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State had that morning telegraphed to the Governor, sanctioning his proposals. As for the Straits Settlements, a Commission had been appointed to deal with the subject and was expected to report early in the autumn. On their report the Government proposed to take action. He could promise that in the Federated Malay States action would be taken which would lead with certainty in the direction of the ultimate extinction of the use of opium.

During the course of the debate, the Right Honourable Sir Edward Grey, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, reminded the House that in 1901, the Secretary of State for India had declared that the government would agree with China in any plan for the restriction of the consumption of opium brought forward in good faith, even if it caused some sacrifice and drew attention to the following decree issued by the Chinese Government on the 24th of March of the present year:—

‘We have already directed by Imperial Decree, that regulations should be issued under which the use of opium, both foreign and native, should be totally suppressed within the period of 10 years. The British Government have now agreed to effect an annual reduction in the amount of opium exported to China, and other friendly powers are willing to assist. This enlightened policy on their part has greatly impressed us. Under the agreement with the British Government, the reduction of the exports is to be continued for three years, and if it is found at the expiration of that period, that China has effectively decreased the consumption and production of opium, the policy of reducing the exports will still be carried on. To allow these three years to slip by without taking measures for the abolition of the drug, would be a poor return for the benevolent policy of a friendly power, and a deep disappointment to philanthropists of all nations.’

Replying to a question in the House of Commons two days previously, Sir Edward Grey had said:—‘No opium dens exist at present in any of the British concessions in China.’

During the course of the debate on the above resolution the Right Honourable Alfred Lytton, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, congratulated the Government upon having taken a step which seemed to be entirely reasonable in the circumstances.

The attitude of the Japanese towards the opium evil is both instructive and profitable. To quote from a report of a committee appointed by the Philippines Commission to investigate the use of opium and the traffic therein, ‘the opium law of Japan, in the words of a government official of Tokyo, is “prohibitive and effective.” . . . The opium law of Japan forbids the importation, the possession, and the use of the drug, except as a medicine, and it is kept to the letter in a population of 47,000,000, of whom 8,000 are Chinese. So rigid are the provisions of the law, that it is sometimes, especially in interior towns, almost impossible to secure opium or its alkaloids, in cases of medical necessity, and the government is determined to keep the opium habit strictly confined to what it deems to be its legitimate use, which use, even, it seems to think, is dangerous enough to require special safeguarding.’

Article 159 of the Japanese law lays it down that any one manufacturing, having for sale, or growing opium in any form, shall be punished with penal servitude not