

to think is as much theirs as it is ours. But, of course, with the privilege of management and of control will also come the obligation and the responsibility. There will come some form of contribution towards the expense for objects which we shall have in common. That, I say, is self-evident, but it is to be borne in mind even in these early stages of the consideration of the subject.

"Now, gentlemen, in connection with this subject we have already made a small advance, upon which I congratulate myself, since it was accomplished during my term of office, though it was prepared by my predecessors; and it may have in the future important results. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is the great Judicial Court of Appeal of the Empire. It is the nearest approach, the closest analogy, to the Supreme Court of the United States. It is a body of almost universal and world-wide reputation and authority, and it is our desire, naturally, in pursuit of the ideas which I am venturing to put before you, to increase its authority, if that be possible, and to give it a more representative character, and with that view we have most gladly secured the appointment as Privy Councillors of distinguished Judges from the Courts of Canada, of Australia, and of South Africa, and they now will take their seats on equal terms with the other members of the Judicial Committee. Well, gentlemen, that is a good beginning, but I do not think that you can feel that at present the arrangement is on a permanent footing. There are objections to the present system which will present themselves to every mind. The Judges who have been chosen have hitherto been Judges who are still in active practice. That at the outset raises a considerable difficulty. It will be difficult for these Judges, even if it were consistent with our general idea of what is right, to take part in appeals in regard to cases upon which they have already decided. And another difficulty is that by the necessity of their position the greater part of their time will be spent in the colonies from which they come. They will only be here for indefinite periods, and, as it were, on casual occasions. It is impossible to arrange the business of the Privy Council or to delay the suitors to meet their convenience, and the result of that is that though they would sit as Judges of the Privy Council it may very often happen that they would not be present or be able to serve precisely on the occasions on which they might be most useful. Now, all that could be altered by the colonies themselves, and this is one of the subjects which I recommend to your attention. If these gentlemen were appointed solely and entirely for the purpose of representing the groups of colonies on the Privy Council, they could reside permanently in this country, and not being themselves actively engaged in judicial work at home, they could sit and assist the Privy Council in all cases in which their respective colonies were engaged; and I think this would go very far to strengthen the position of the Privy Council, and at the same time to give to all the colonies a security that justice would be done when they appeal to this great institution. May I note in passing a matter of some importance in regard to the proposed Australian Federation Bill: it appears in that Bill to be suggested that, if it is passed, appeals should only go to the Privy Council upon constitutional questions. I venture most respectfully to urge the reconsideration of that suggestion. Nothing is more desirable in the interests of the colonies, in the interests of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire, than an uniformity of law, and that uniformity can only be obtained by occasional appeals to the highest tribunal, settling once for all the law for all parts of the Empire; and I confess I think it would be a great loss to the colonists if they surrendered the opportunity of getting this judicial decision upon difficult and complicated points of law which from time to time may arise in the local Courts.

DEFENCE.

"I have said that the question to which I first directed your attention—that of closer relations—is greater than all the rest. I may say that it covers all the rest, because, of course, if Federation were established, or anything approaching to it, all these other questions to which I am now about to call your attention would be settled by whatever was the representative body of the Federation; and among them, and in the very first rank, must of necessity come the question of Imperial defence. Gentlemen, you have seen something of the military strength of the Empire; you will see on Saturday an astounding representation of its naval strength, by which alone a Colonial Empire can be bound together. You are aware that that representation—great, magnificent, unparalleled as it will be—is nevertheless only a part of the naval forces of the Empire spread in every part of the globe. The great Mediterranean fleet is still at its full force; the fleets on the various stations are all up to their normal strength; and the fleet which you will see on Saturday next is merely the Reserve and the Home fleet, ready to go anywhere, at any time, in the interests of the colonies and of the United Kingdom.

"This gigantic navy and the military forces of the United Kingdom are maintained, as you know, at heavy cost. I think the charge upon the Exchequer is at the present time something like thirty-five millions sterling per annum, and it constitutes more than one-third of the total income of the country. Now, these fleets and this military armament are not maintained exclusively, or even mainly, for the benefit of the United Kingdom, or for the defence of Home interests. They are still more maintained as a necessity of empire, for the maintenance and protection of Imperial trade and of Imperial interests all over the world; and if you will for a moment consider the history of this country during, say, the present century, or, I would say, during the present reign, you will find that every war, great or small, in which we have been engaged has had at the bottom a colonial interest, the interest, that is to say, either of a colony or of a great dependency like India. That is absolutely true, and is likely to be true to the end of the chapter. If we had no Empire, there is no doubt whatever that our military and our naval resources would not require to be maintained at anything like their present level.

"Now, I venture to say that that must necessarily be the case in the future. Look at the condition of the colonies. Assume—although I am almost ashamed to assume it, even for the purpose of argument—assume that these colonies were separated from the Mother-country. What