

Imperial service, and I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter which has been received from the War Office in regard to this application.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) DERBY.

The Marquis of Lansdowne.

And the war office answered that they might avail themselves hereafter of the liberty given them by the Canadian government to enlist troops if it were necessary. Now, the privilege to enlist was as far as the government of Canada at that time went. The War Office addressed the following letter to the Colonial Office :

Central Department,
War Office, February 14, 1885.

Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 13th instant, relative to the offer of the government of New South Wales of two batteries of field artillery and a battalion of infantry for service in the Soudan, I am directed to acquaint you that the Marquis of Hartington considers that this offer should be accepted with much satisfaction, but that it should be understood that the force must be placed absolutely under the orders of the General Officer Commanding as to the duties on which it will be employed.

Now, there was a statement of the acceptance of the offer of New South Wales. Why? Because New South Wales equipped the men and sent them forward at their own expense to the point of destination, while the Canadian government offered the Imperial government the privilege of enlisting men in Canada. Let me read how the War Office replied, because it is very frank, and it shows the difference in their estimate of the two offers :

War Office, February 16, 1885.

Sir,—I have laid before the Secretary of State for War your letters of the 9th and 13th instant, and in reply I am directed by the Marquis of Hartington to inform you that he highly appreciates the feeling which has prompted the government of the Dominion of Canada to offer facilities for raising a force for Imperial service at this juncture of affairs, but that the time which must necessarily elapse before such a force could be raised, organized and equipped, renders it undesirable to take advantage of the offer at the present time.

The offer of the government of New South Wales, which has been accepted by Her Majesty's government, was to provide an organized force fully equipped and ready for immediate service, and the government of the Dominion will, no doubt, fully appreciate the difference between the two offers as regards the use which could be made of them by Her Majesty's government, and will not, Lord Hartington feels sure, consider that in declining their patriotic offer for the present, any undue preference has been given to the colony of New South Wales.

The colony of New South Wales made an offer such as we have made recently, and it was accepted, and the hon. gentlemen who

sit opposite were members of the government which offered to the Imperial government the privilege of enlisting men in Canada for service in South Africa, and that offer was declined. There is a change in the political situation. There is a change in the view which the people of the empire take, and in so far as that change of public sentiment has occurred, I recognize the difference, but, I say to the hon. gentleman that it was as open to him then to undertake the work as it has been open to us now, and it would have been accepted by the Imperial government if the offer had been in proper form then, as is shown by the fact that they accepted the offer of the government of New South Wales. I say, then, it does not rest with my hon. friend opposite to charge the government with dilatoriness or want of patriotism. The hon. gentleman is himself open to that charge in the course which the government of which he was a member pursued; and what Sir Wilfrid Laurier said in the interview which my hon. friend read yesterday to this House, was said by Sir John Macdonald himself and his colleagues when this very subject was under discussion. Having said this much, I need not pursue the subject further. In my opinion we are having gradually—maybe unsystematically—but we are gradually having developed within the British Empire an Imperial constitution. The British government has not governed the United Kingdom as a domestic parliament, as we govern Canada, and it has in addition to that the power of an Imperial government and an Imperial assembly. That is gradually undergoing a change. Everybody sees that. In 1887, when the Imperial government asked the government of Canada to name a commissioner to settle the difficulties between Canada and the United States, they were giving this country a position in an Imperial commission and an office in the settlement of an Imperial question, and so, recently, when there was an attempt made to settle the difficulties between this country and the United States, the Imperial government named four Canadian commissioners and one nobleman from the United Kingdom, an eminent jurist, to sit as a commission representing Great Britain—no, not Great Britain only, but the British Empire, and so we had a voice in determining a question which