

"Orange Free State, nor with any native tribe to the eastward or westward of the Republic, *until the same has been approved by Her Majesty, the Queen.*

"Such approval shall be considered to have been granted if Her Majesty's Government shall not, within six months after receiving a copy of such treaty, have notified that the conclusion of such treaty is in conflict with the interests of Great Britain or of any of Her Majesty's possessions in South Africa."

Clearly, then, unless the British Government gave their decision sooner, *six months must elapse* after a treaty was made before it could go into effect.

But what did the Boers do? The Convention was ratified by the Volksraad August 8, 1884, and by September 16th following the Boers had made a treaty with natives and the President had issued a proclamation upon the strength thereof. On May 9th, 1899, the Transvaal State Secretary attempted to justify this action in the following remarkable language:

"That Article gave the right to conclude treaties with any native race to the east or west of the Republic, *subject to the assent of Her Majesty, and when Her Majesty's Government raised objection to the approval of that agreement the proclamation was withdrawn.*"

To suppose for a moment that these cunning Boers did not appreciate the great difference between *previous assent* and *subsequent objection* would be preposterous.

At the Bloemfontein Conference President Kruger asked Sir Alfred Milner the meaning of England's military preparations in South Africa, in reply to which Sir Alfred said that they appeared insignificant by comparison with those of the Transvaal. The crafty Kruger's answer was as follows:

"It pleases me very much to hear what His Excellency said, but I would like to give him a correct idea with regard to his statement that the Afrikaners are being armed. Your Excellency knows that when the State was first founded the Afrikaners were always armed, but that they gradually became neglectful therein, and when a commando had to be called up against the Kaffirs we found very many were not armed, while many of those who had arms had old guns, and you can easily imagine that when one was served with a new gun they all wanted one."

*And now they boast that they have four good guns for every man, and of how cleverly they got them into the country, with plenty of the finest artillery in the world, without our finding it out.*