

- 8 wide difference between its implied promise of non-interference in shipping concerns outside the Commonwealth and the attempts made in the first Federal Parliament to impose restrictions in that very direction. The first manifestation of this spirit appeared when it was proposed, in the Postal Bill, to prohibit the employment of Asiatics on board mail-steamers trading to and from the ports of the Commonwealth and Europe. The Secretary of State for the Colonies at once pointed out to the young Government that such a measure was
- 9 distinctly beyond their authority to enact, inasmuch as it would involve, if passed, a violation of existing contracts of international law. It was therefore dropped, but the Government still hoped to ultimately gain their point, and cable advices received lead us to infer that they have succeeded, not in the case of existing agreements, it is true, but in so far as future contracts are concerned. On what authority such a radical measure can be enforced is difficult to
- 10 understand. The Australian mail-service is in the hands of at least nine companies. |

(New Regulations.)

(b.) At the rate of 130 words a minutes. Takes 7 minutes.

- My honourable friend the member for Islington complains that the civil administration is to blame in regard to the matter he brought before the Committee. I do not want to throw blame on anybody's shoulders, but all the matters he dealt with are matters of military administration. He has not proved any case against the military authorities, and has not justified the position he took up. I entirely agree with him that while we ought to be considerate to our enemies, we ought not to ignore the loyalists in South Africa. Our first duty is to our friends, and my honourable friend has not proved any failure on our part in that respect. Large funds have been provided to secure for the refugees driven out of the
- 1 Transvaal, and waiting | to go back to Johannesburg, any luxuries, as well as necessities, in which they may be deficient. Recently these funds have been almost exhausted, and the Government recognise their duty; but Lord Milner has taken immense trouble in regard to these matters, and taken the measures which are most wise and most calculated to secure the object we desire to carry out. Two Committees have been considering and providing for the necessities of these refugees. Only very recently I telegraphed to Capetown asking whether they wanted more money, and informing them that if they did it would be placed at their disposal. I received a reply to the effect that, although the funds were low, they were
- 2 prepared to continue to act on the same principles as before, but that | they had to be careful not to pauperise recipients by giving assistance broadcast. That is the principle acted upon by the representatives of the refugees themselves. I regret the language used by my honourable friend when he said he did not know whether there was favouritism or jobbery. When he says that, he is insinuating that these things do exist. I told him I regarded the charge as one of the most serious that could possibly be brought against the military administration, and that, although I am not answerable for the military administration, yet that I would, in my position as Secretary of State for the Colonies, interfere and endeavour to secure that right should be done, if he would give me any proof or any evidence that
- 3 I could | follow up. But my honourable friend, for reasons which I appreciate, has declined to do that. He has not given me the name of one single person who has gone up to Johannesburg who ought not to have been allowed to go. Does he really think I am justified in telegraphing to Lord Kitchener, insinuating to him favouritism and jobbery, on an anonymous accusation of this kind, of which I have not the slightest evidence? It is an enormous business to decide, under existing circumstances, who should, and who should not, go up to Johannesburg, and I think it is very likely that mistakes have been made. In regard to all those mistakes, I should be delighted to take the necessary steps
- 4 to put matters right, if anyone would furnish me with particulars; but as long as the statements are vague and anonymous, it is impossible for me to go into that further. My honourable friend says that his wish was that everyone should go up to Johannesburg. That is the wish of all of us. That would be a proof that the end is near at hand. Hitherto it has not been possible to allow great numbers to go up there, because it would be impossible to provide them with the necessities of life. The whole of the orders for rolling-stock have been placed. M. Girouard is in charge of the railway in South Africa, and I believe everyone will agree that
- 5 no one more capable or competent could have been selected. We intend, as far as possible, | to leave him an entirely free hand. It is his opinion that when he obtains this additional rolling-stock, which is to consist of, I think, sixty engines and 400 trucks, he will be able to supply a very much larger number of persons at Johannesburg. Other steps we are now considering in conference with the military authorities, and altogether I am hopeful that the wish of my honourable friend may be gratified—perhaps even sooner than he expects. As to the question of my right honourable friend the member for Forest of Dean, with regard to the constabulary, the duty this body will always perform will be of a semi-military character, until the
- 6 need for semi-military operations disappears. They are under the control of | the Commander-in-Chief, and they may be regarded as a military force. The right honourable gentleman the member for Monmouth complained of the form of the vote, and went on to suggest that part of it ought to be a military vote. It is very difficult when war is going on to say properly what is military and what civil expense. This is put in a civil vote because ultimately the constabulary will be a civil vote placed on the revenues of the Transvaal and not upon the revenues of this country. It seems to me reasonable to regard it at present as part of the expenses of the war, against which we shall have to place whatever sum we may think fit to
- 7 charge upon the Transvaal revenue. |