

You will observe that the Earl of Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty, in answering Lord Sidmouth, said that the Admiralty did not think it desirable for them to initiate any scheme for a colonial naval force, and that it should be left to the colonies themselves to initiate one; but that, in order to facilitate the initiation of such a scheme, Rear-Admiral Tryon had had, before leaving this country, communications with the Admiralty and Colonial Office, so that he might be able to lay the views of Her Majesty's Government before the Australasian Governments. Lord Northbrook added that the Admiralty would be most happy to assist in every way those colonies that wished to form a navy, if their Agents-General would communicate with them upon the matter; and he added, "on this point I now publicly invite such communications to be made to us."

The Earl of Derby said that Her Majesty's Government could not bring forward any plan for naval defence until after the creation of some federal authority in the colonies, and could not deal with a question of that kind with a number of divided authorities. On the question whether the Imperial Government ought to take the initiative, Lord Derby said that Rear-Admiral Tryon was in possession of a plan which had been carefully prepared and considered by the Admiralty, in concert with the Colonial Office; and he added that, while on the one hand the colonies had a right to ask that funds locally raised should be expended for the purpose of local defence, on the other it was obvious that local defence could not be effectually provided unless it was part of a general plan, the adoption of which would be much simplified when there was a federal authority to speak in the name of all the colonies. His Lordship further said that Her Majesty's Government were making overtures to all the colonies on the subject, and that the papers thereon would be laid before the Imperial Parliament without delay.

As so distinct an invitation has now been made by Lord Northbrook, I should be glad to receive whatever instructions the Government may think necessary for my guidance in the matter.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Defence, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### Enclosure.

[The *Times*, Tuesday, 17th March, 1885.]

#### THE COLONIAL NAVAL FORCE.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH rose to move for correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Governments of any of the Australasian Colonies relative to the formation and maintenance of a colonial naval force. The noble viscount said he understood that a great deal of correspondence had passed between the Colonial Office and the Admiralty on this subject. He wished to point out how very essential a navy was almost to the existence of our colonies. The naval force which we now sent out to the colonies was totally inadequate at present, and we had done very little indeed towards helping the colonies to establish a naval force of their own. The First Lord of the Admiralty seemed the other night to be under the mistaken impression that he had charged the Admiralty with being hostile to the establishment of a naval force in the colonies. He had not the slightest intention of making any accusation of that kind against the Admiralty, but he did maintain that the effort made by the colonies in providing themselves with ships did impose on the Admiralty some obligation to meet the natural wishes of the colonies. The noble earl the First Lord of the Admiralty had, he believed, said that some kind of assistance had been already given to the colonies, and that several naval officers were already there. He did not want to underrate that assistance, but it had never been definitely stated by the noble earl, and the information he possessed on the subject had been picked up piecemeal here and there. The colonies were extremely anxious for their self-defence, and were more or less waiting for the Admiralty to make some proposal to them. The noble earl was of opinion that the initiative should come from the colonies, but for his own part he ventured to think that they had already taken a step in advance. It appeared to him that two courses lay open to the Admiralty—they might either send out an experienced officer to organize the whole of the local marine, or they might name a certain number of officers to serve in the colonies for a limited number of years, their pay being defrayed by the colonies, and their promotion being allowed to go on in the same way as at present. The latter course would be acceptable to many naval officers who were now in a state of enforced idleness. Looking at the Navy List, he found that there were seventy captains, about seventy-five commanders, and between eighty and ninety lieutenants at present unemployed. As to the first proposal, there was a precedent for it, as in former days, when the East India Company maintained a navy of its own, the Admiralty used to send out a distinguished naval officer, who had the sole management of the Bombay Marine. What the colonies now required was a body of trained naval officers to enable them to form a navy. The colonies had a certain number of men who might easily be trained to the management of torpedo vessels to be used for the protection of their harbours. Such a torpedo force would be of the greatest value in protecting the local commerce of those colonies, which amounted to some 10,000,000 tons per annum, and their enormous coast-line. In conclusion, he begged to move for correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Governments of any of the Australasian Colonies relative to the formation and maintenance of a colonial naval force.

The Earl of NORTHBROOK.—I have been requested by my noble friend the Secretary to the Colonies to answer the questions of the noble lord opposite. The noble viscount asked whether applications had been made by the Australian Colonies—viz., Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia—for advice and assistance as to manning vessels of war. I have to state in reply to that question that such applications have been received, and that they have been in every case freely and fully complied with. I may further say that the Admiralty have received the warmest thanks for the way in which they have acted in the matter. I can assure the noble viscount that many