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Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	Mss Eur F112/252
Date(s)	Nov 1911-Mar 1917 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 file (221 folios)
Copyright for document	Unknown

About this record

The file contains correspondence, memoranda, and other papers relating to railway projects in Persia [Iran] and the surrounding region. The papers deal with the proposals for, planning, and progress of, several railway lines, including one from the Mediterranean to India, the Trans-Persian Railway, the Baghdad Railway, and the Nushki and Dalbandin extension from Quetta. The documents discuss the merits and flaws of the proposals, technical issues such as gauge sizes, and the impact of such projects on Britain's relations with Russia, Germany, France, and Turkey.

At the back of the file are a number of official reports on Parliamentary debates within the House of Commons, dating from 10 July 1912 to 25 May 1914, all of which feature railways (folios 128-218). Also at the rear of the file are three maps:

- General Map of Asia with proposed British, German, and Russian rail lines added by hand
- War Office map of the Middle East, showing railways and railway projects
- As above with further rail lines added and details of gauges given.

Correspondents include: Arthur Campbell Yate, army Officer; Henry McNiel; Francis Richard Maunsell, army officer; George Lloyd, politician; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington, army officer and war

correspondent; Lord Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes, Leader of the House of Lords; Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice (Lord Lansdowne), statesman; Lucien Wolf, journalist and historian; Charles Staniforth, businessman and railway investor; Charles Prestwich Scott, Editor of the Manchester Guardian; Hugh Shakespear Barnes, Director, Imperial Bank of Persia; and Colonel Frank Cooke Webb Ware, former Political Agent, Chagai.

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Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [1r] (1/442)

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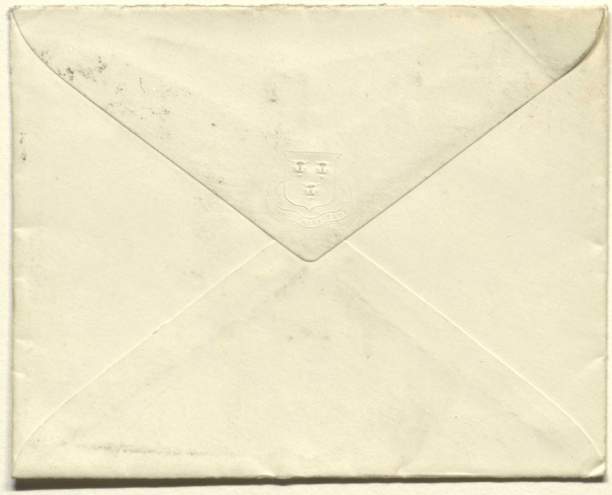
(13)
Dec 11
The Right Hon.
The Earl Curzon of Kedleston
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., P.C.
1 Carlton House Terrace
London S. W.
12



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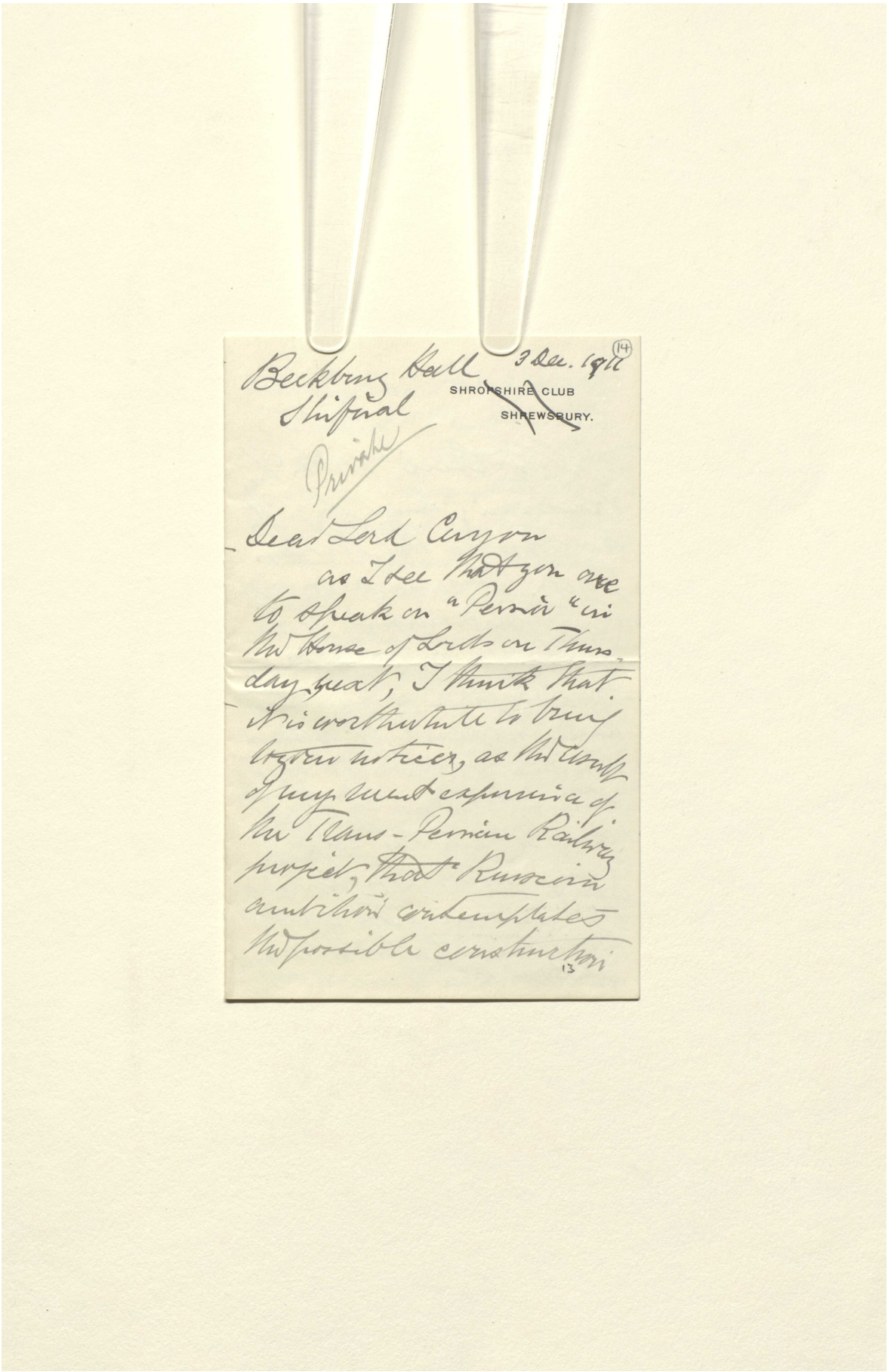

Beckbury Hall 3 Dec. 1910 (14)
Shifnal
SHROPSHIRE CLUB
SHREWSBURY.

Private

Dear Lord Curzon

as I see that you are to speak on "Persia" in the House of Lords on Thursday next, I think that it is worthwhile to bring before notice, as the Trans-Persian Railway project, that the Russian ambition contemplates the possible construction

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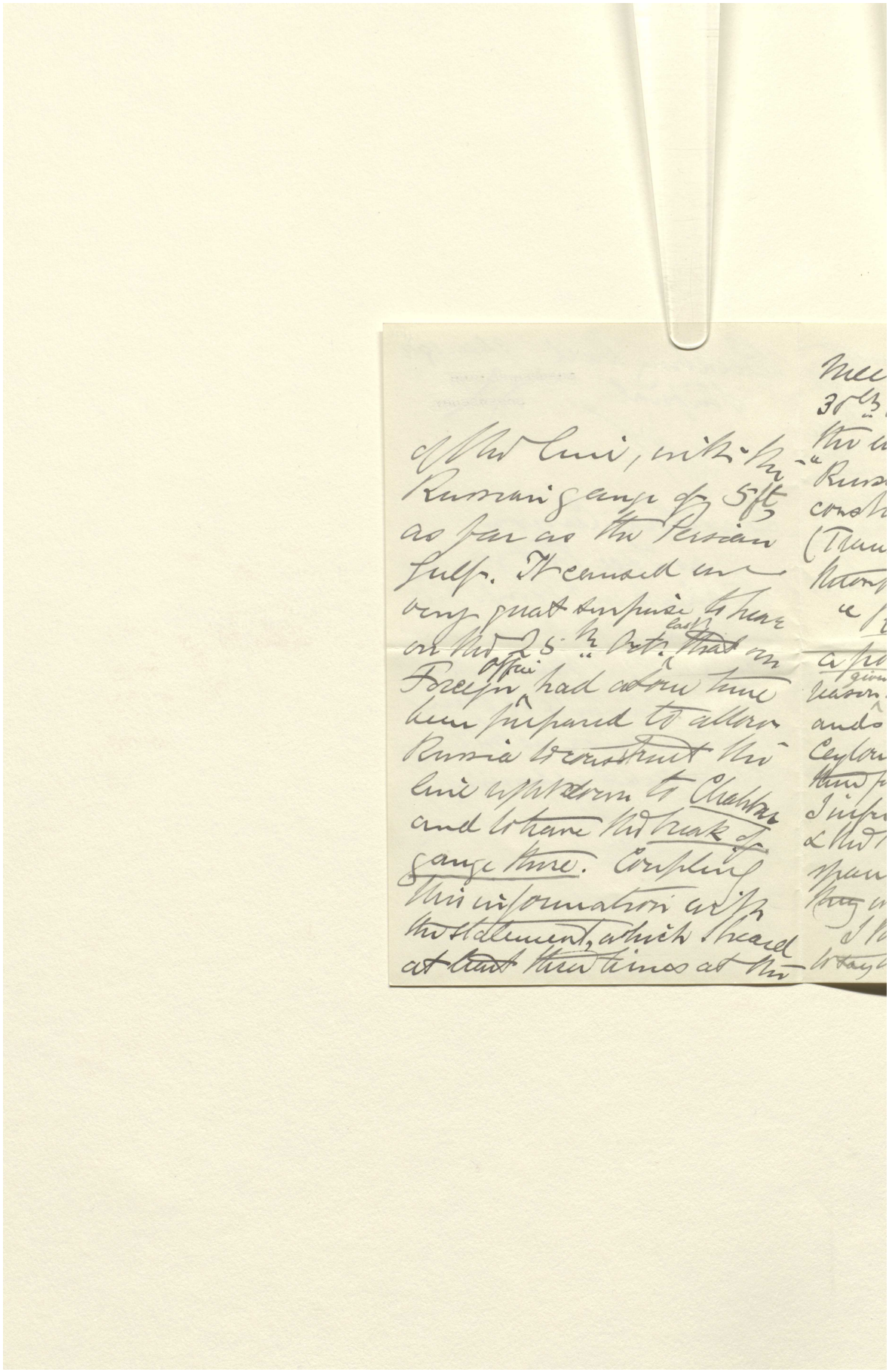

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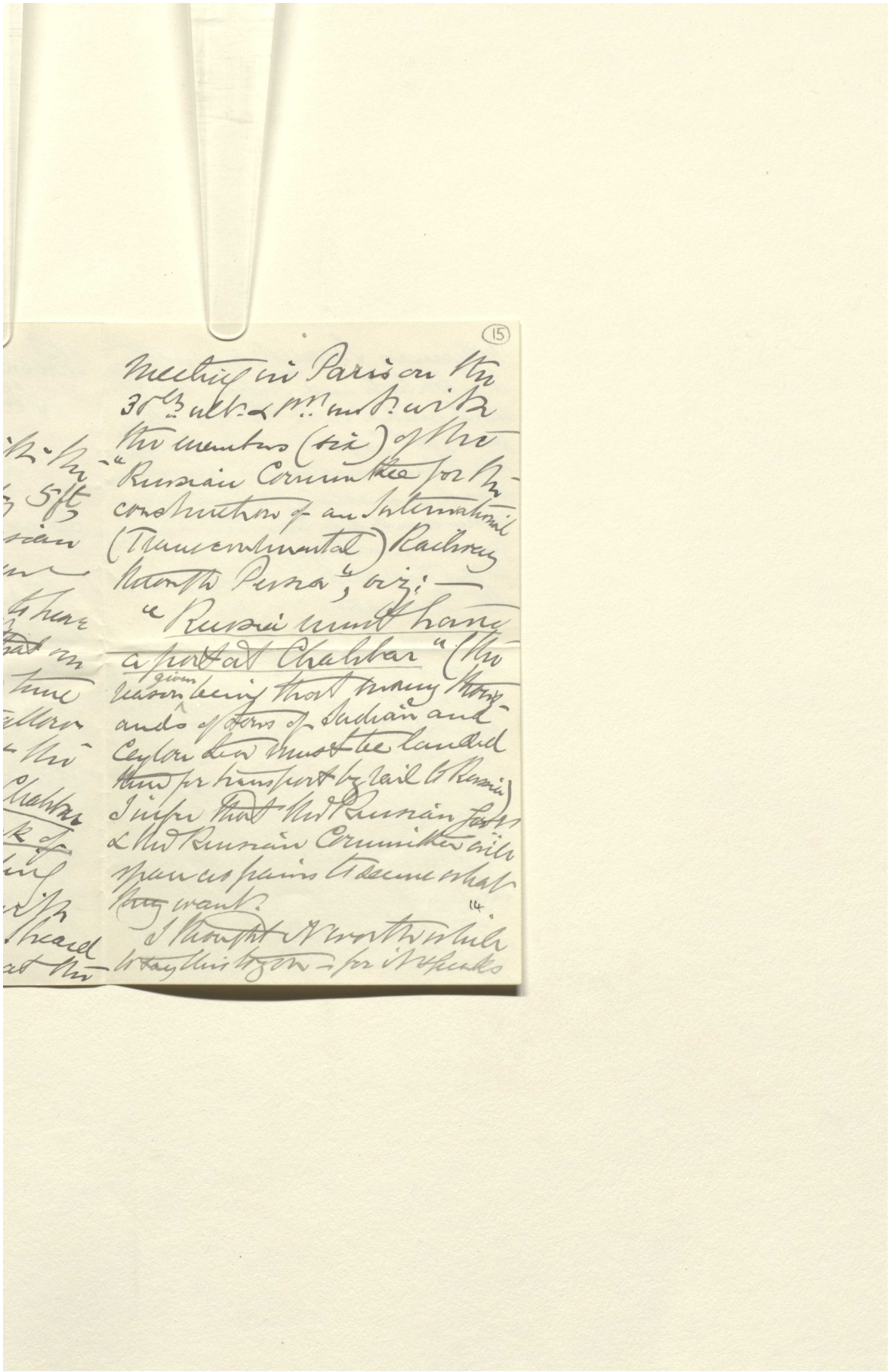

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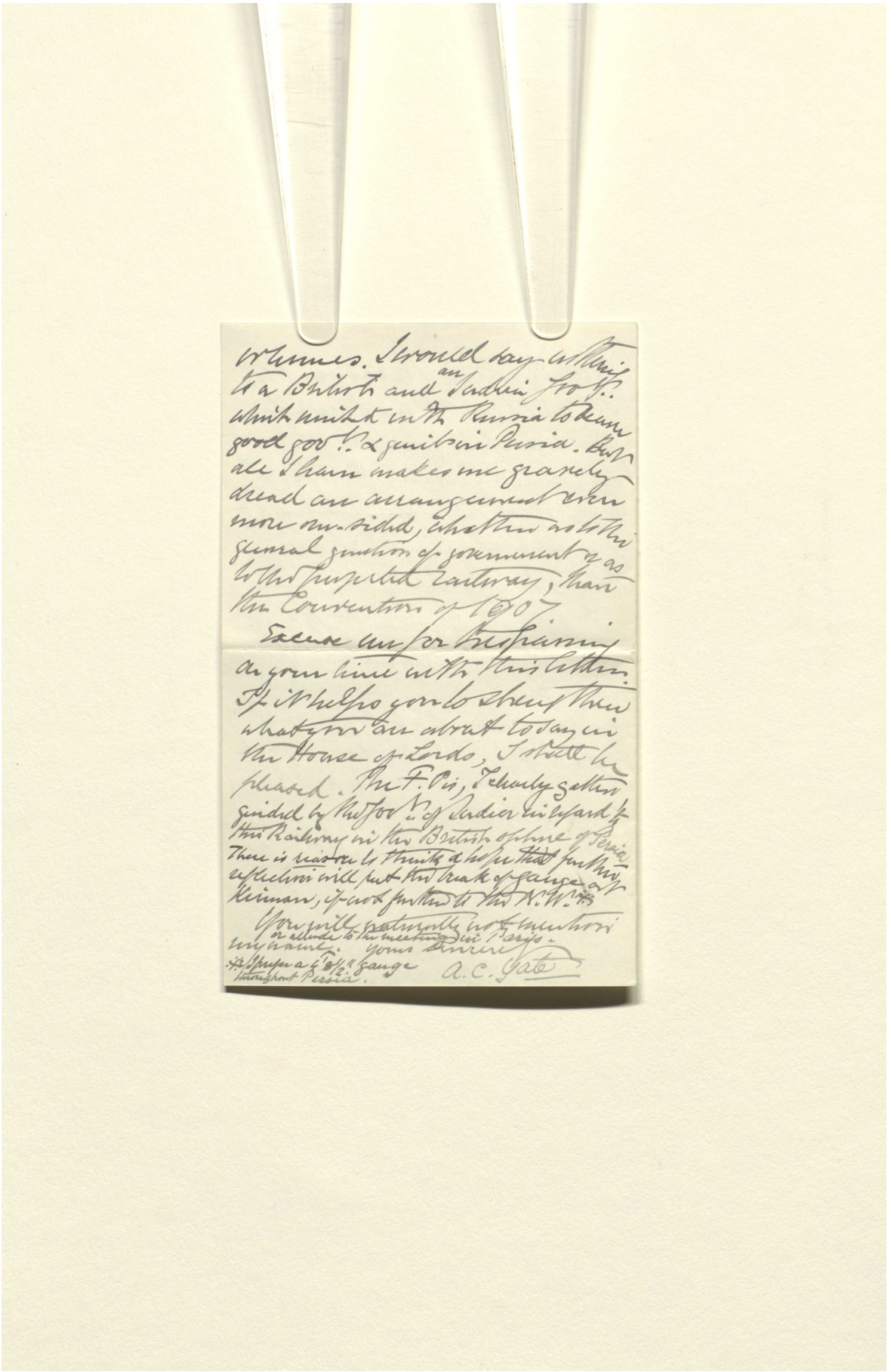

volumes. I would say as thereby to a British and an Indian Govt. which united with Russia to secure good govt. & guilt in Persia. But all I have makes me gravely dread an arrangement even more one-sided, whether as to the general question of government or as to the projected railway, than the Convention of 1907.

Excuse me for trespassing on your time with this letter. If it helps you to shew them what you are about to say in the House of Lords, I shall be pleased. The F. Pis, I clearly gather guided by the Govt. of Indian in regard to this Railway in the British sphere of Persia. There is reason to think & hope that further reflection will put the break of gauge at Kirman, if not further to the N.W.*

You will naturally not mention my name. Yours sincerely

A. C. Gate

* I prefer a 4' 8½" gauge throughout Persia.

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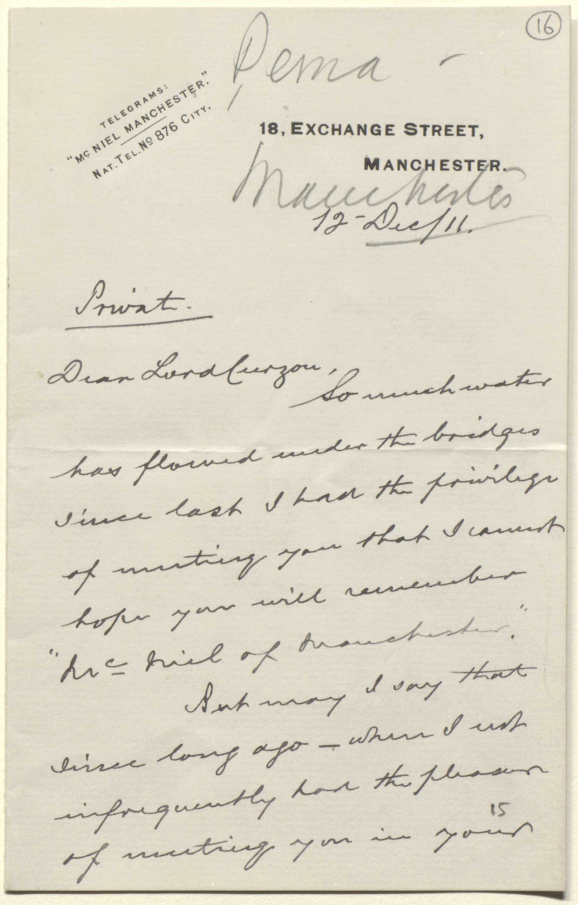

(16)

Pema -

TELEGRAMS: "McNIEL MANCHESTER." NAT. TEL. No 876 CITY.

18, EXCHANGE STREET,
MANCHESTER.

Manchester
12 - Dec/11.

Private.

Dear Lord Curzon,

So much water has flowed under the bridges since last I had the privilege of meeting you that I cannot hope you will remember "McNiel of Manchester."

But may I say that since long ago — when I not infrequently had the pleasure of meeting you in your

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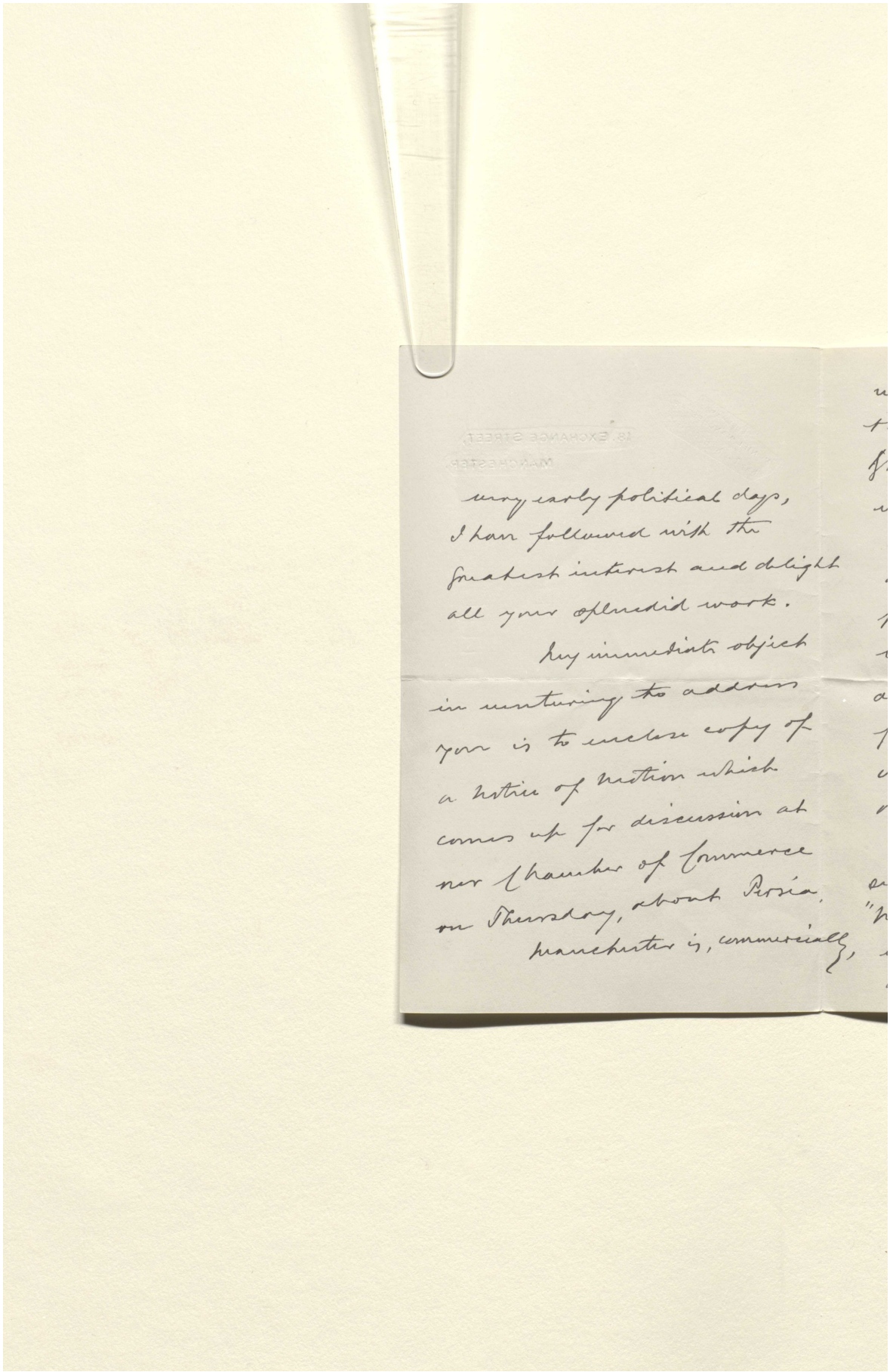

very early political days,
I have followed with the
greatest interest and delight
all your splendid work.

My immediate object
in venturing to address
you is to enclose copy of
a notice of motion which
comes up for discussion at
our Chamber of Commerce
on Thursday, about Persia.
Manchester is, commercially,

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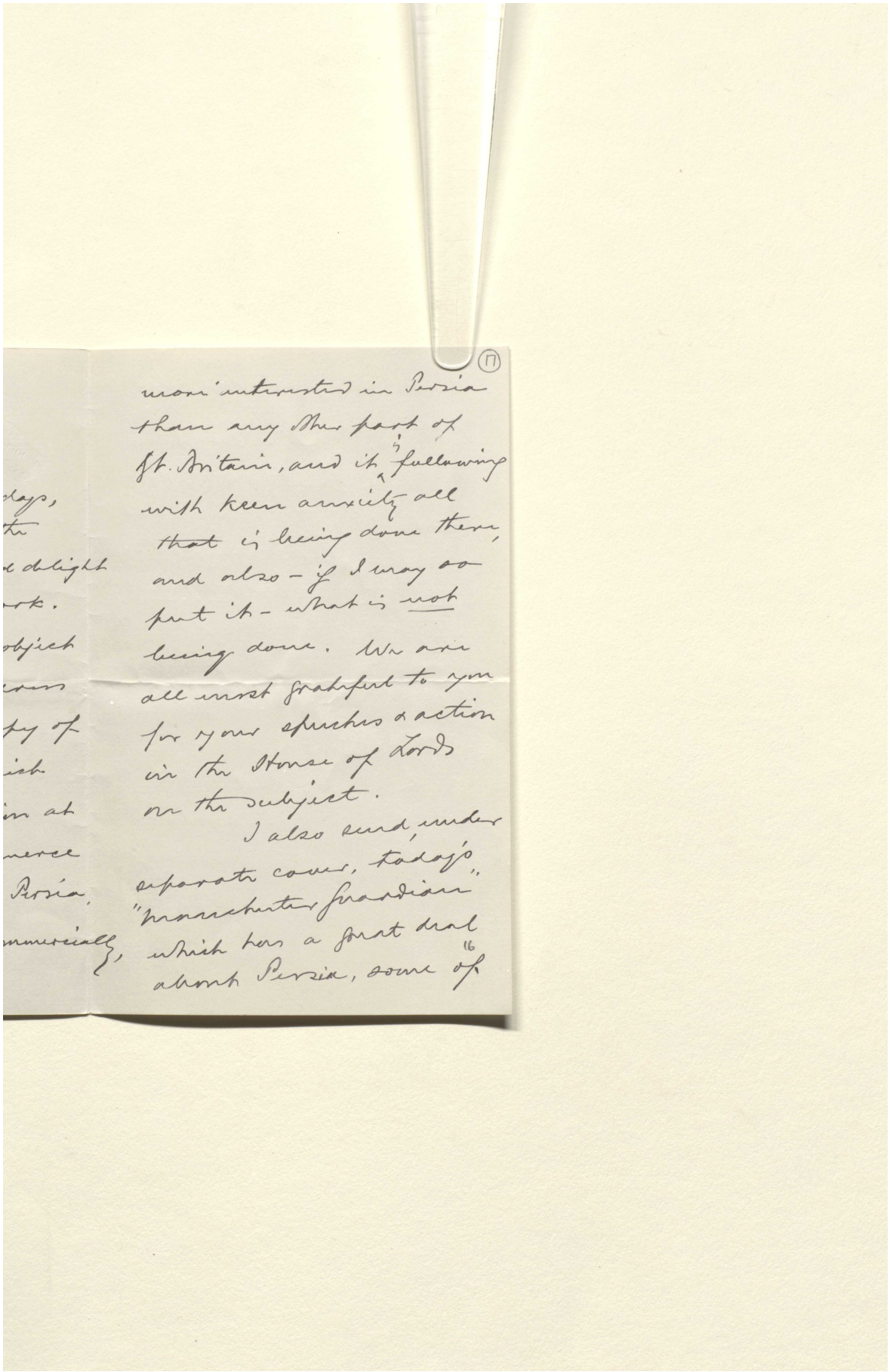

more interested in Persia
than any other part of
Gt. Britain, and is following
with keen anxiety all
that is being done there,
and also – if I may so
put it – what is not
being done. We are
all most grateful to you
for your speeches & action
in the House of Lords
on the subject.
I also send, under
separate cover, today's
"Manchester Guardian"
which has a great deal
about Persia, some of

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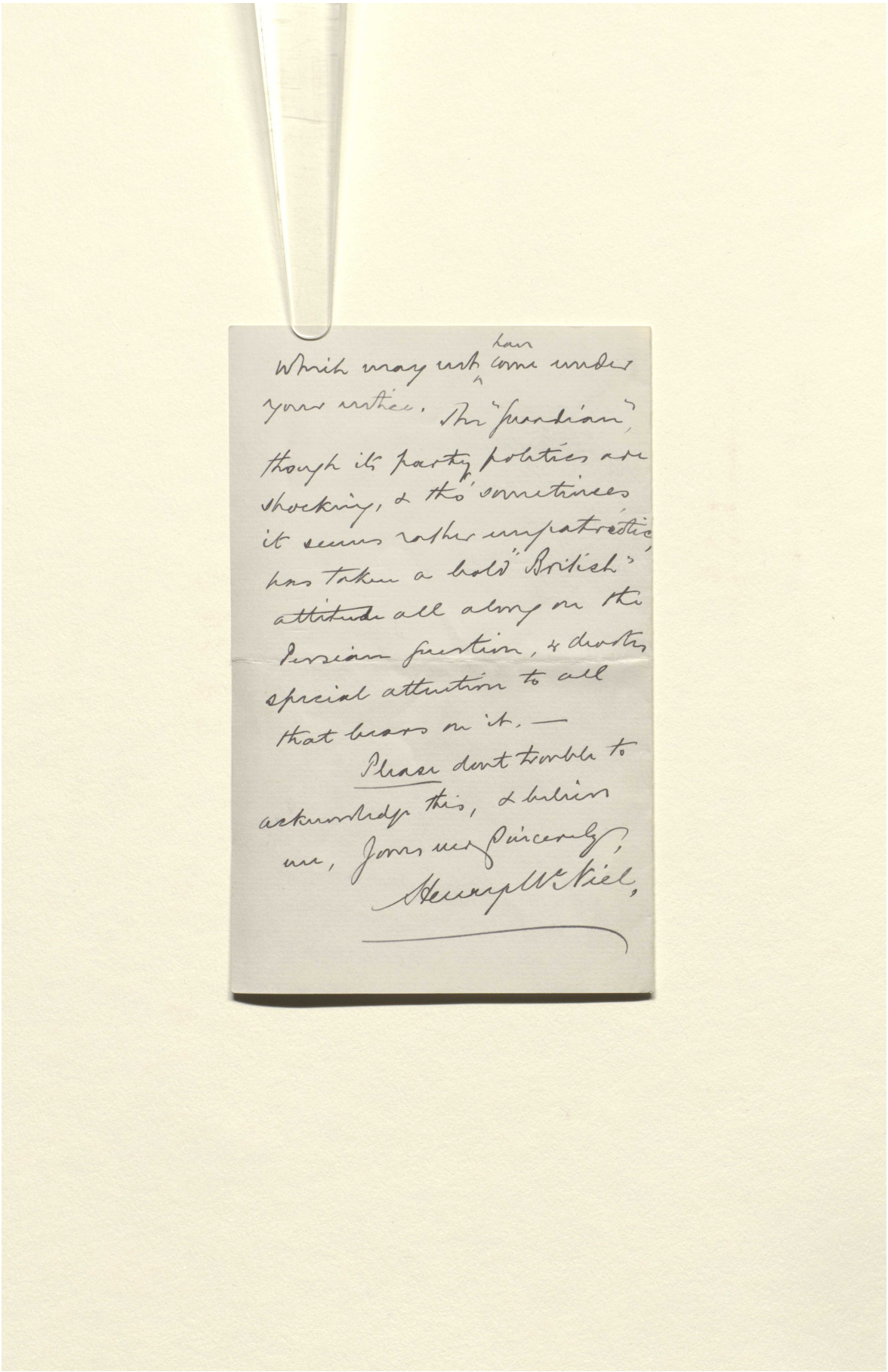
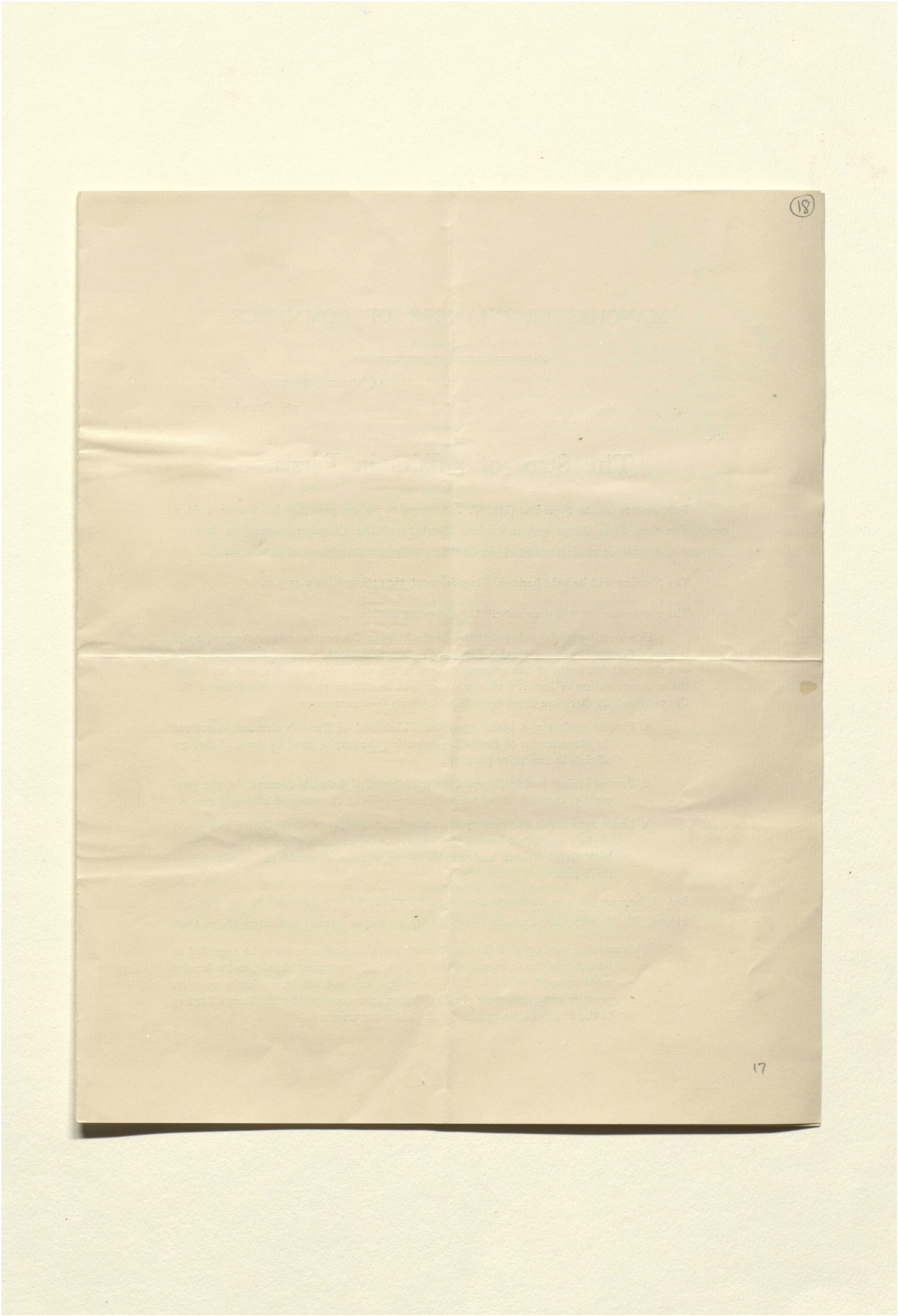


Which may not have come under
your notice. The "Guardian",
though its party politics are
shocking, & tho' sometimes
it seems rather unpatriotic
has taken a bold "British"
attitude all along on the
Persian question, & devotes
special attention to all
that bears on it. —

Please don't trouble to
acknowledge this, & believe
me, Yours very sincerely,
Henry McKiel,



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MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

44, Mosley Street,

7th December, 1911.

Sir,

The State of Affairs in Persia.

I am desired by the President (Mr. W. T. Stubbs) to inform you that he has received a requisition from forty Firms and individual Members of the Chamber requesting him to convene a Special General Meeting of the Chamber under the provisions of Article 20.

The Meeting will be held here on *Thursday next, the 14th inst., at* 2-45 *p.m.*

The requisitionists will then submit the following motion :—

"This meeting is of opinion that the Anglo-Russian Convention of 31st August, 1907, is being flagrantly abused by the Russian Government to the loss of British Prestige and the great detriment of her commercial and other interests in Persia, and fears that the arbitrary nature of Russia's ultimata may lead to still more serious breaches of the Convention. It therefore urges upon His Majesty's Government to

1. Protest against and insist upon the withdrawal of Russia's demand to control the Government of Persia in preventing the employment by them of foreign officials in executive positions.

2. Protest against and insist upon the withdrawal of Russia's demand for the payment of the cost of her present intervention in the internal affairs of Persia.

3. Insist upon a full and honourable observance by Russia of the letter and spirit of the Convention, and of the co-relative assurances given in the names of both Great Britain and Russia to the Persian Government in connection therewith.

But if, because of any understanding between Great Britain and Russia not publicly known, His Majesty's Government is not able to act in the manner indicated above, then

This meeting is of opinion that as Russia's recent actions are not to be regarded as breaches of the Convention, His Majesty's Government should, and is hereby most strongly urged, to fulfil its obligations and act immediately upon its promise and declaration of 14th October, 1910, conveyed by Sir George Barclay to the Persian Government in the following terms :—

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" . . . . with a view to remedying this state of things which has at last become intolerable to His Majesty's Government, I am instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform you that unless by three months from now order has been restored to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government upon the roads from Bushire to Shiraz, and from Shiraz to Ispahan, which are the routes which have been marked by the most flagrant outrages and disorders, His Majesty's Government will be reluctantly compelled themselves to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the proper policing of these roads.

"That the terms of this resolution be despatched immediately to such of His Majesty's Ministers and Local Members of Parliament as it may be deemed desirable by the President to inform."

If this is carried the requisitionists will ask for the despatch of this resolution to such of His Majesty's Ministers and Local Members of Parliament as it may be deemed desirable to inform.

A ticket (or tickets) of admission is enclosed, in accordance with the Articles of Association (see below), and I am respectfully to ask your attention to the conditions stated on the back.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER SPEAKMAN,

Secretary.

EXTRACTS FROM ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION.

N.B.—No member shall have the right of voting at General Meetings of the Chamber or ....., until the expiration of three months after his election as a member of the Chamber.

No member shall be entitled to vote whose subscription is more than two months in arrear.

Admission to General Meetings shall be by ticket. Each individual member paying one guinea annual subscription is entitled to one ticket; every partnership firm or joint stock company paying two guineas annual subscription, two tickets; and every bank and every corporation constituted by the combination of ten or more firms or companies, and paying three or more guineas annual subscription, three tickets, with liberty to obtain, on duly authorised application, additional tickets in the proportion of one ticket for each guinea (beyond three) subscribed, but not to exceed twenty in all.

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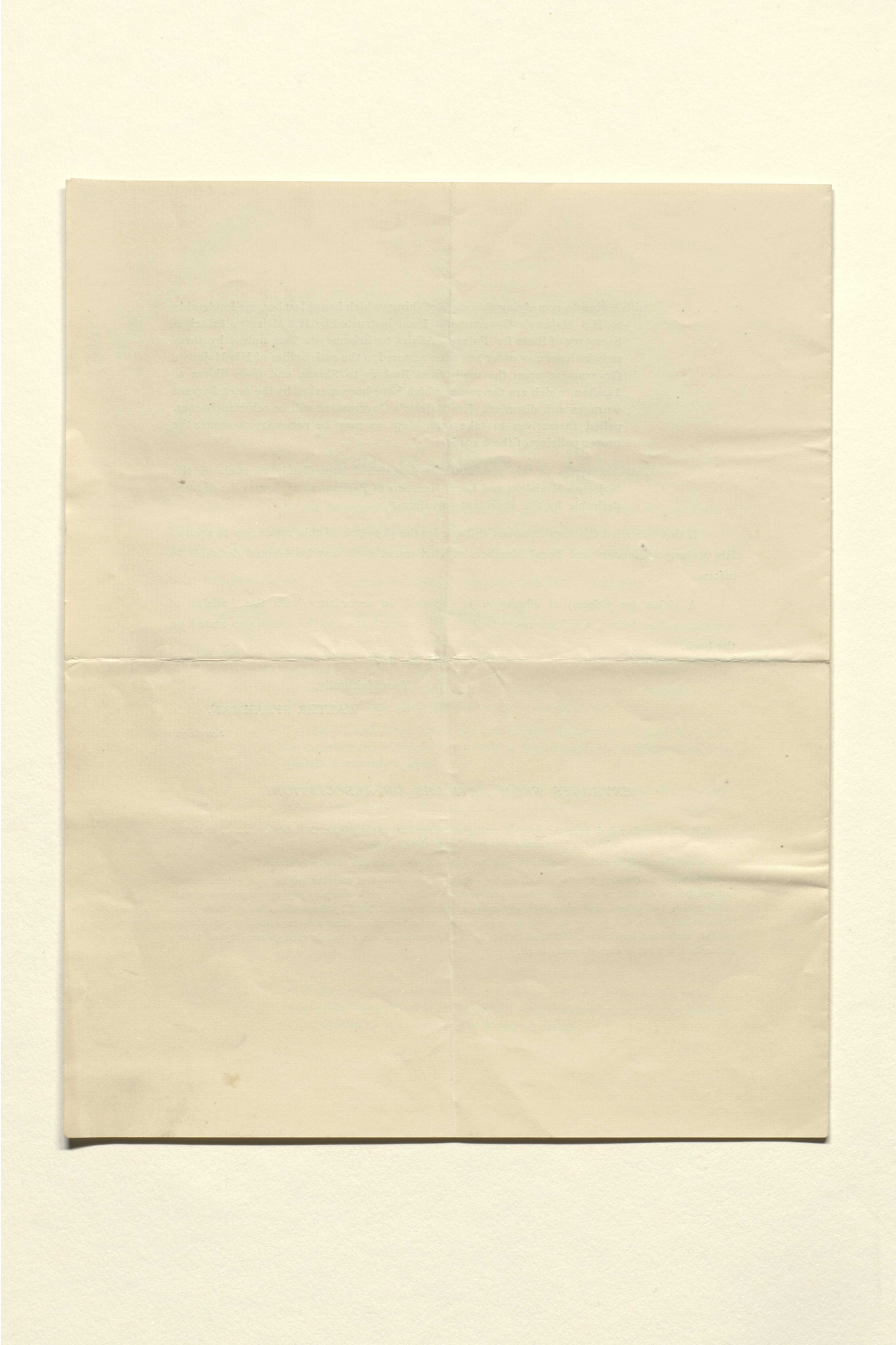

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(20)

Proposed Scheme of Railways in Persia, and a through Railway from the Mediterranean to India.

At the present time several British and Russian railway projects are being put forward for railways in Persia, and it is important to study these in their relation to the defence of India, as lines now sanctioned on a mistaken trace cannot afterwards be rectified and the effect on India may be very serious.

In considering railway projects in Persia the natural features of the country count for a great deal as much of the country is so mountainous and difficult as to be impossible for railway construction at all. Central Persia is a plateau some 4,000 feet above sea level the borders of which are formed by steep ranges of hills which descend abruptly towards the Persian Gulf on one side and towards the Tigris Valley on another - Access is difficult through this fringe of hills at all points, especially in the South West. The track from Bushire to Shiraz crosses a series of sharp rocky ridges; the Lynch road from Shuster to Ispahan traverses a difficult mountain country; although an easier route lies through Khorremabad to Burujird of which it is proposed to take advantage for a railway.

A route running along the coast East of Bushire has been proposed for a line but recent surveys shew that steep hills come down to the sea shore and this way would be most difficult.

In West Persia the main road from Kermanshah to

Baghdad

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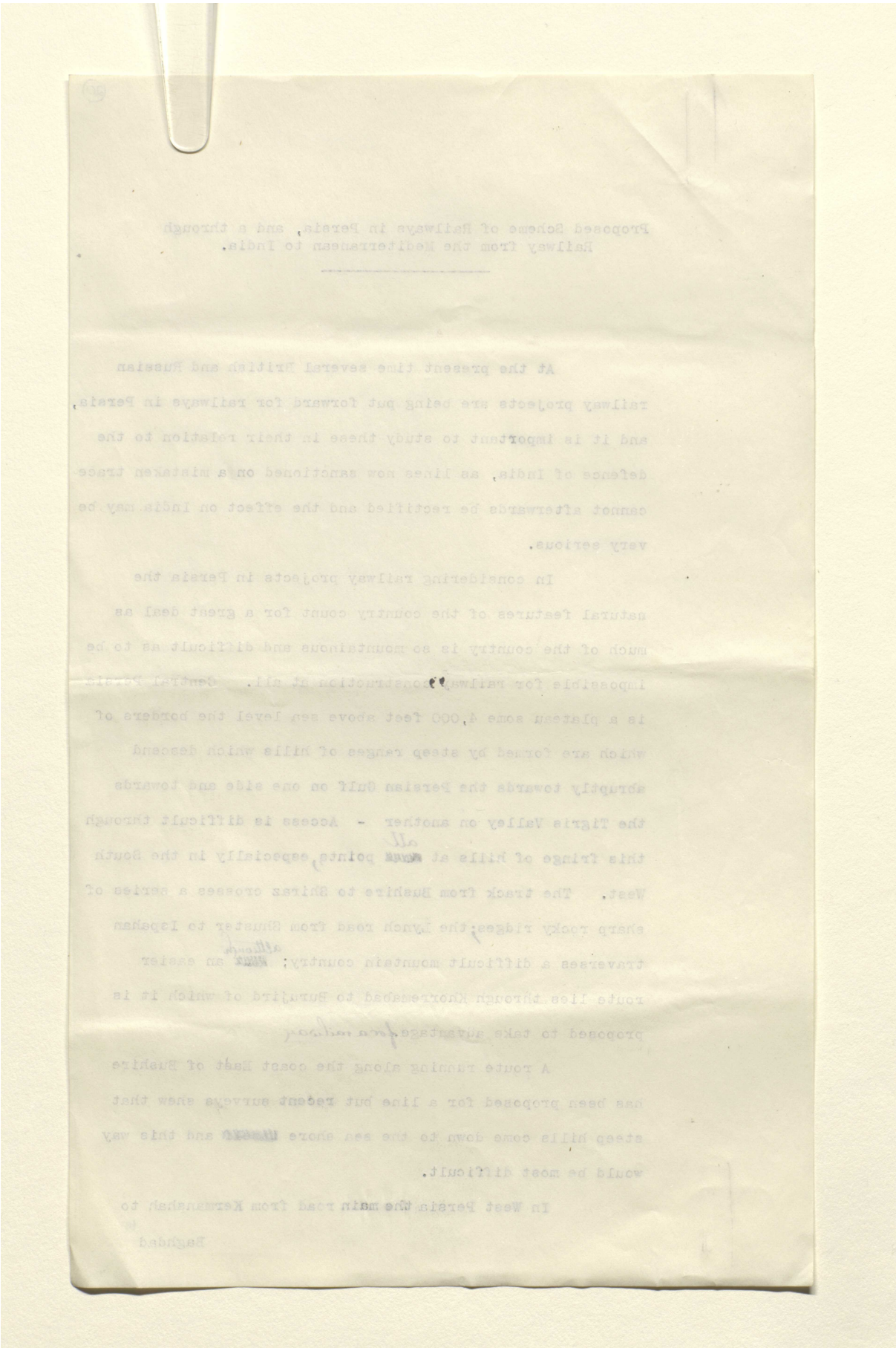

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(21)

Baghdad finds its way through a narrow gap, the ancient Gates of Zagros, to the plain at Khanikin, and close to this is another route through Mendali more suitable for railway construction.

In all the long line of the Turco-Persian frontier North of this, there is not a single practicable route for a railway except one along the valley of the Lesser Zab River to Suj Bulak in Persia.

At other points the frontier hills rise very steeply and form an impassable barrier.

Russian Railway Projects.

Several projects of Russian railway construction in Persia have been put forward, one general scheme being called a Russian Trans-Persian Railway proposed to join up with the Indian railways at Nushki.

Such a project may be at once ruled out of consideration as in time of war it would certainly prove most dangerous to the security of our Indian defensive line and afford a ready gateway by which the Russians might enter.

It may indeed be taken for granted that any connection between Persia and India must be towards Karachi running within striking distance of the sea coast.

The following Russian lines are proposed in North Persia, given roughly in their order of precedence :-

(1) From a point on present line near Baku along the shore of the Caspian to Resht then up to the plateau at Kazvin and so to Teheran. Such a line would form the most direct connection between Russia and the Persian capital.

(2)

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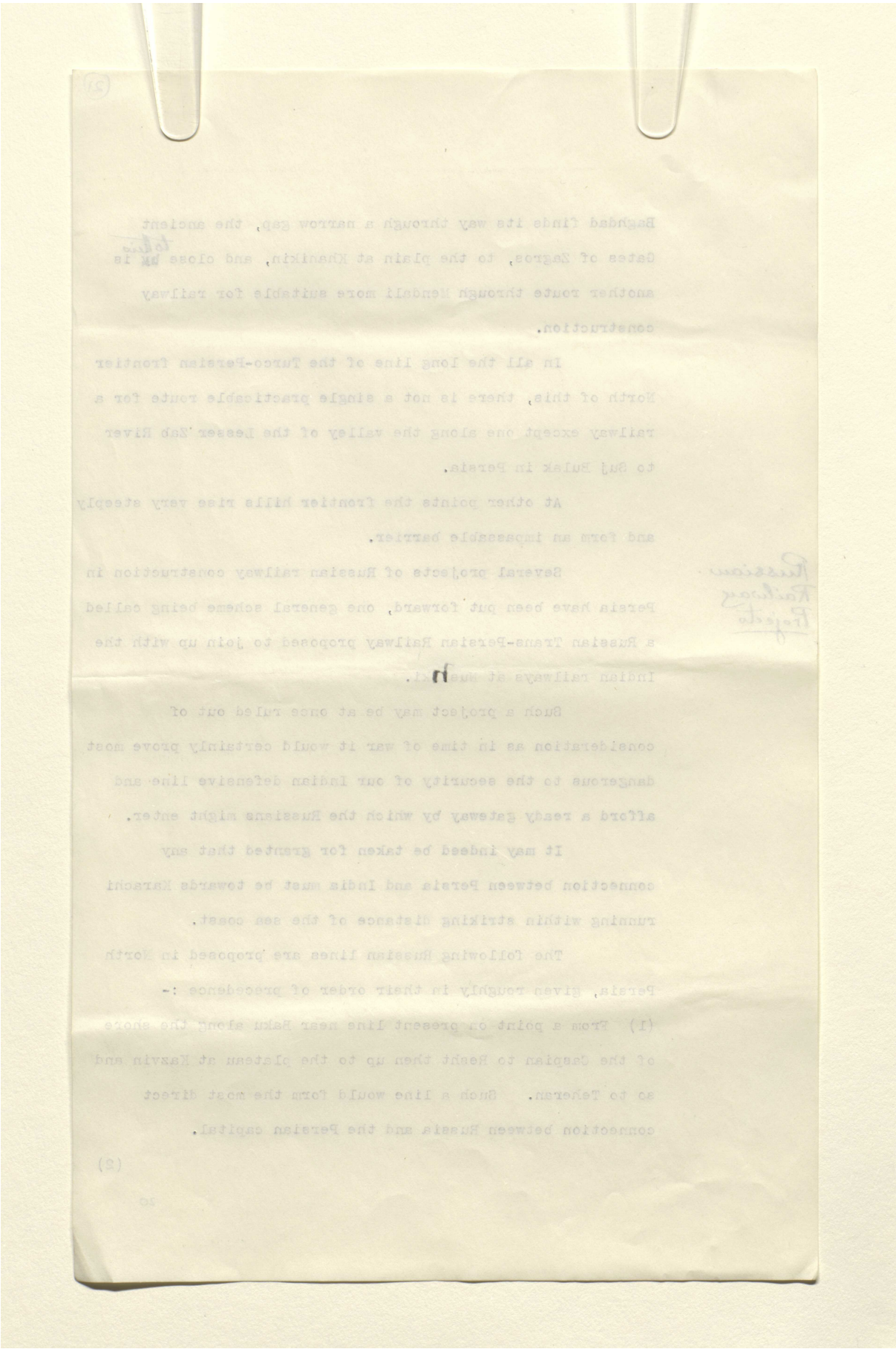

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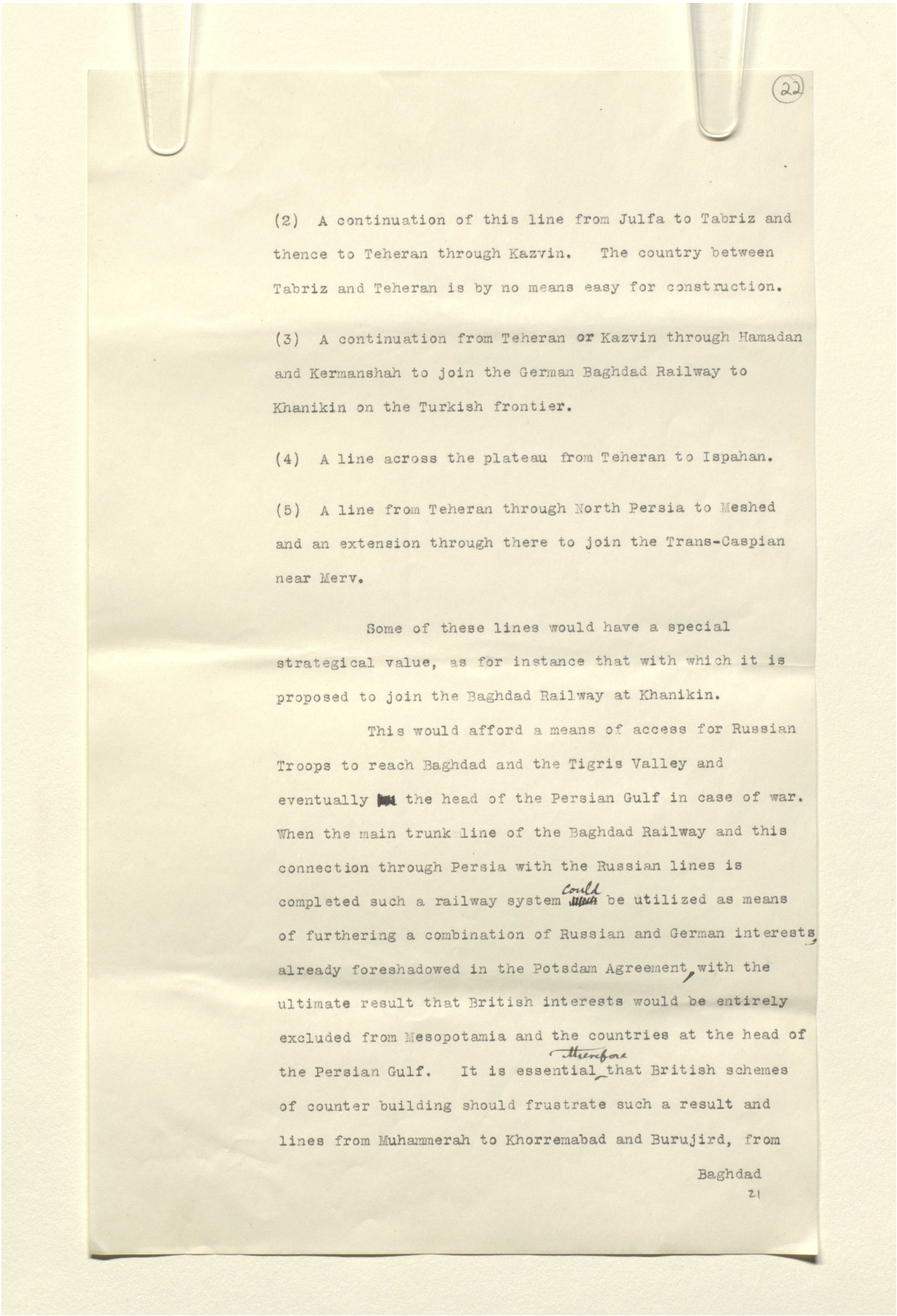

(22)

(2) A continuation of this line from Julfa to Tabriz and thence to Teheran through Kazvin. The country between Tabriz and Teheran is by no means easy for construction.

(3) A continuation from Teheran or Kazvin through Hamadan and Kermanshah to join the German Baghdad Railway to Khanikin on the Turkish frontier.

(4) A line across the plateau from Teheran to Ispahan.

(5) A line from Teheran through North Persia to Meshed and an extension through there to join the Trans-Caspian near Merv.

Some of these lines would have a special strategical value, as for instance that with which it is proposed to join the Baghdad Railway at Khanikin.

This would afford a means of access for Russian Troops to reach Baghdad and the Tigris Valley and eventually the head of the Persian Gulf in case of war. When the main trunk line of the Baghdad Railway and this connection through Persia with the Russian lines is completed such a railway system could be utilized as means of furthering a combination of Russian and German interests already foreshadowed in the Potsdam Agreement, with the ultimate result that British interests would be entirely excluded from Mesopotamia and the countries at the head of the Persian Gulf. It is essential therefore that British schemes of counter building should frustrate such a result and lines from Muhammerah to Khorremabad and Burujird, from

Baghdad

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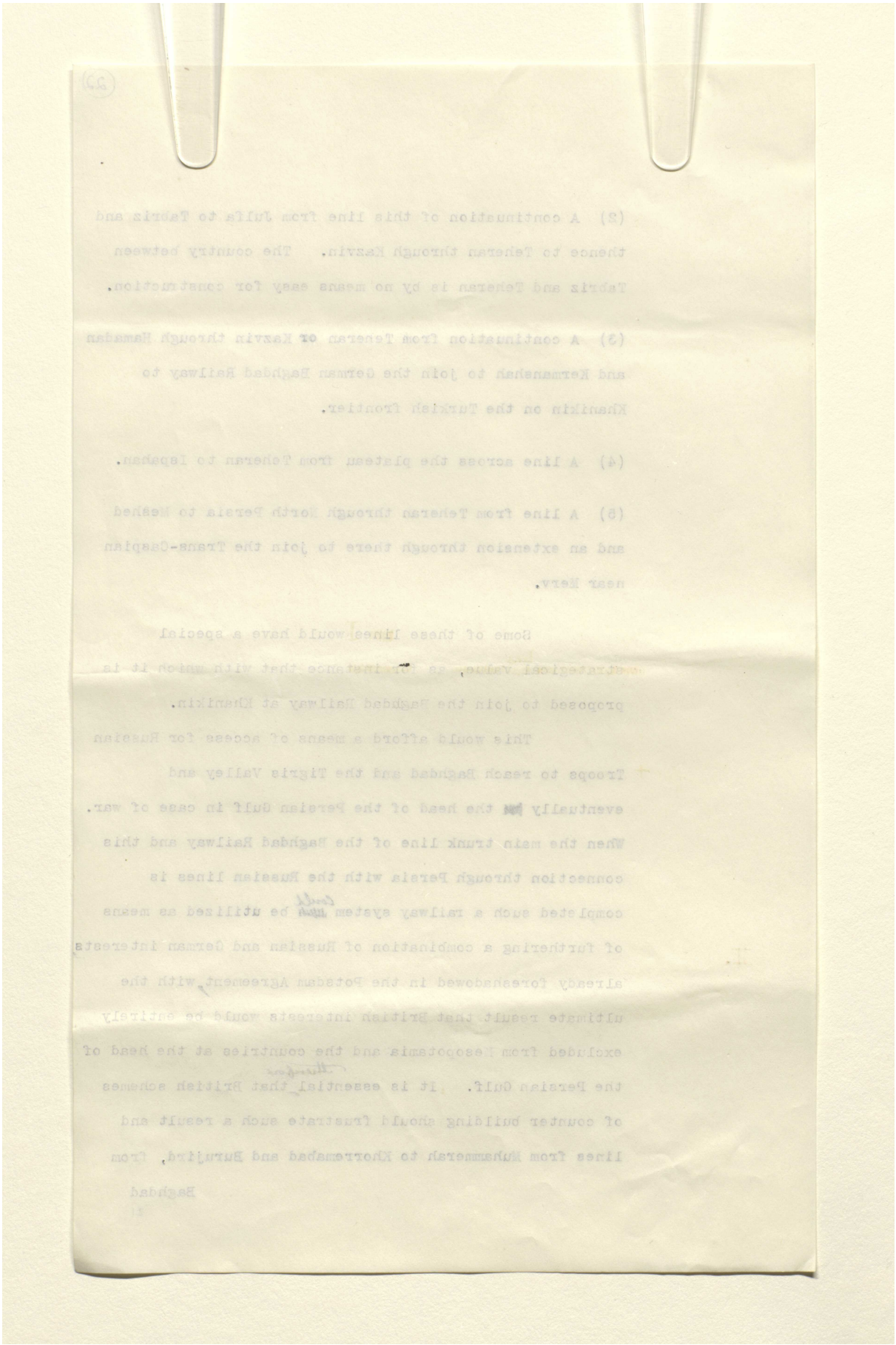

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Baghdad to Kermanshah by Mendali and from Busra to Mosul would be the most effective means of accomplishing this.

Another Russian proposed railway which might have a special strategical value is that from Teheran through Moshed to join the present Trans-Caspian line near Merv.

This might be utilized in war as an alternative to the Trans-Caspian railway to bring troops from Central Russia round the South of the Caspian, avoiding the transhipment across that sea.

Proposed British Projects

I. Turning now to proposed British lines in South Persia - the first and perhaps most important is that from Muhammerah on the Shatt-el-Arab through Shuster and Khorremabad to Burujird. Its strategical importance lies in its relation to the proposed Russian line from the North through Kermanshah to Khanikin where it joins a branch of the German Baghdad line. for the Southern line would afford a means of striking across the Russo-German project and consolidating British influence in the Bakhtiari country and South West Persia besides developing commercially the most fertile part of the country, the ancient Elam.

II. Another line which could be built at the same time would run from Baghdad to Kermanshah through Mendali with a continuation from Kermanshah to Burujird.

This would obviously supplant the Russo-German line through Khanikin, but the latter route would be practically impossible for a railway owing to the steep ascent (3,000 feet in 10 miles) from the plain to the plateau, while a

line

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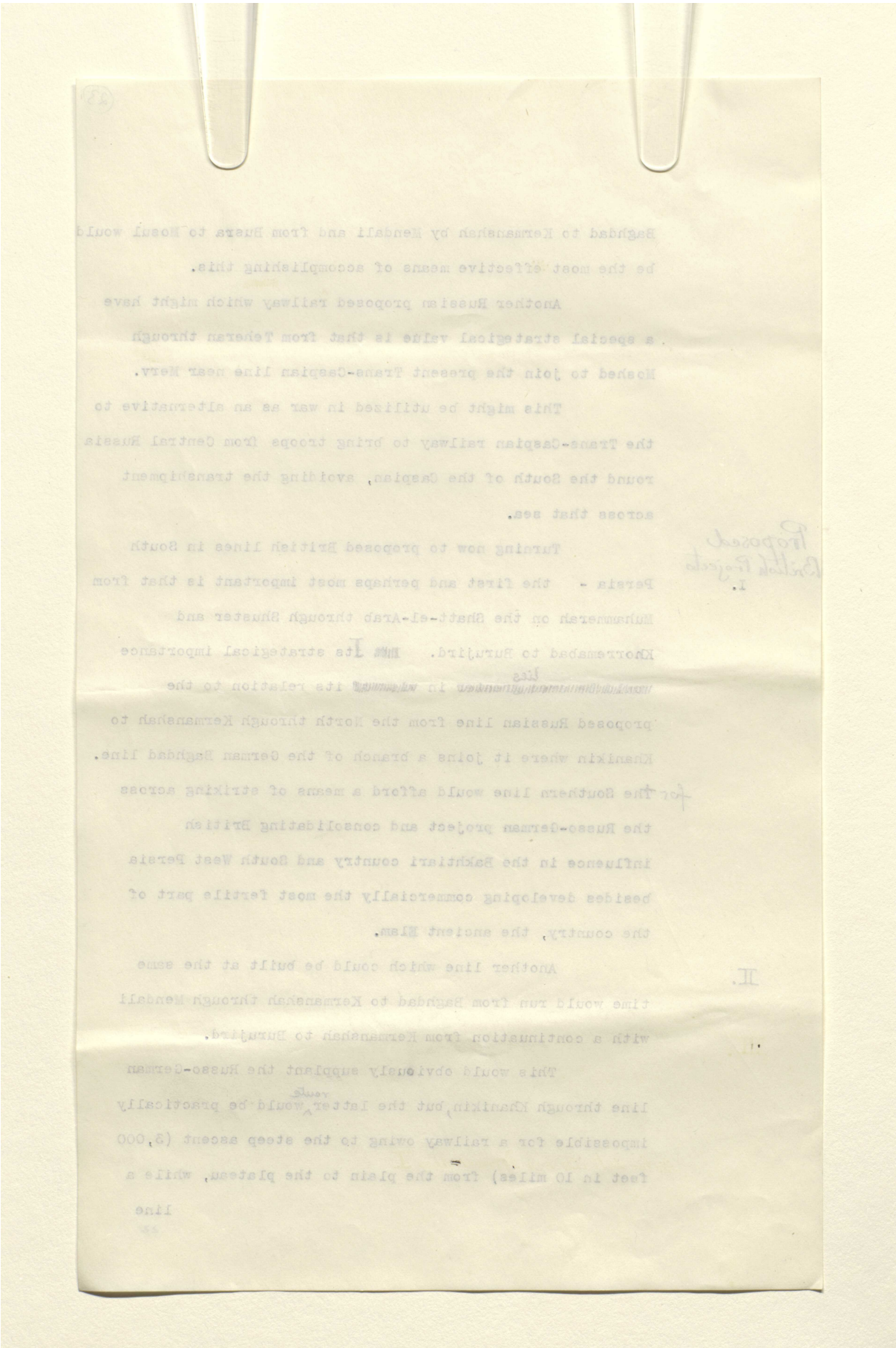

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line through Mendali would have an easy gradient 3,090 feet in 48 miles.‡ The construction of these two lines in South West Persia would neutralize the Russian lines in the North and go far to maintain the integrity of Persia. They would obviate the danger of an Agreement between Russia and Germany to jointly absorb West Persia and the adjoining districts of Eastern Turkey to the probable exclusion of British interests.

Kermanshah is the most important strategical point in West Persia as it stands at the head of several passes leading towards Baghdad and the Gulf. It would be advisable therefore that the railway routes towards it should be under British control and the place would then stand as an outpost covering the passes into Mesopotamia from Central Persia and the strong mountain positions near the place could be held if necessary to prevent aggression against our position in Mesopotamia and at the head of the Gulf.

The possession of the Mendali route to Kermanshah and a line from Mohammerah to Burujird with a connecting link between the town would give us an extremely strong position in the Kermanshah hills on the flank of any Russian movement in Central Persia.

III. On the same principle of building lines North from the Persian Gulf, another important line would run from Bunder Abbas to Kerman a town within the British zone.

‡ for details see Appendix I

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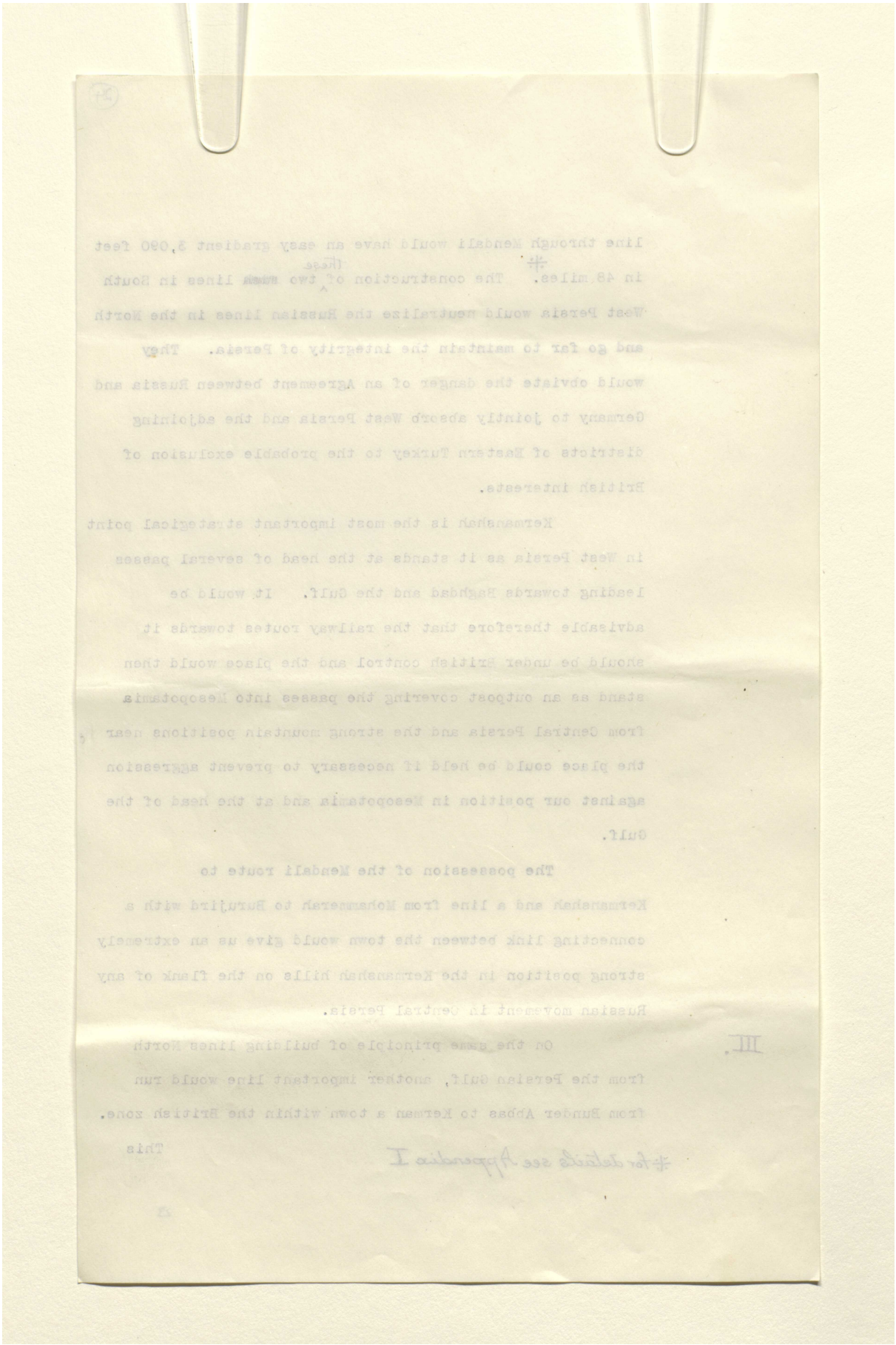

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This would be strategically important to Indian defence as it would afford a means of bringing troops on the flank of a Russian advance towards India on the Herat-Kandahar line.

IV. A railway also could be made without much difficulty from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz through Lar and Jahrum. This line would avoid the great difficulty of the ascent from the coast to the interior plateau as it avoids the principal ranges and has been reported as quite easy*.

This line might be continued from Shiraz following the caravan route to Ispahan,

V. And further to complete the connection with the line already proposed to Burujird a continuation could be made from Ispahan to Burujird along an open undulating country+ by an easy route passing many villages.

It has also been suggested that the trace of the line should run from Bunder Abbas through Kerman and Yezd to Ispahan, but there are several important objections which may be urged against this.

In

*R.Geographical Journal Vol. XXXI p.168. A journey from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz by Lieut. A.Wilson, 32nd Sikhs. He states that "between Bunder Abbas & Shiraz the road traverses valley after valley crossing from one to the other by a series of low saddles which would offer very little difficulty to an engineer. A good carriage road could be constructed very cheaply; whether it would pay as a commercial speculation is a point for experts to determine. The opinion of the writer is that it would not pay, although a railway very possibly would do so."

+See Journal R.Geographical Society - The Bakhtiari Hills by Lieut.Col. H.A.Sawyer & Reconnaissance Survey 1890 - 8 miles to an inch.

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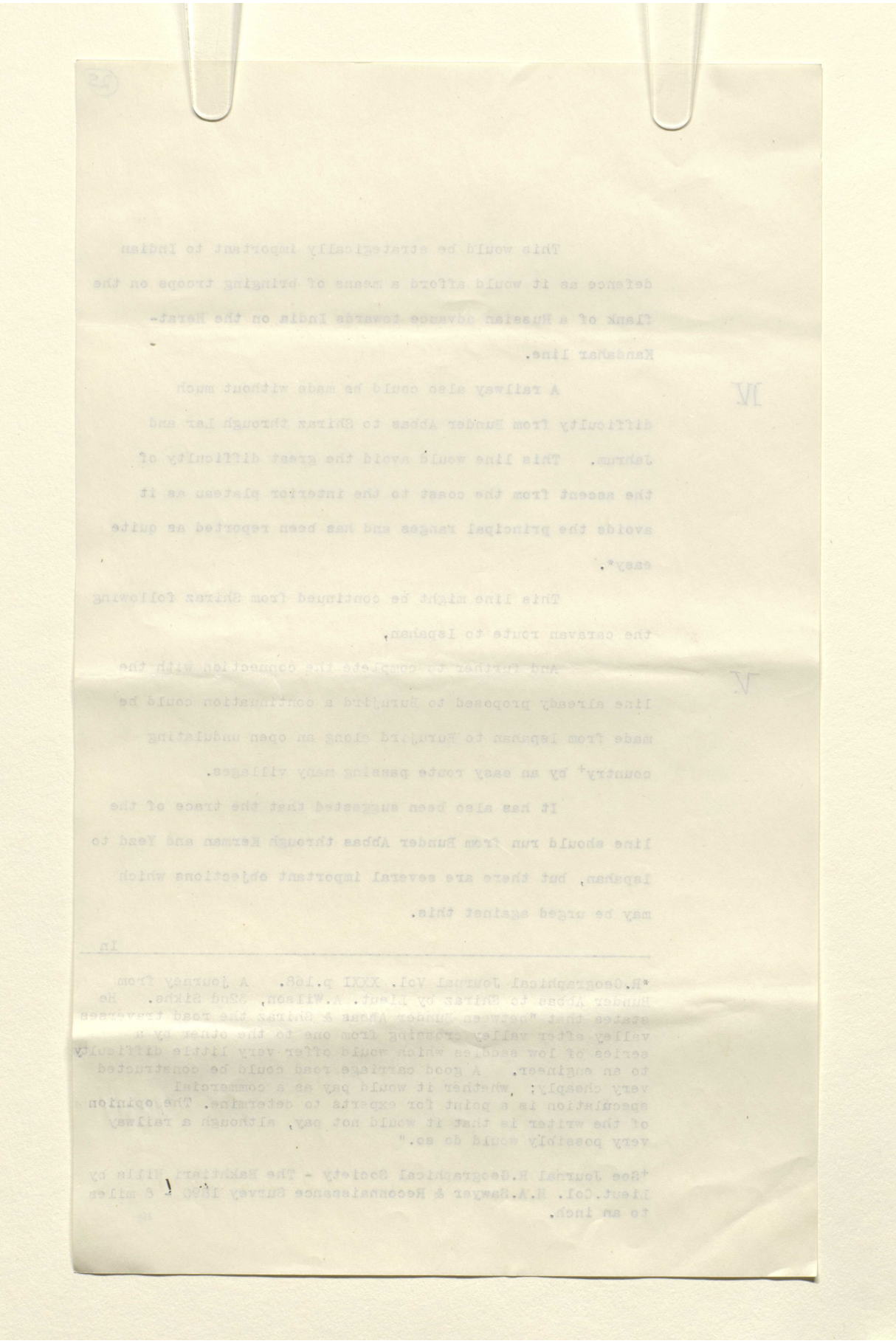

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In the first place it would provide a means of bringing Russian troops direct to Kerman and although there would be no further railway towards Nushki, it would place them within striking distance of Seistan one of our important outworks of defence in this direction.

In fact, assuming such a line were made, the Russians would then be provided with two excellent railway lines of advance towards the Indian frontier, one that now open through Merv, and the other up to Kerman.

By taking the line from Bunder Abbas through Shiraz to Ispahan, this danger would be avoided. Also Shiraz, with the plains surrounding it, is a more productive and fertile country† than Yezd, a town on the edge of the great desert with less chances of development.

Then again the trace through Shiraz is far more direct from East to West than that through Yezd would be.

At Ispahan the Russian line from the North would first be encountered and it is proposed to select this town as the meeting point of the various gauges. The Russian gauge of 5 feet from the North would meet the Indian Gauge of 5 ft. 6 in. coming up from Bunder Abbas, while the ordinary continental gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. used throughout Turkey would come in on the West.

VI To complete the connection with India, a line could be made from Karachi to Bunder Abbas through Panjgur and Bampur this being fairly easy country and not far from the coast.

It

† see Lieut Wilson's report in R. Geo: Journal, already alluded to

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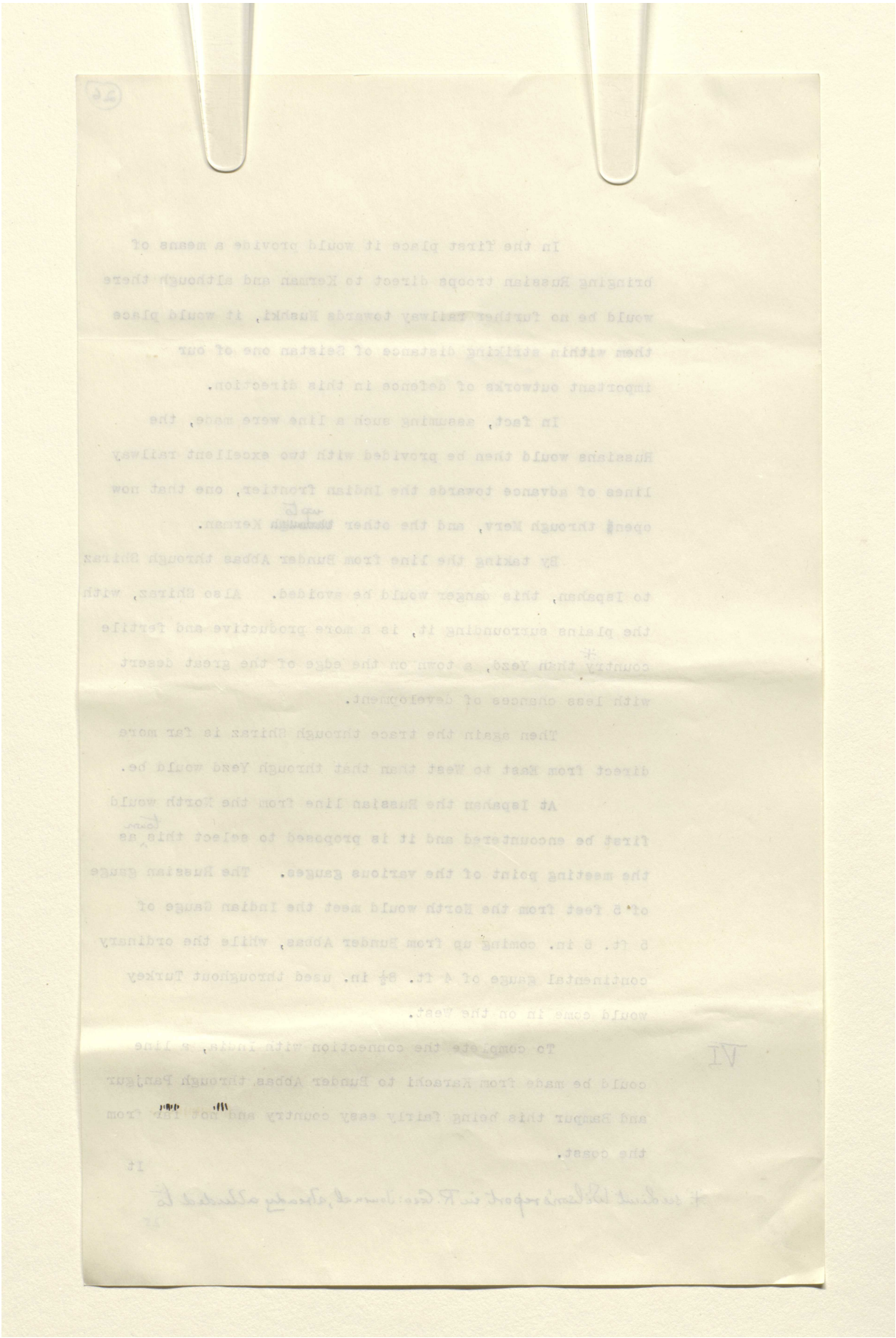

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It may be suggested that a coastal line should be made from Bunder Abbas along the coast to Bushire and thence to Mohammerah but there are many natural difficulties in the way as the mountains reach close to the shore* rendering construction very costly. Besides which such a line would avoid the chief centres of the country and leave them entirely to the Russians with consequent loss of prestige to us in Oriental eyes.

Moreover a coastal railway would commercially be of small value and could not recoup the large cost of construction involved.

The question of the exact meeting point of the various gauges is one of very great importance both politically and strategically, because firstly there is no doubt that political influence must inevitably tend to follow the gauge and strategically because the rolling stock of the Northern roads for example could be used for an advance towards India, if the point approached too closely to our frontier.

Ispahan has been selected as the meeting point of the gauges because the town was the ancient capital and is geographically the central point of Persia so that neither Russia nor England could claim an undue advantage by having it as their principal

---

*See sheets 10, 17, and 18 of Indian Government Map "India and adjacent countries". 1/1,000,000 - 1909

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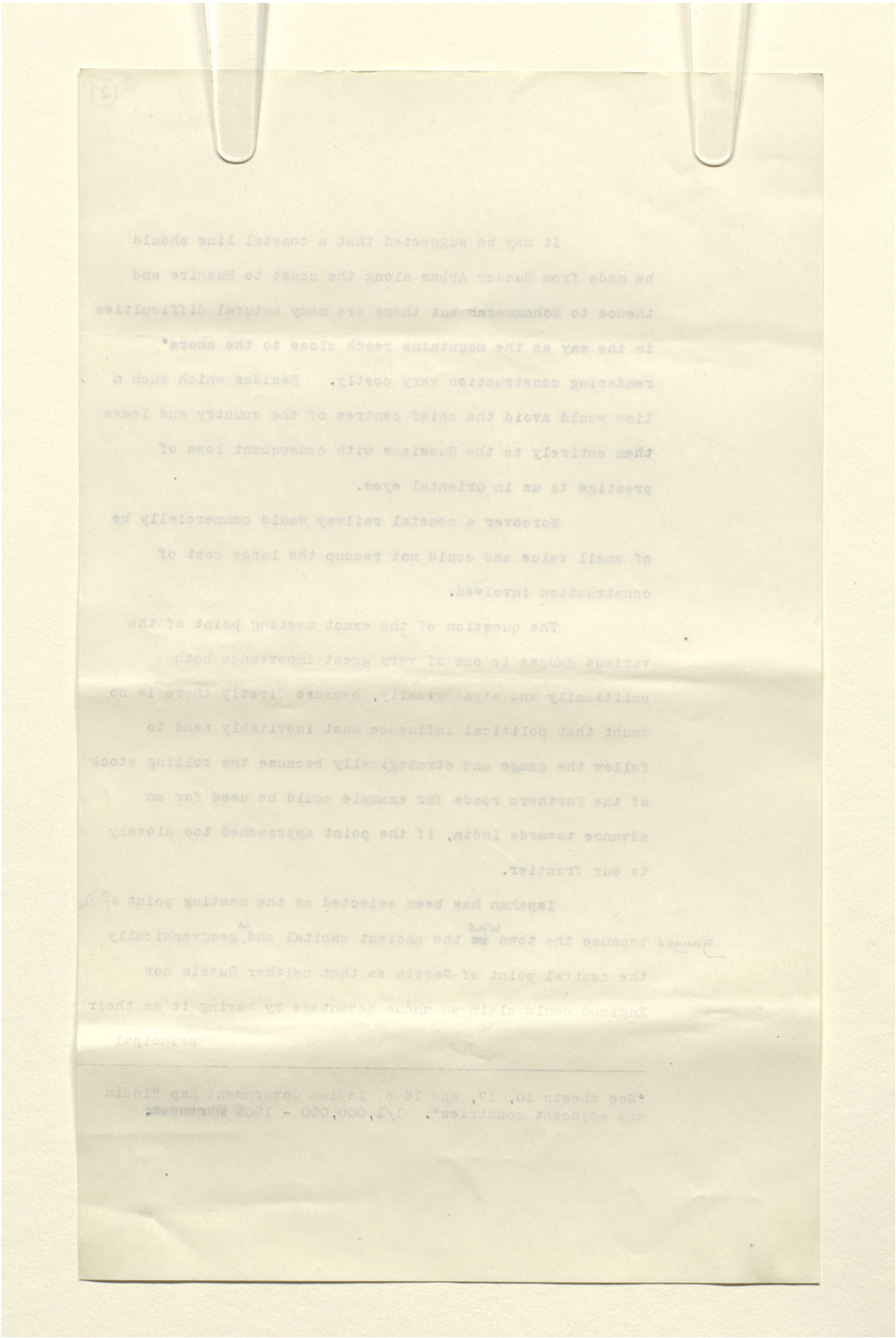

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principal station.

It may be urged that Russian troops on an emergency might be expected to reach Ispahan before troops from India could reach the same point and that the Indian rolling stock then captured might be utilized for further operations Eastward. But, as the line is designed to pass through Bunder Abbas, a point readily accessible to our troops and fleet it would be only on the section between Bunder Abbas and Ispahan that such danger would exist, and this could be overcome by registration and limiting the rolling stock on this section as is done on all European frontier lines.

As Russian influence might be expected to follow their gauge, it were best kept as far from the Indian frontier as possible and as Ispahan is on the edge of the Russian Zone and is the centre of the country it would seem the most suitable point, even if it were not possible to restore the town to its ancient position as the capital of the country.

Such a series of British lines in Southern Persia would be the surest means of safeguarding the integrity of Persia or at least preventing its absorption by one Power.

Through Line from the Mediterranean to India

It is evident that while this series of Persian lines are under discussion a continuation Westward to some point on the Mediterranean will become essential for through traffic from India.

The German Baghdad Railway makes a sweep to the North and does not afford the most direct route for such traffic.

The

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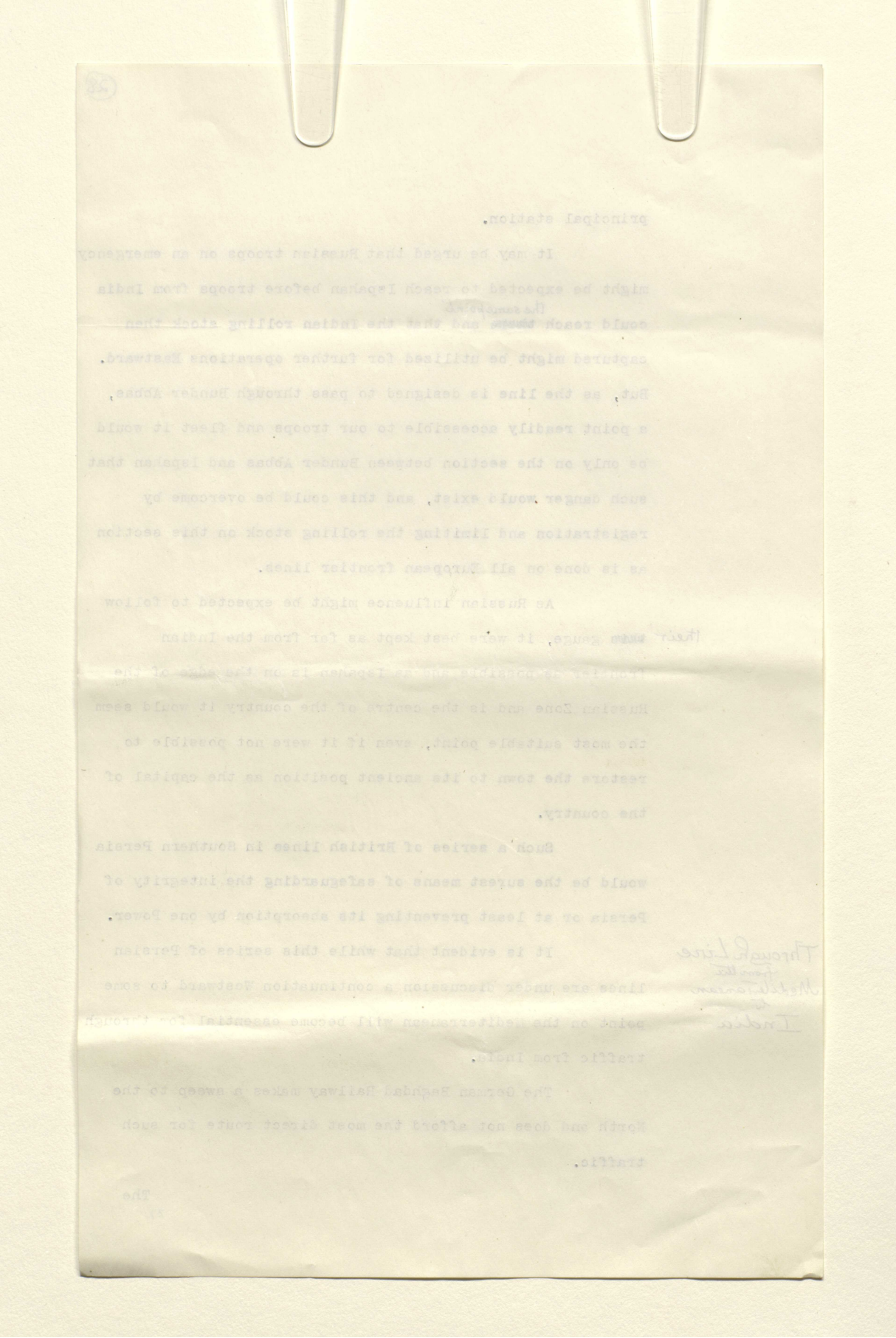

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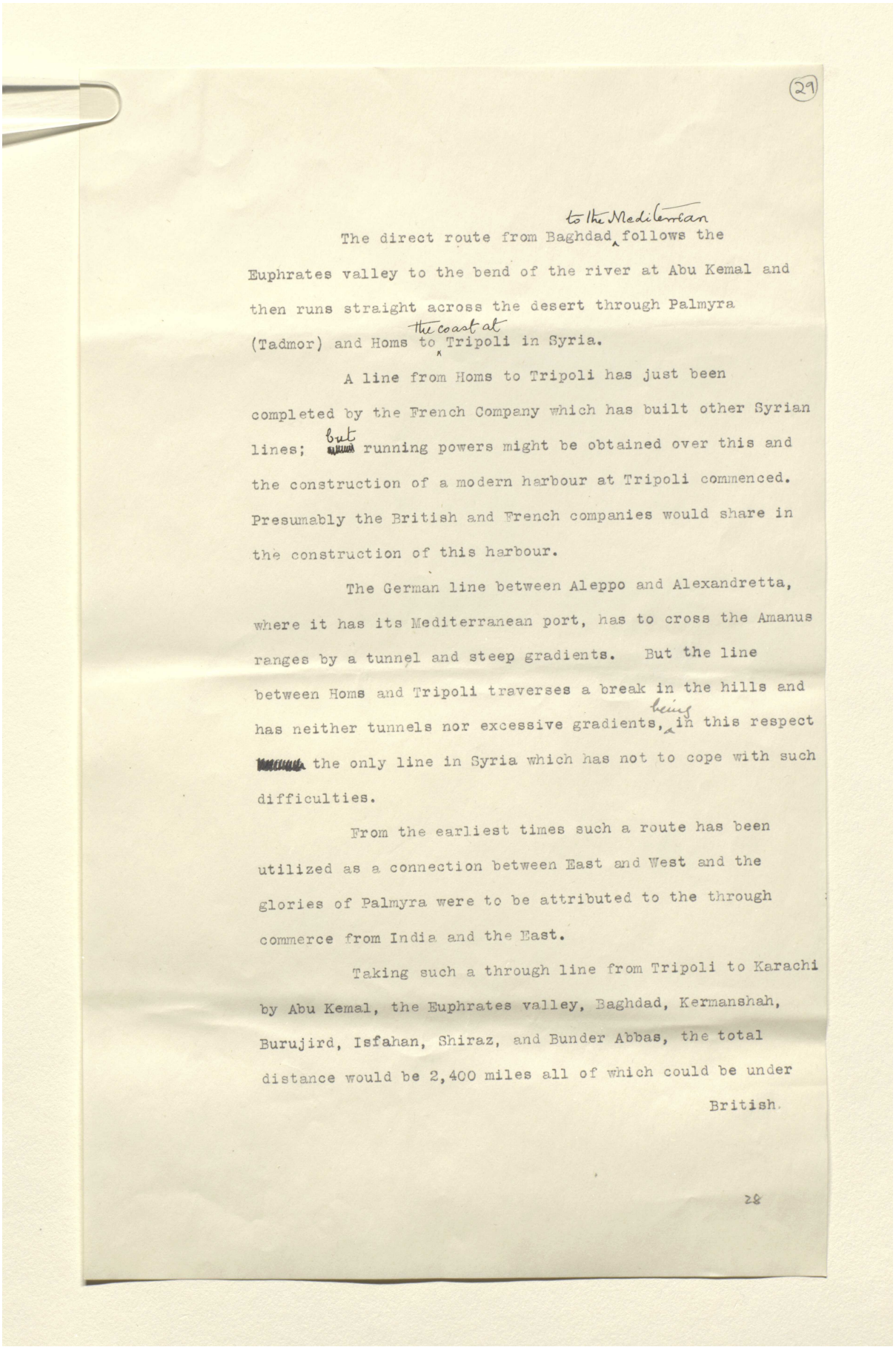

(29)

The direct route from Baghdad to the Mediterranean follows the Euphrates valley to the bend of the river at Abu Kemal and then runs straight across the desert through Palmyra (Tadmor) and Homs to the coast at Tripoli in Syria.

A line from Homs to Tripoli has just been completed by the French Company which has built other Syrian lines; but running powers might be obtained over this and the construction of a modern harbour at Tripoli commenced. Presumably the British and French companies would share in the construction of this harbour.

The German line between Aleppo and Alexandretta, where it has its Mediterranean port, has to cross the Amanus ranges by a tunnel and steep gradients. But the line between Homs and Tripoli traverses a break in the hills and has neither tunnels nor excessive gradients, being in this respect the only line in Syria which has not to cope with such difficulties.

From the earliest times such a route has been utilized as a connection between East and West and the glories of Palmyra were to be attributed to the through commerce from India and the East.

Taking such a through line from Tripoli to Karachi by Abu Kemal, the Euphrates valley, Baghdad, Kermanshah, Burujird, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Bunder Abbas, the total distance would be 2,400 miles all of which could be under British.

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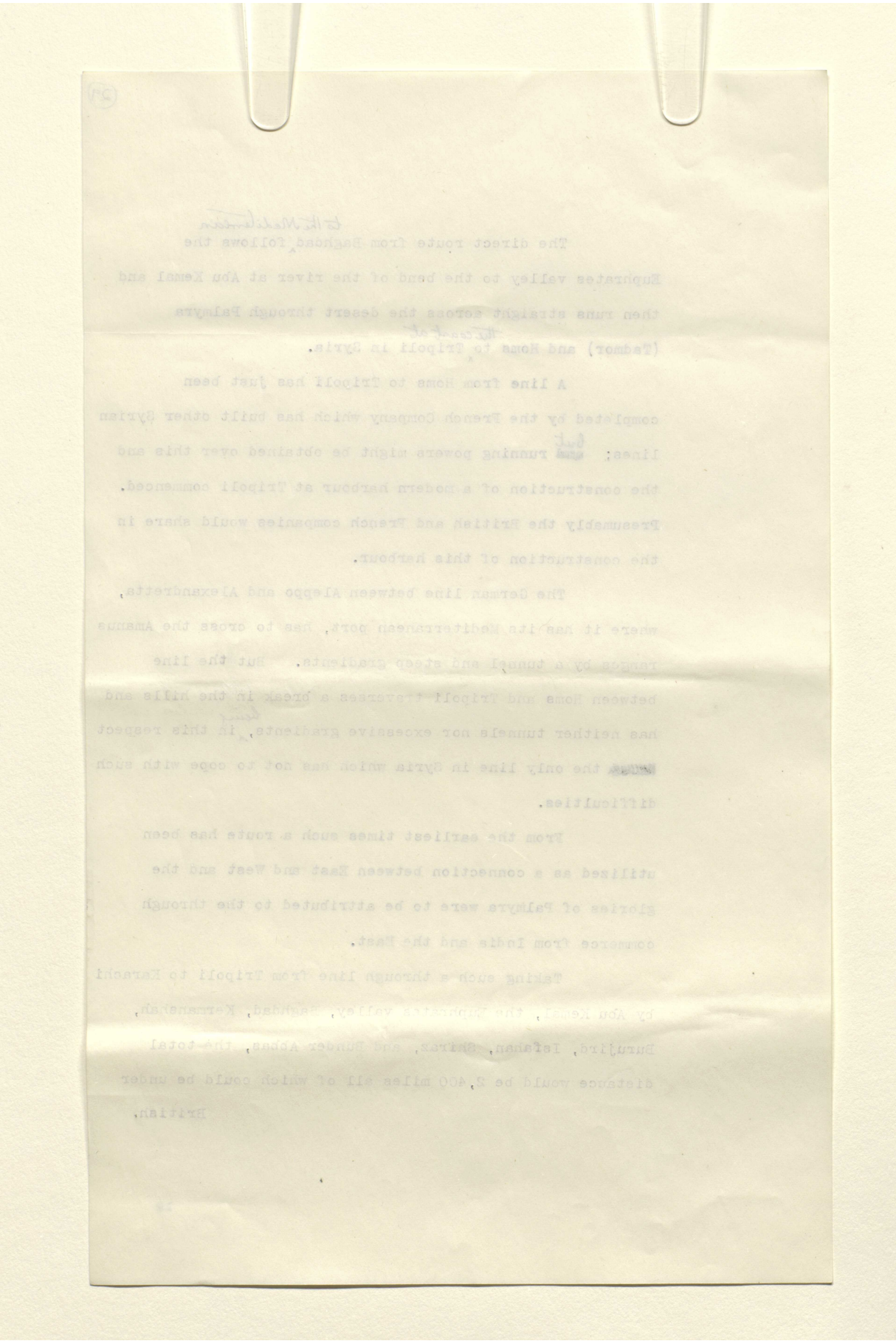

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British control as regards freights.

From Tripoli fast steamers (25 knot speed) could convey passengers to Brindisi or Salonica.

This would provide a more rapid and satisfactory means of transport than by following the Baghdad Railway to Constantinople and passing through the Balkans and Central Europe, for the ascent through the Taurus Mountains to the Anatolian plateau with corresponding descent to Constantinople and the gradients through the Balkans would militate against rapid traffic.

Still this route through Constantinople would be open to travellers, as also a Russian connection from Isfahan through Teheran Baku and Central Russia to London.

It is a mistake to suppose however that the Russian route must necessarily be the shortest to India and must therefore be selected for the Indian mail from London.

Tracing the various routes on a general map of Asia and Europe it will be seen that the Russian route is considerably longer, even if the Russian trains were speedier than they are at present (see attached map).

The times by the Tripoli Karachi route would be as follows :-

London to Brindisi	44 hours
Brindisi to Tripoli in Syria 1,260 miles in 25 knot steamer	52 hours
Tripoli in Syria to Karachi (2,400 miles at 30 miles an hour to include stoppages)	80 hours
	186 hours
	or just under 7 days.

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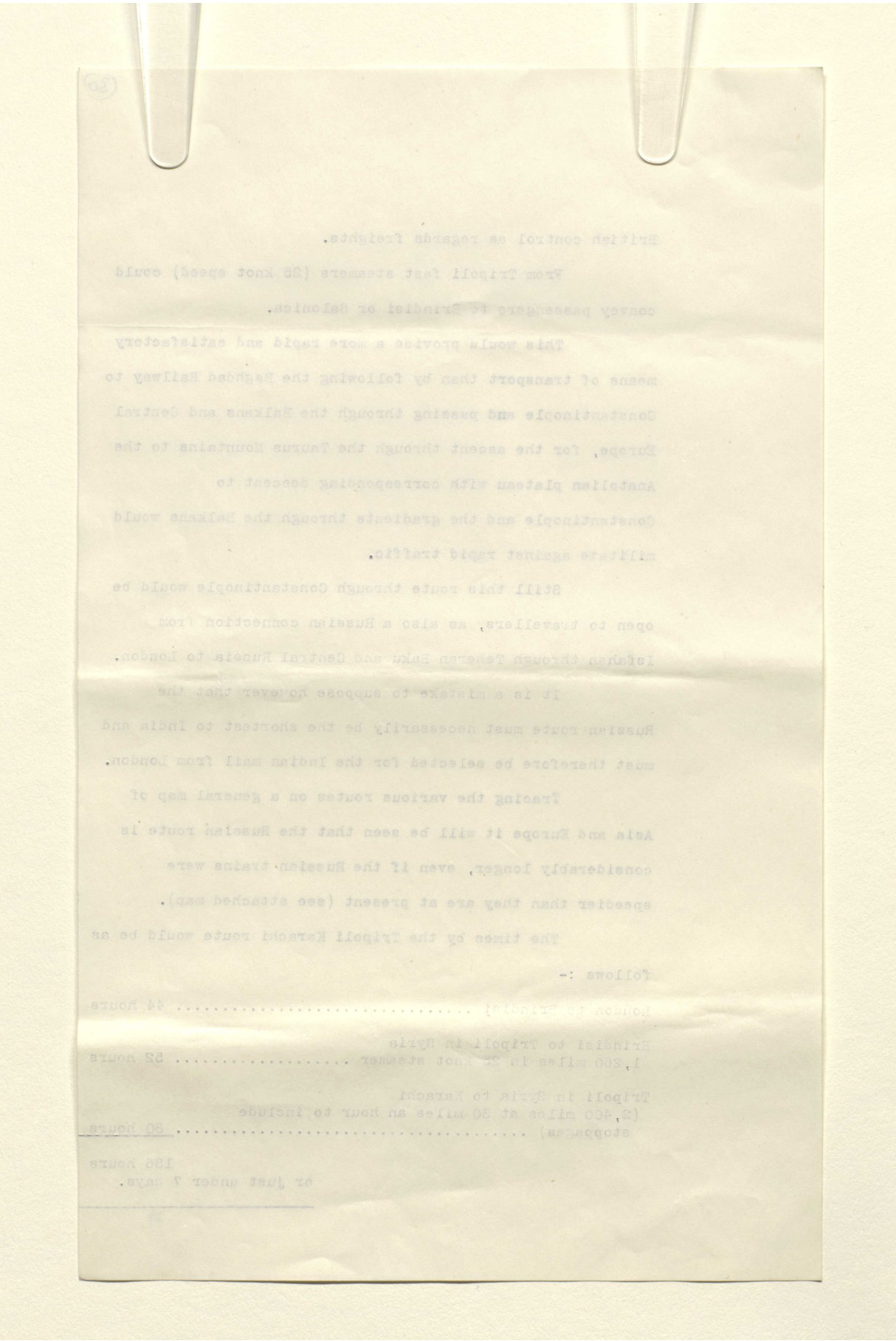

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This might be improved to 6 days if 40 m. an hour could be maintained on the railway and the London Brindisi line were improved.

Thus the total distance from London to Karachi could be covered in 6 or at most 7 days - a time with which the fastest P. & O. steamer could not hope to compete.

Also it would be most desirable to obtain complete control over the Busra - Baghdad section of the Baghdad Railway and continue it through Kerkuk to Mosul.

This would strike directly across any possible Russo-German projects of joining up their lines and interests; moreover, if a branch line were made from Kerkuk up the Lesser Zab valley, crossing the frontier at the Wazna Pass, a connection could be made with Urmia in North West Persia through the frontier territory recently annexed by Turkey.

This would provide a means of bringing up Turkish troops from the South to oppose Russian movements in the country South of Tabriz.

The Urmia district and the country along the Lesser Zab are fertile and such a branch line would also pay commercially.

To summarize these railway projects we would have the following four systems running North from the Persian Gulf into Persia :-

(1) BUNDER ABBAS to KERMAN.
(2) BUNDER ABBAS to SHIRAZ and ISFAHAN.
(3) MUHAMMERAH to BURUJIRD.
(4) BUSRA to BAGHDAD with a continuation by the LESSER ZAB VALLEY to URMIA.

30

The

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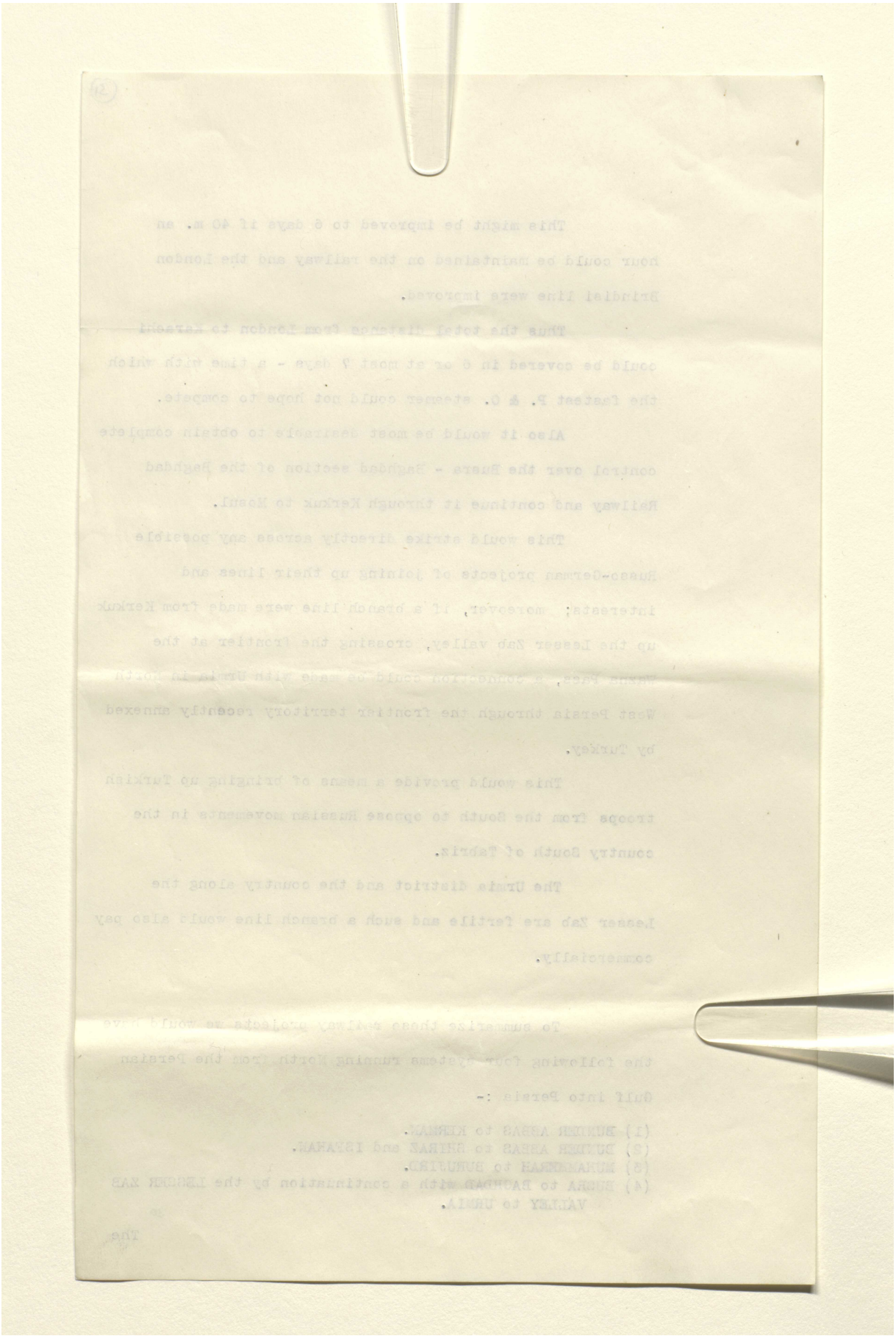

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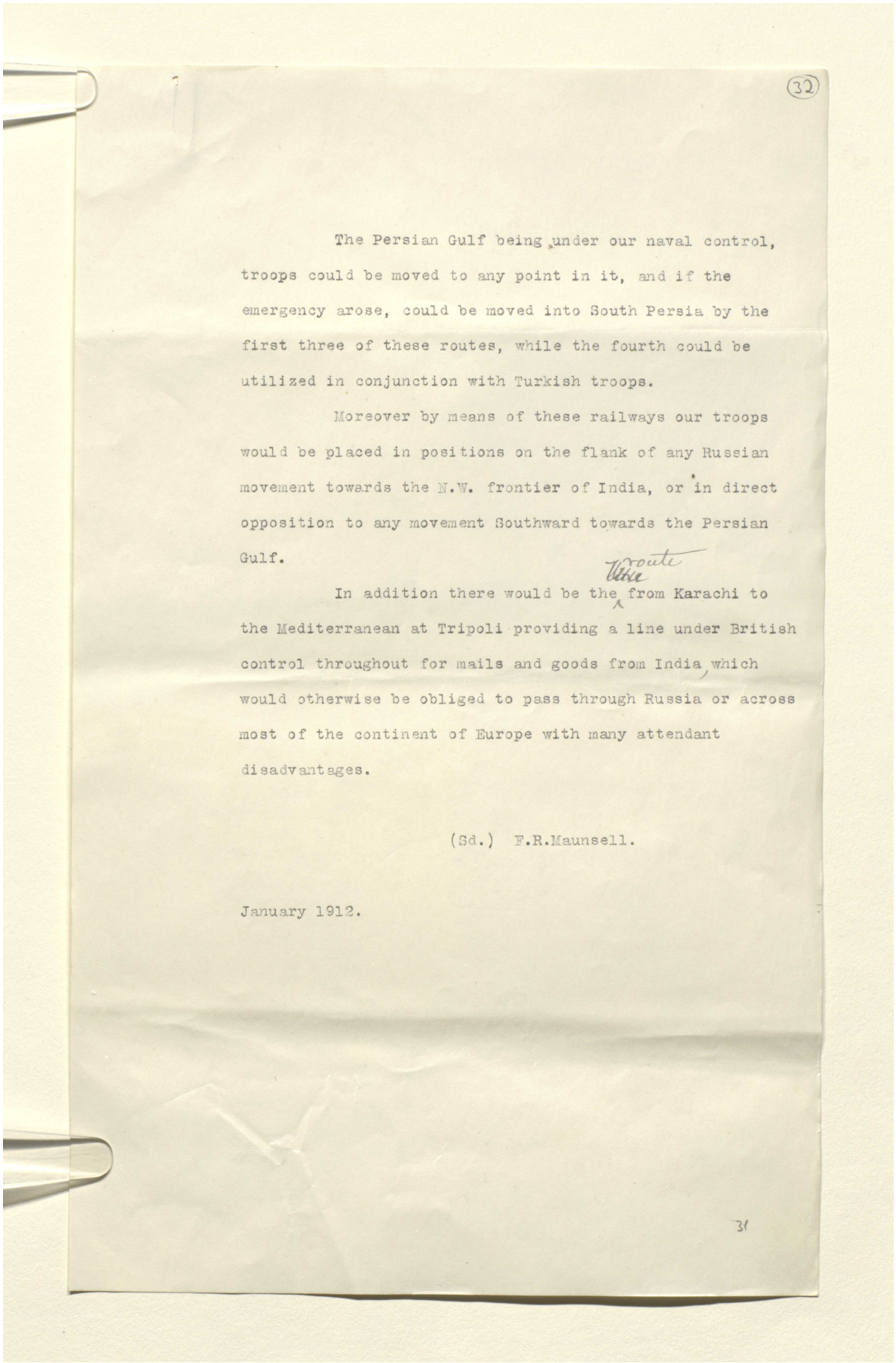

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The Persian Gulf being under our naval control, troops could be moved to any point in it, and if the emergency arose, could be moved into South Persia by the first three of these routes, while the fourth could be utilized in conjunction with Turkish troops.

Moreover by means of these railways our troops would be placed in positions on the flank of any Russian movement towards the N.W. frontier of India, or in direct opposition to any movement Southward towards the Persian Gulf.

In addition there would be the route from Karachi to the Mediterranean at Tripoli providing a line under British control throughout for mails and goods from India, which would otherwise be obliged to pass through Russia or across most of the continent of Europe with many attendant disadvantages.

(Sd.) F.R.Maunsell.

January 1912.

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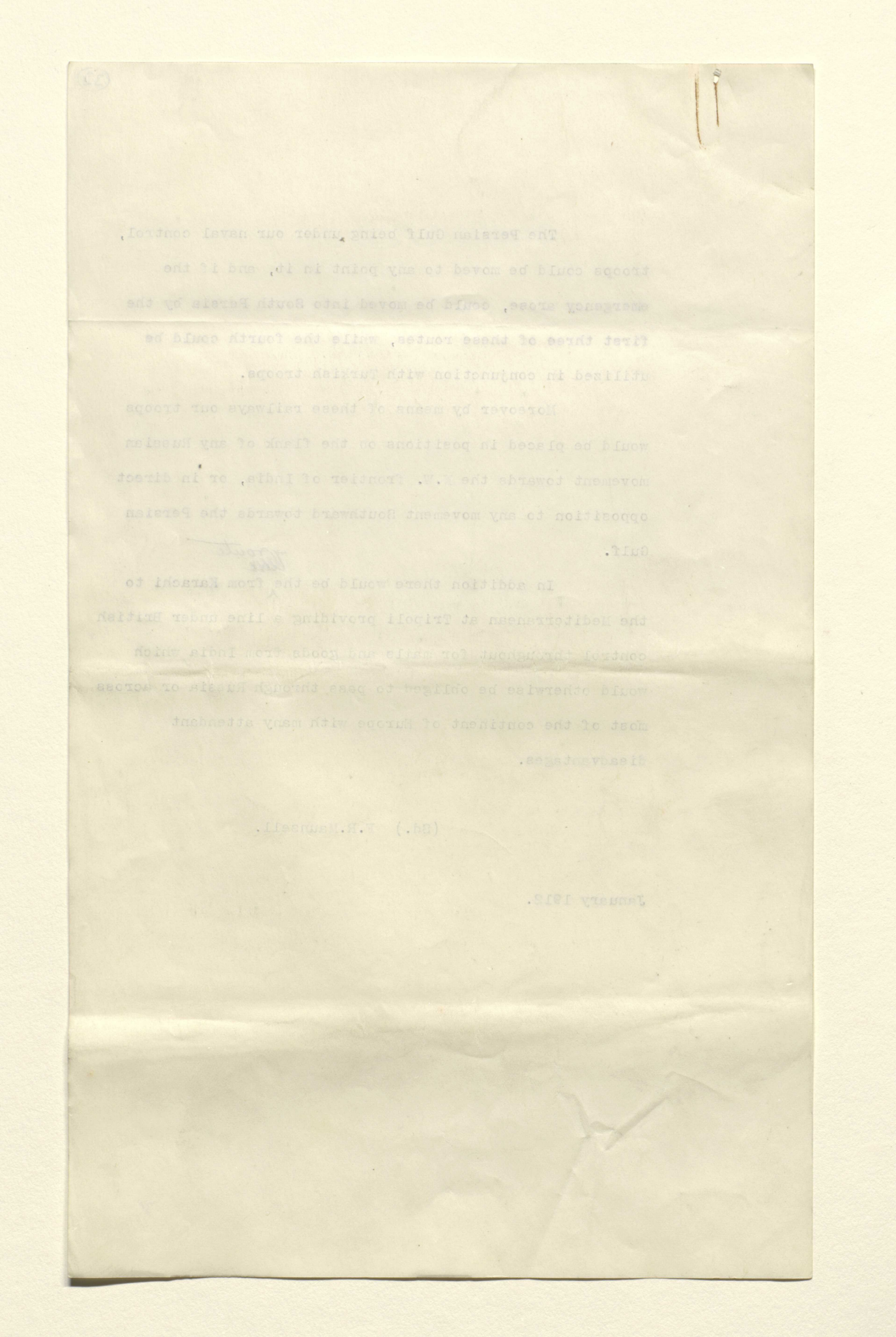

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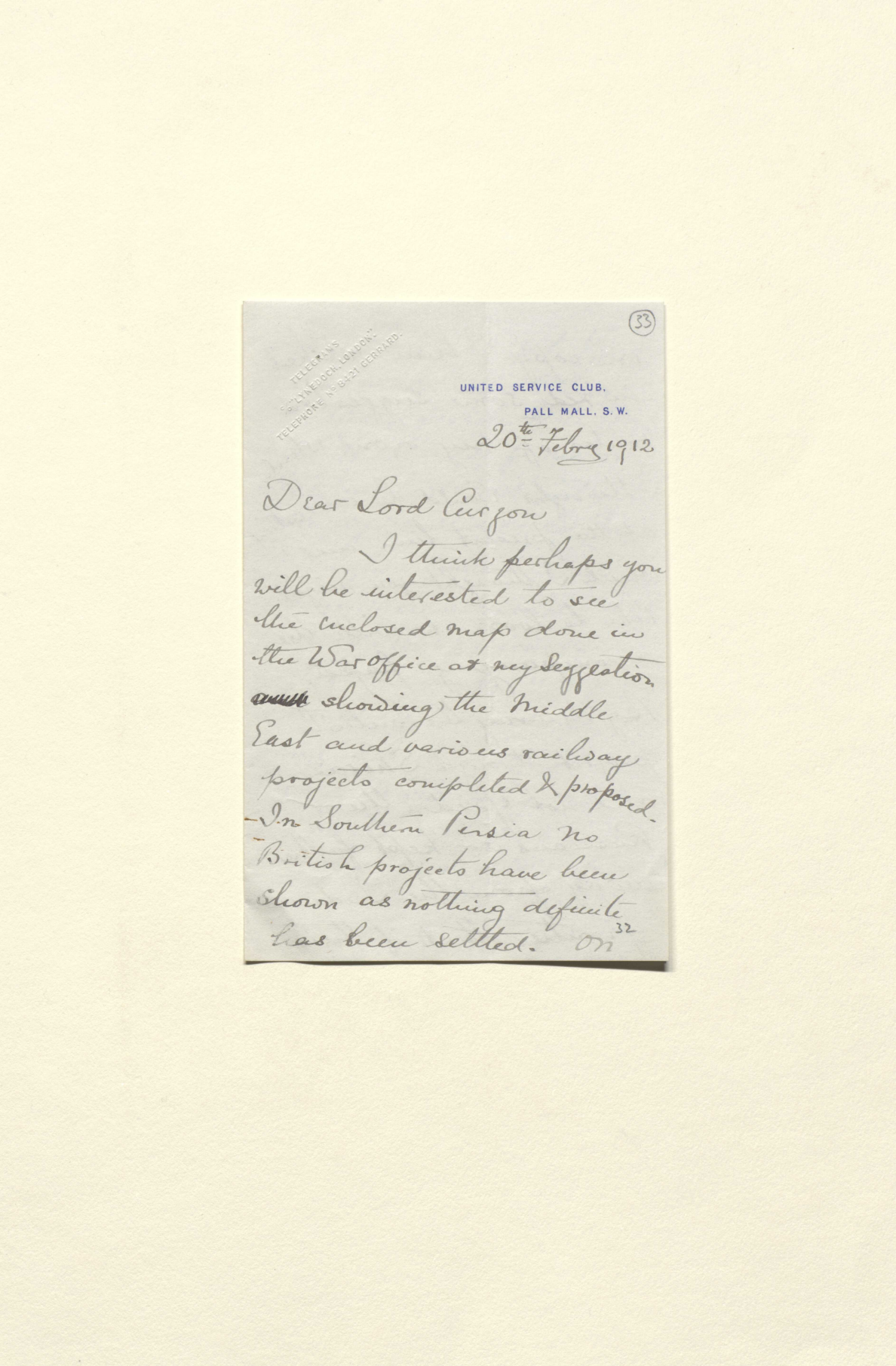

(33)

TELEGRAMS
"LYNEDOCH, LONDON."
TELEPHONE No. 8121 GERRARD.

UNITED SERVICE CLUB,
PALL MALL, S.W.

20th Febry 1912

Dear Lord Curzon

I think perhaps you will be interested to see the enclosed map done in the War office at my suggestion showing the Middle East and various railway projects completed & proposed. In Southern Persia no British projects have been shown as nothing definite has been settled. On

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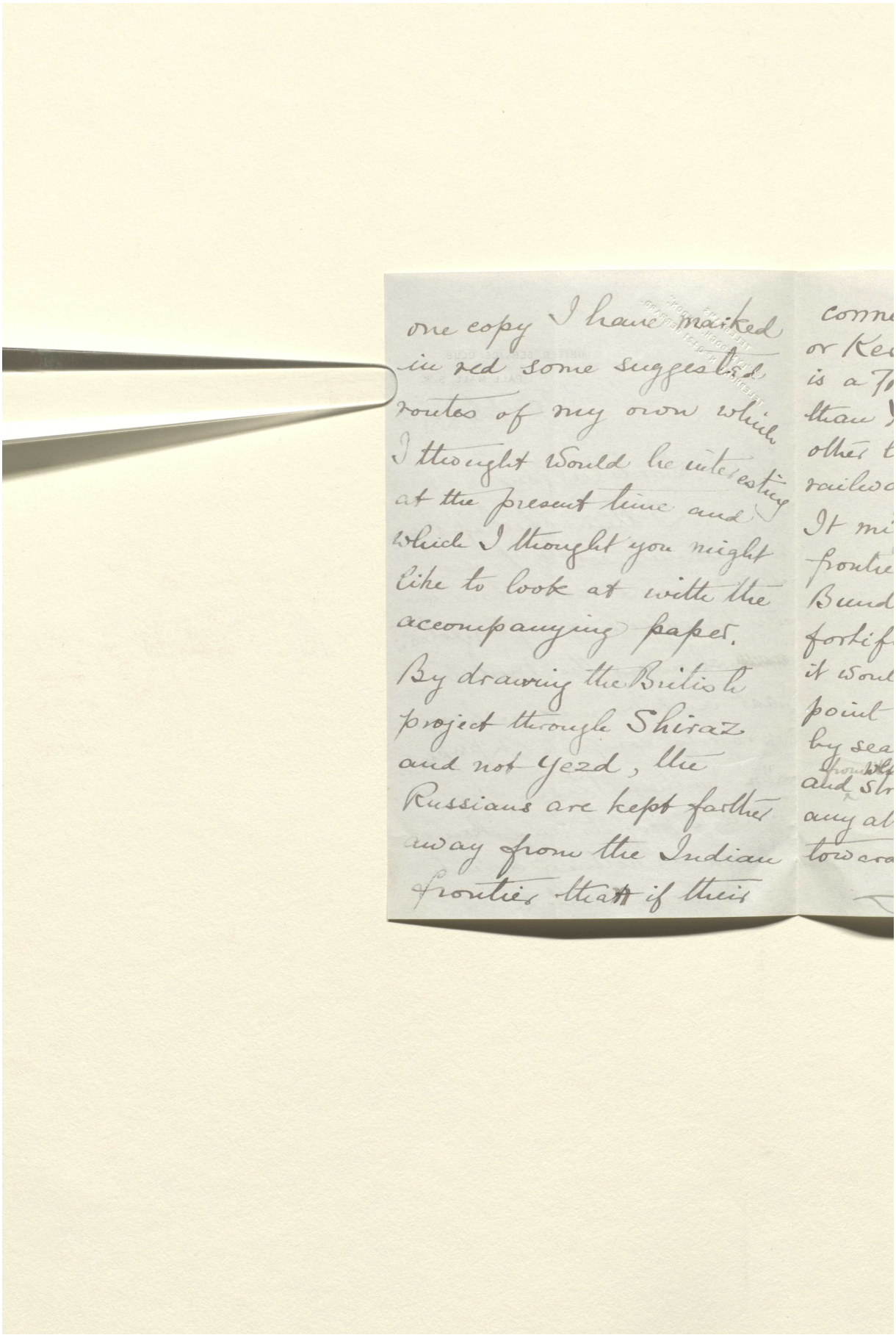

one copy I have marked
in red some suggested
routes of my own which
I thought would be interesting
at the present time and
which I thought you might
like to look at with the
accompanying paper.
By drawing the British
project through Shiraz
and not Yezd, the
Russians are kept farther
away from the Indian
frontier than if this

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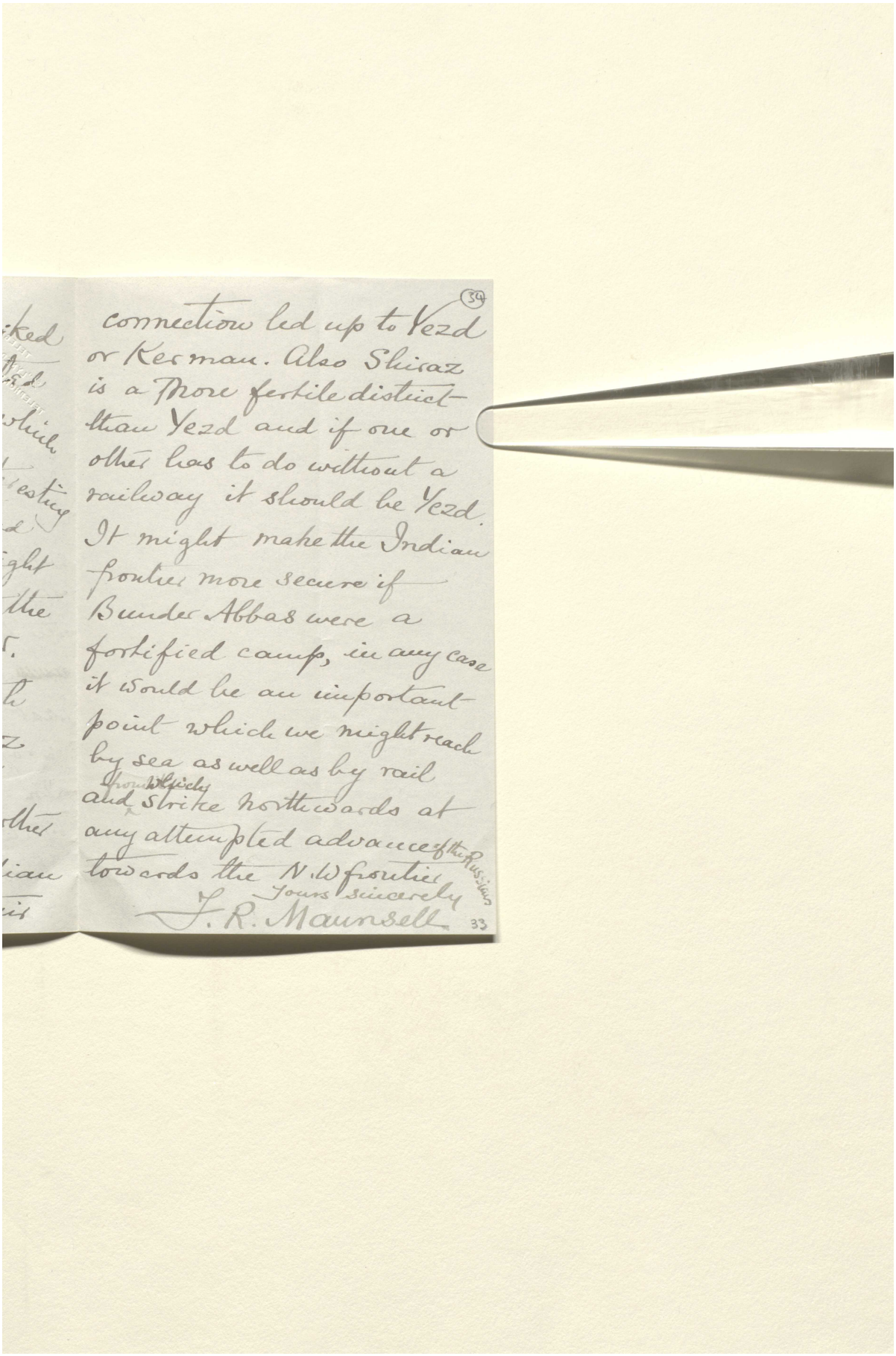

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connection led up to Yezd
or Kerman. Also Shiraz
is a more fertile district
than Yezd and if one or
other has to do without a
railway it should be Yezd.
It might make the Indian
frontier more secure if
Bunder Abbas were a
fortified camp, in any case
it would be an important
point which we might reach
by sea as well as by rail
and strike northwards at
any attempted advance of the Russians
towards the N.W frontier

Yours sincerely
F. R. Maunsell

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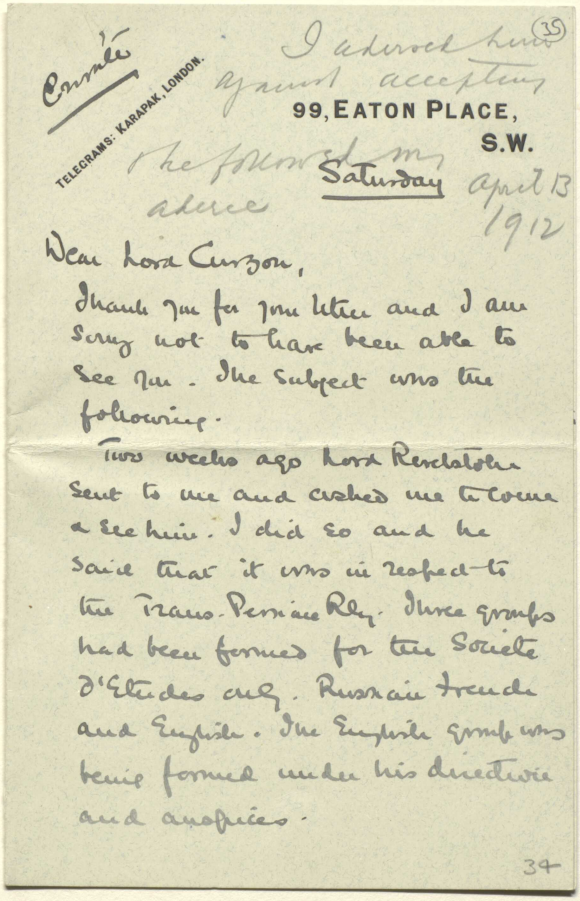

Curzon

TELEGRAMS: KARAPAK, LONDON.

I advised him against accepting the followed my advice

(35)

99, EATON PLACE,
S.W.

Saturday April 13 1912

Dear Lord Curzon,

Thank you for your letter and I am sorry not to have been able to see you. The subject was the following.

Two weeks ago Lord Revelstoke sent to me and asked me to come & see him. I did so and he said that it was in respect to the Trans-Persian Rly. Three groups had been formed for the Societe d'Etudes only. Russian French and English. The English group was being formed under his direction and auspices.

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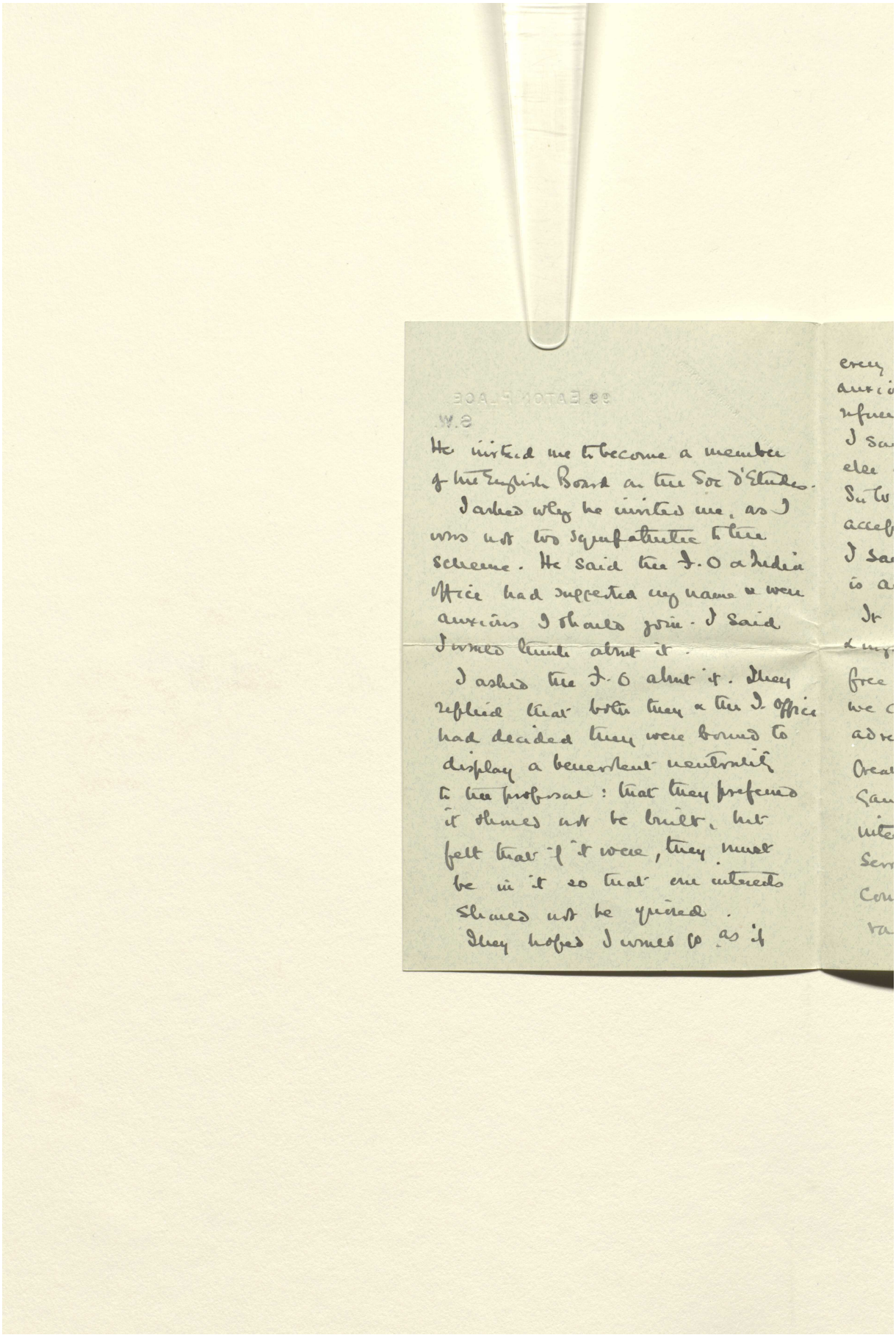

He invited me to become a member of the English Board on the Soc d'Etudes.

I asked why he invited me, as I was not too sympathetic to the scheme. He said the F.O & Indian Office had suggested my name & were anxious I should join. I said I would think about it.

I asked the F.O about it. They replied that both they & the I. Office had decided they were bound to display a benevolent neutrality to the proposal: that they preferred it should not be built, but felt that if it were, they must be in it so that our interests should not be injured.

They hoped I would do as if

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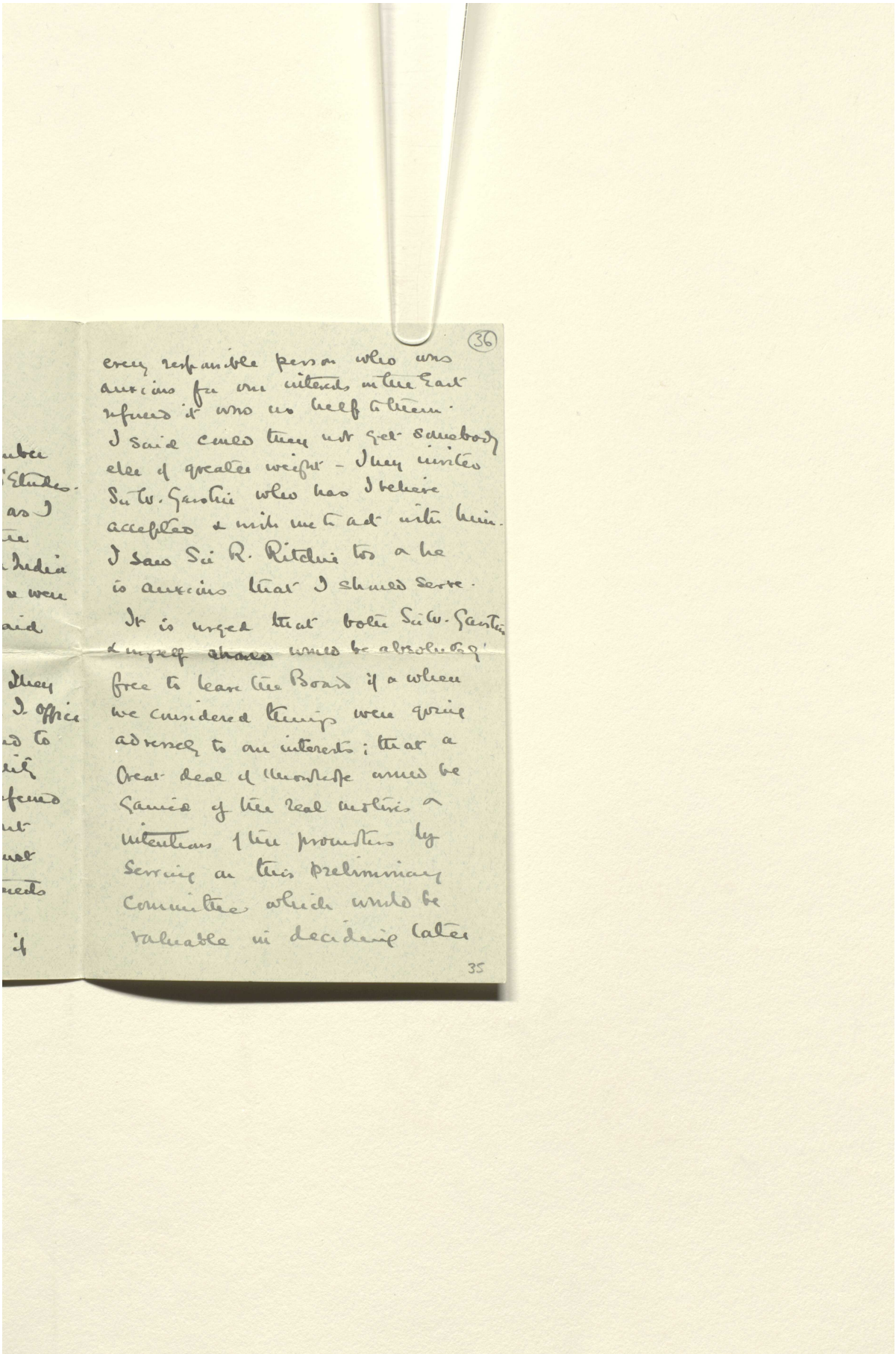
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [36r] (71/442)



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every responsible person who was
anxious for our interests in the East
refused it was no help to them.
I said could they not get somebody
else of greater weight – They invited
Sir W. Garstin who has I believe
accepted & wish me to act with him.
I saw Sir R. Ritchie too & he
is anxious that I should serve.
It is urged that both Sir W. Garstin
& myself should would be absolutely
free to leave the Board if & when
we considered things were going
adversely to our interests; that a
great deal of Moorhope would be
gained of the real motives &
intentions of the promoters by
serving on this preliminary
committee which would be
valuable in deciding later

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Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [36v] (72/442)

whether this scheme were to be
strongly opposed or not.
I venture to write and ask your
opinion as to whether you think
one would be prejudiced in serving
on this preliminary committee
and whether in view of the
invitation of the F.O. & India Office
I ought to accept or refuse.
I only want to do that which
will be best for our interests.
I have threshed the whole question
out with Lorat Fraser & he advises
me on the whole to accept, believing
as he does that under the
unfortunate terms of the Anglo Russian
Treaty Russia can build a Rly
to Isfahan tomorrow on
French money & without our
permission, & that we
cannot afford not to have

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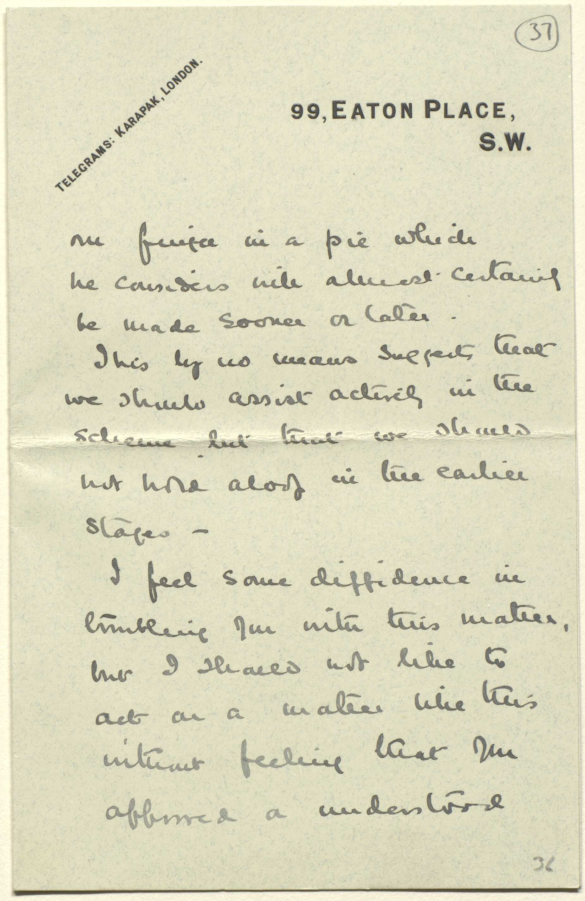

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TELEGRAMS: KARAPAK, LONDON.

99, EATON PLACE,
S.W.

an [illegible] in a pie which
he considers will almost certainly
be made sooner or later.
This by no means suggests that
we should assist actively in the
scheme but that we should
not hold aloof in the earlier
stages –
I feel some diffidence in
troubling you with this matter,
but I should not like to
act on a matter like this
without feeling that you
approved a understood

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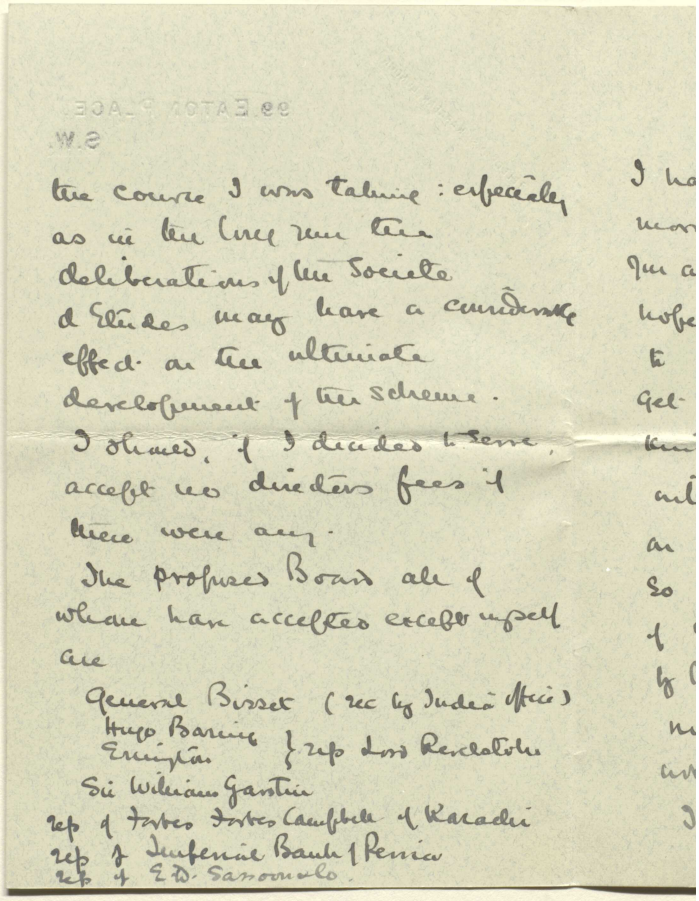
99 EATON PLACE
S.W.



the course I was taking: especially as in the long run the deliberations of the Societe d'Etudes may have a considerable effect on the ultimate development of the scheme.

I should, if I decided to serve, accept no directors fees if there were any.

The proposed Board all of whom have accepted except myself are

General Bisset (rec by India Office)
Hugo Baring
Errington } rep Lord Revelstoke
Sir William Garstin
rep of Forbes Forbes Campbell of Karachi
rep of Imperial Bank of Persia
rep of E.D. Sassoon & Co.

I ha
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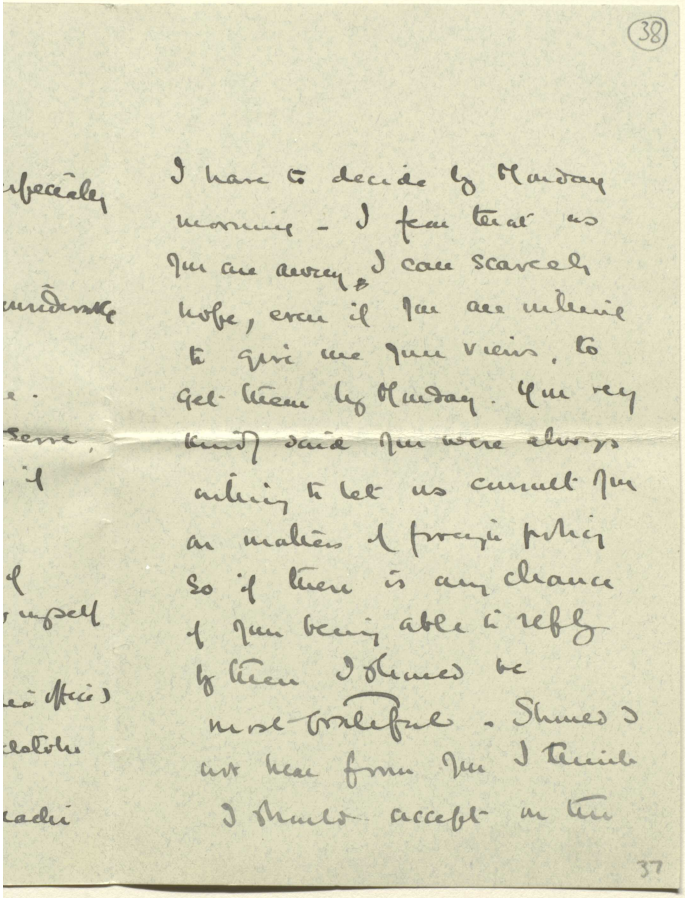
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [38r] (75/442)



(38)

I have to decide by Monday morning - I fear that as you are away, I can scarcely hope, even if you are inclined to give me your views, to get them by Monday. You very kindly said you were always willing to let us consult you on matters of foreign policy so if there is any chance of your being able to reply by then I should be most grateful. Should I not hear from you I think I should accept on the

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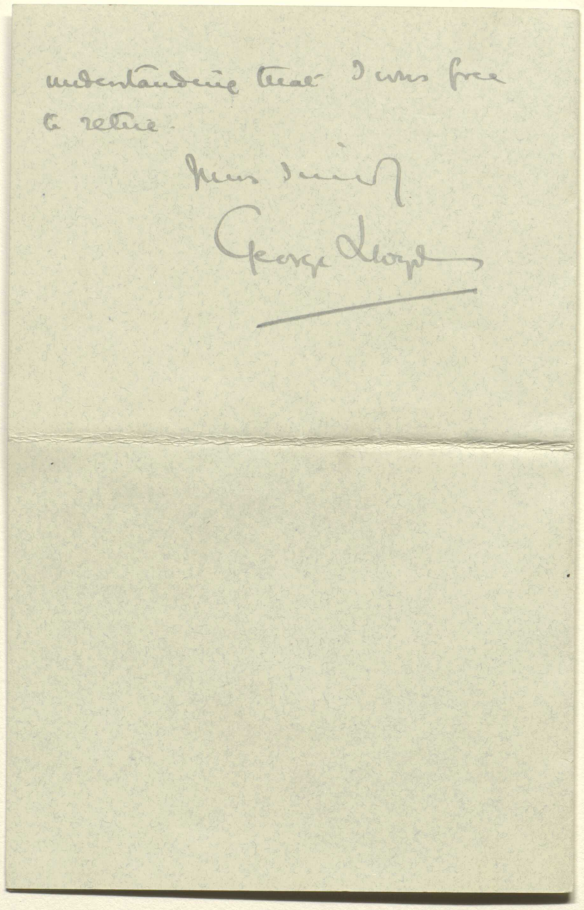

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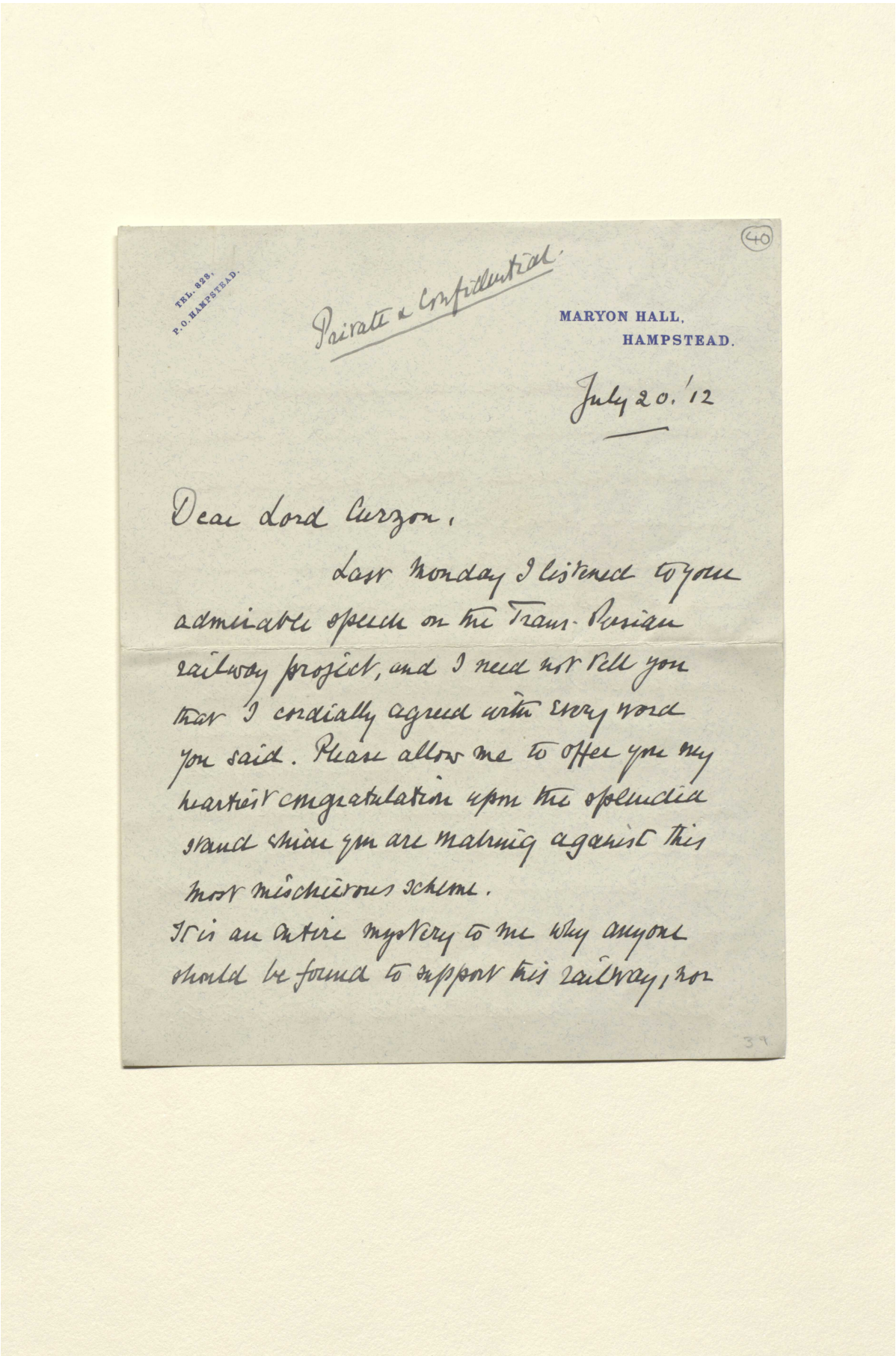

(40)

TEL. 828.
P.O. HAMPSTEAD.

Private & Confidential.

MARYON HALL,
HAMPSTEAD.

July 20. '12

Dear Lord Curzon,

Last Monday I listened to your admirable speech on the Trans-Persian railway project, and I need not tell you that I cordially agreed with every word you said. Please allow me to offer you my hearty congratulation upon the splendid stand which you are making against this most mischievous scheme.

It is an entire mystery to me why anyone should be found to support this railway, nor

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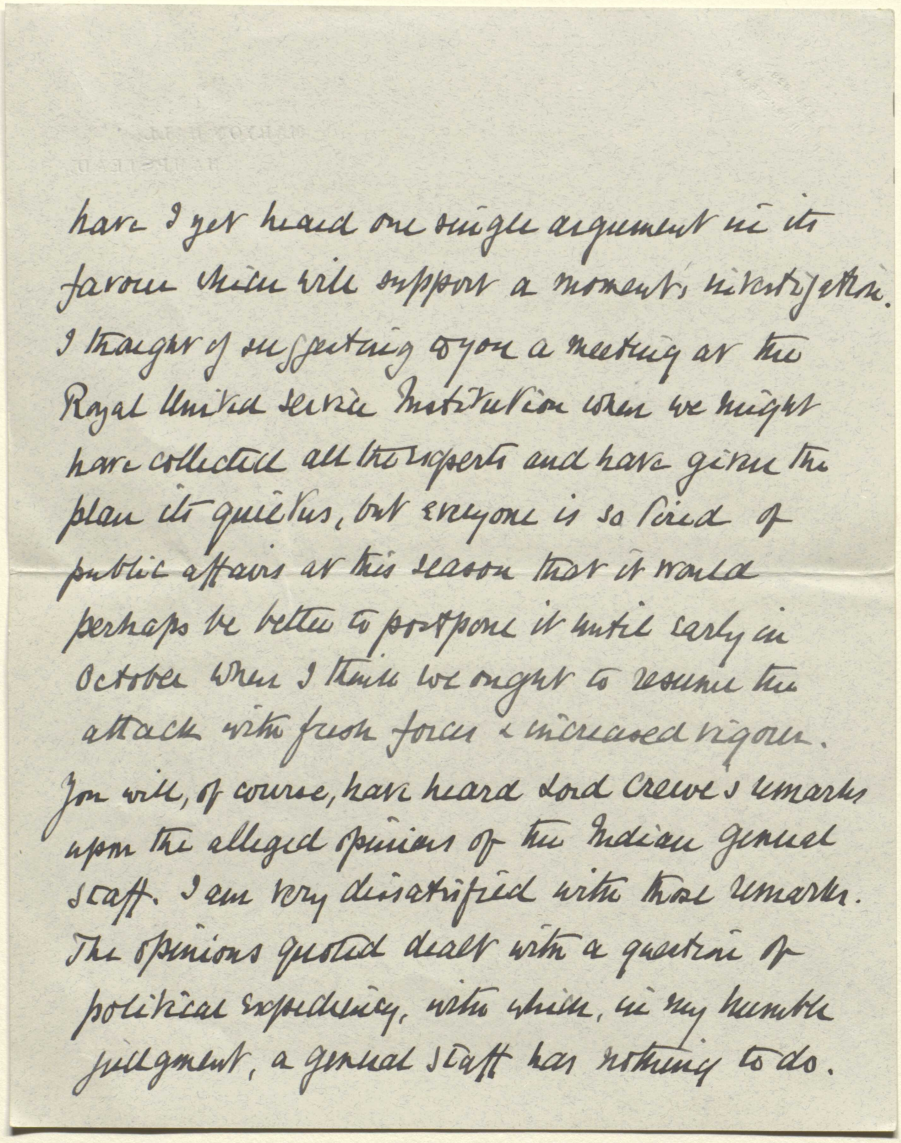

have I yet heard one single argument in its favour which will support a moment's investigation. I thought of suggesting to you a meeting at the Royal United Service Institution when we might have collected all the experts and have given the plan its quietus, but everyone is so tired of public affairs at this season that it would perhaps be better to postpone it until early in October when I think we ought to resume the attack with fresh forces & increased vigour. You will, of course, have heard Lord Crewe's remarks upon the alleged opinions of the Indian general staff. I am very dissatisfied with those remarks. The opinions quoted dealt with a question of political expediency, with which, in my humble judgment, a general staff has nothing to do.

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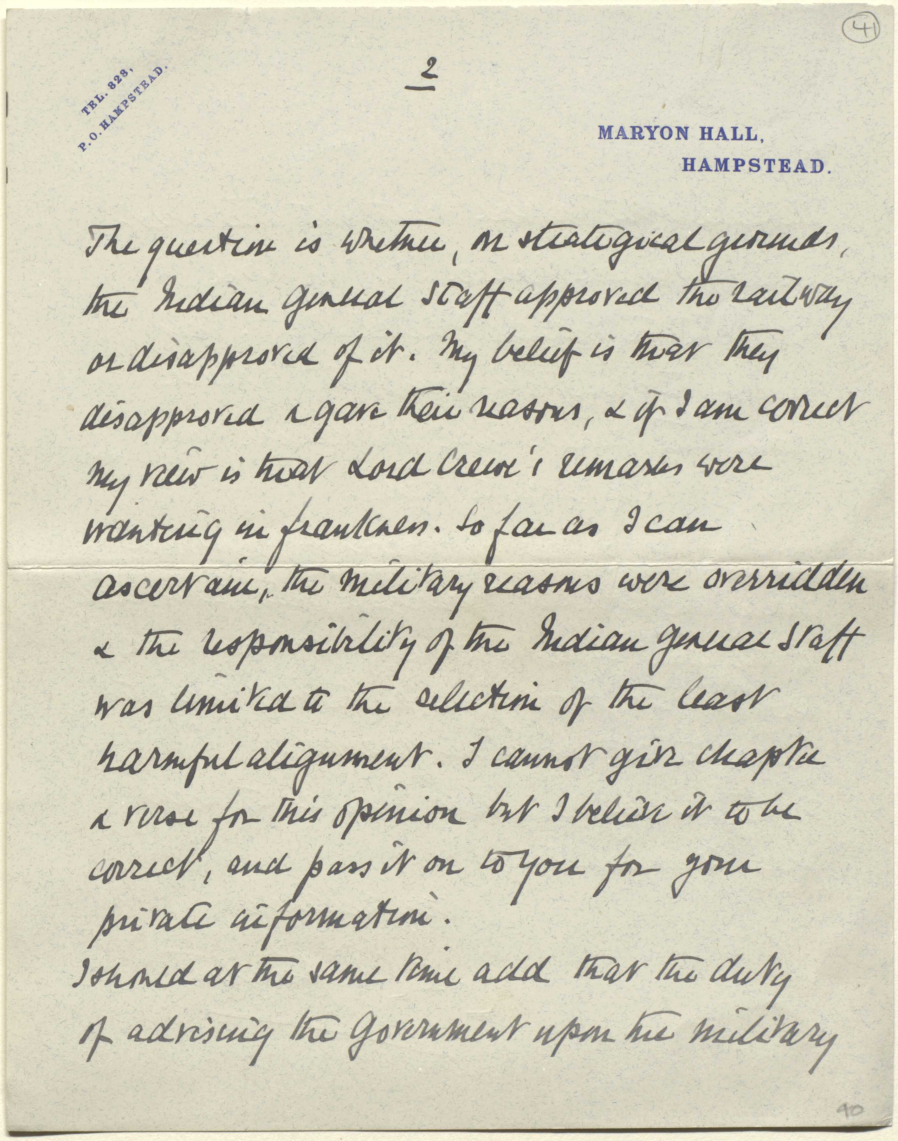

(4)

2

TEL. 829,
P.O. HAMPSTEAD.

MARYON HALL,
HAMPSTEAD.

The question is whether, on strategical grounds, the Indian general staff approved the railway or disapproved of it. My belief is that they disapproved & gave their reasons, & if I am correct my view is that Lord Crewe's remarks were wanting in frankness. So far as I can ascertain, the military reasons were overridden & the responsibility of the Indian general staff was limited to the selection of the least harmful alignment. I cannot give chapter & verse for this opinion but I believe it to be correct, and pass it on to you for your private information.

I should at the same time add that the duty of advising the government upon the military

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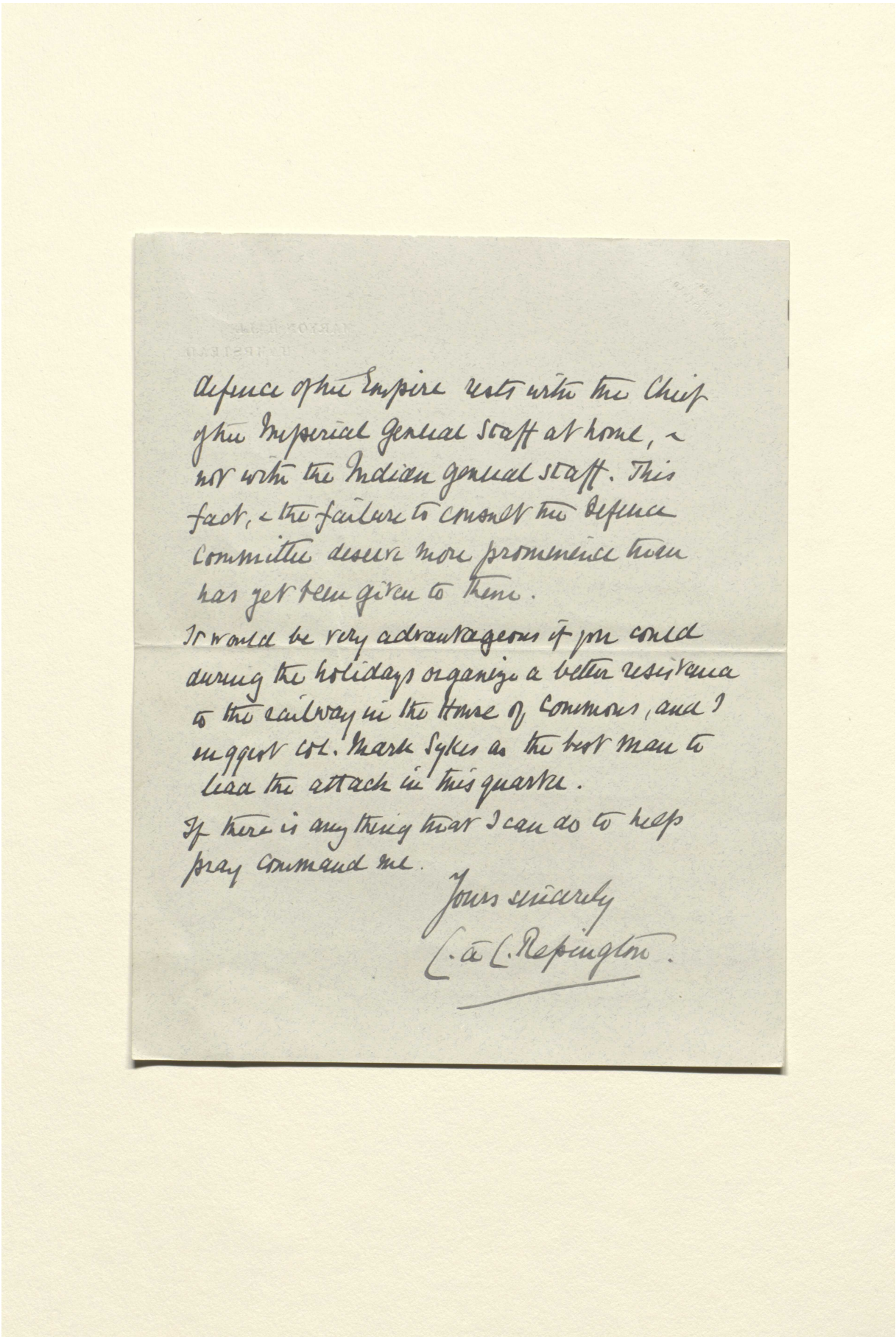

defence of the Empire rests with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff at home, & not with the Indian general staff. This fact, & the failure to consult the defence committee deserve more prominence than has yet been given to them.

It would be very advantageous if you could during the holidays organize a better resistance to the railway in the House of Commons, and I suggest Col. Mark Sykes as the best man to lead the attack in this quarter.

If there is any thing that I can do to help pray command me.

Yours sincerely
C. à C. Repington.

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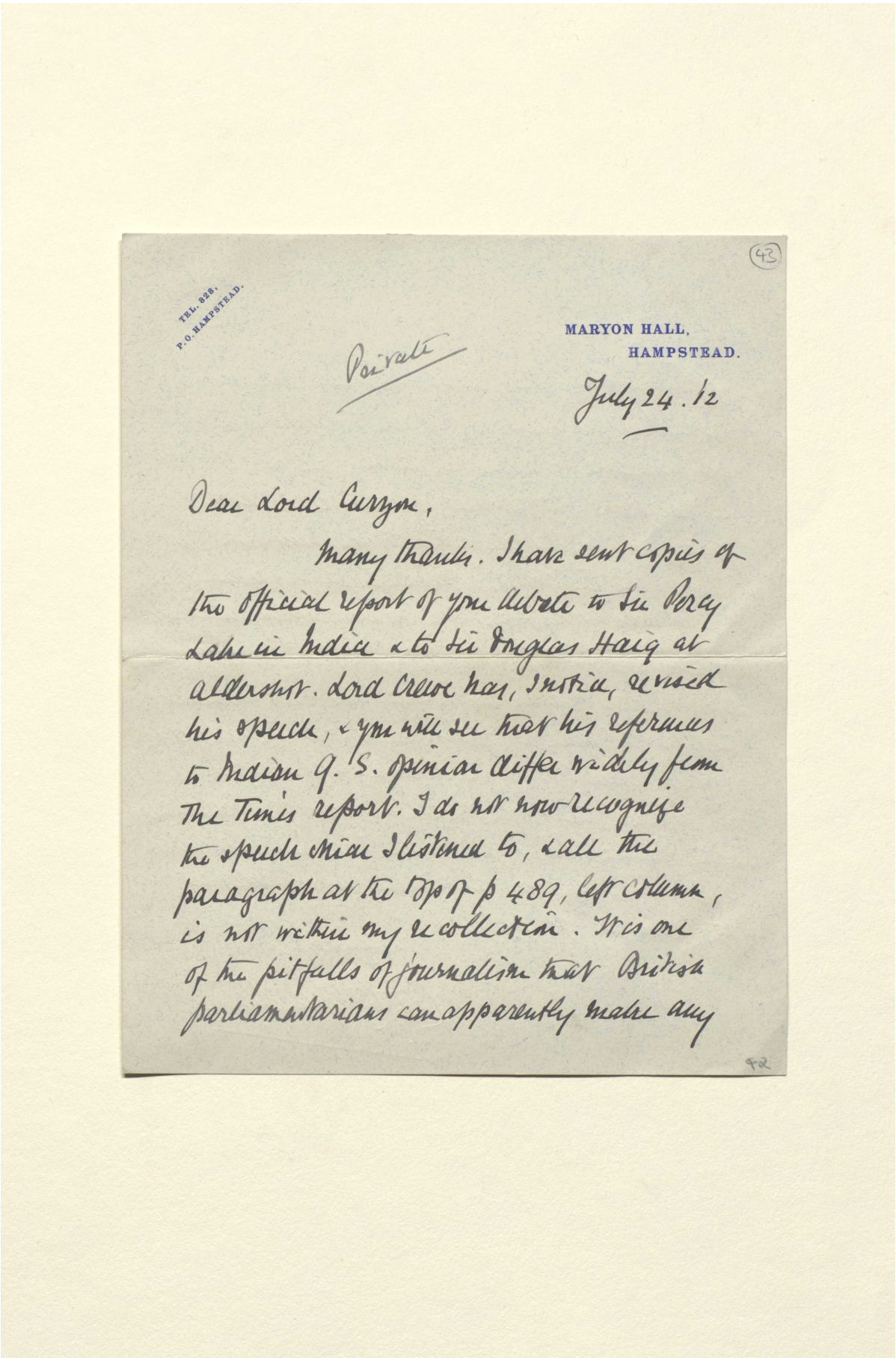

(43)

TEL. 828,
P.O. HAMPSTEAD.

MARYON HALL,
HAMPSTEAD.

Private

July 24. 12

Dear Lord Curzon,

Many thanks. I have sent copies of the official report of your debate to Sir Percy Lake in India & to Sir Douglas Haig at Aldershot. Lord Crewe has, I notice, revised his speech, & you will see that his references to Indian & U.S. opinion differ widely from The Times report. I do not now recognise the speech which I listened to, & all the paragraph at the top of p 489, left column, is not within my recollection. This is one of the pitfalls of journalism that British parliamentarians can apparently make any

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changes that they please in their speeches after they are delivered, & I am not aware that this practice is permitted in any foreign Legislature. It permits a member to score any point in debate & then to put himself right with the world afterwards, a proceeding which does not appear to be parliamentary cricket. However, now if I am wrong, & Lord Curzon said all that he now makes himself say, the fact remains that he has still not fully brought out the hostility of the Indian G. S. to the scheme in principle. I am afraid that you are right about the feeling & the Russian lines, but we are tied by the Convention and can, I suppose, do nothing about lines in the Russian sphere.

Yours sincerely

C. A. C. Pepington.

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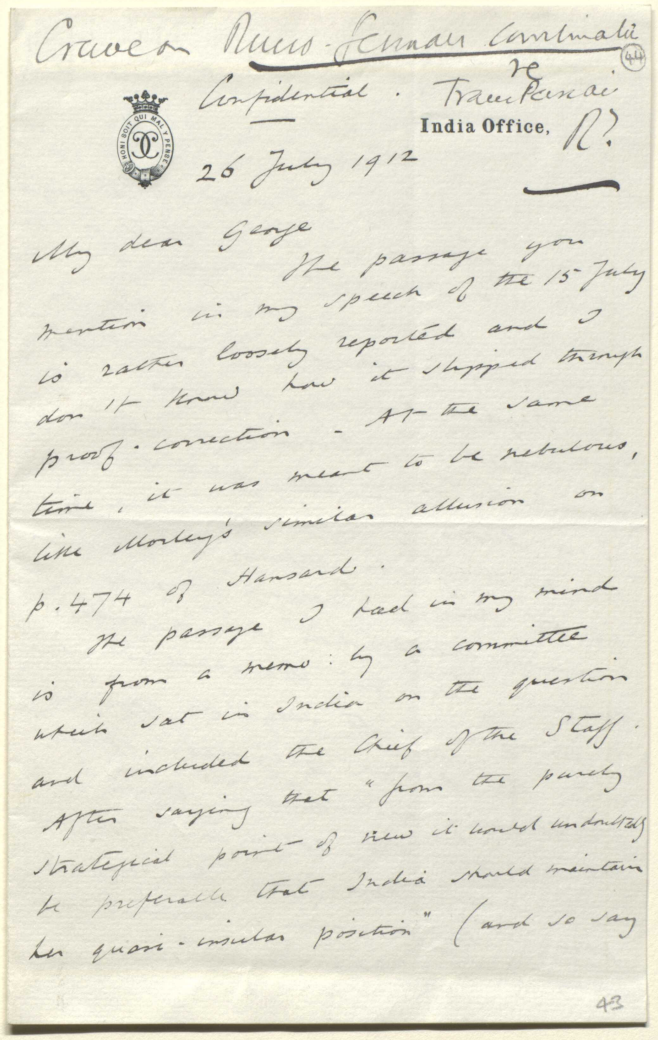

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Crewe on Russo-German Combination

(44)

Confidential. Trans Persian

India Office, R.

26 July 1912

My dear George

The passage you mention in my speech of the 15 July is rather loosely reported and I don't know how it slipped through proof-correction. At the same time, it was meant to be nebulous, like Morley's similar allusion on p. 474 of Hansard.

The passage I had in my mind is from a memo: by a committee which sat in India on the question and included the Chief of the Staff. After saying that "from the purely strategical point of view it would undoubtedly be preferable that India should maintain her quasi-insular position" (and so say

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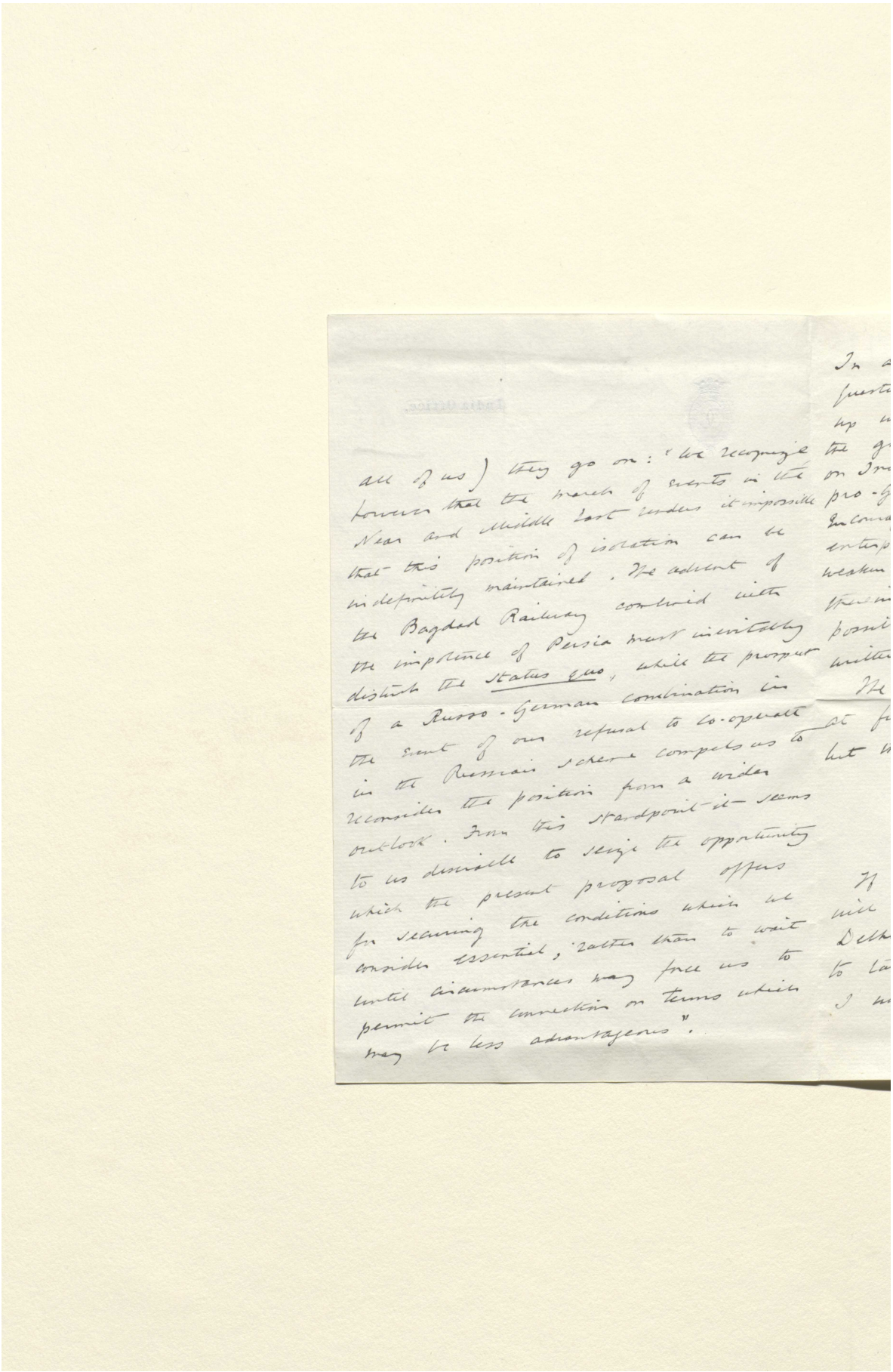

all of us) they go on: "We recognize however that the march of events in the Near and Middle East renders it impossible that this position of isolation can be indefinitely maintained. The advent of the Bagdad Railway combined with the importance of Persia must inevitably disturb the *status quo*, while the prospect of a Russo-German combination in the event of our refusal to co-operate in the Russian scheme compels us to reconsider the position from a wider outlook. From this standpoint it seems to us desirable to seize the opportunity which the present proposal offers for securing the conditions which we consider essential, rather than to wait until circumstances may force us to permit the connection on terms which may be less advantageous".

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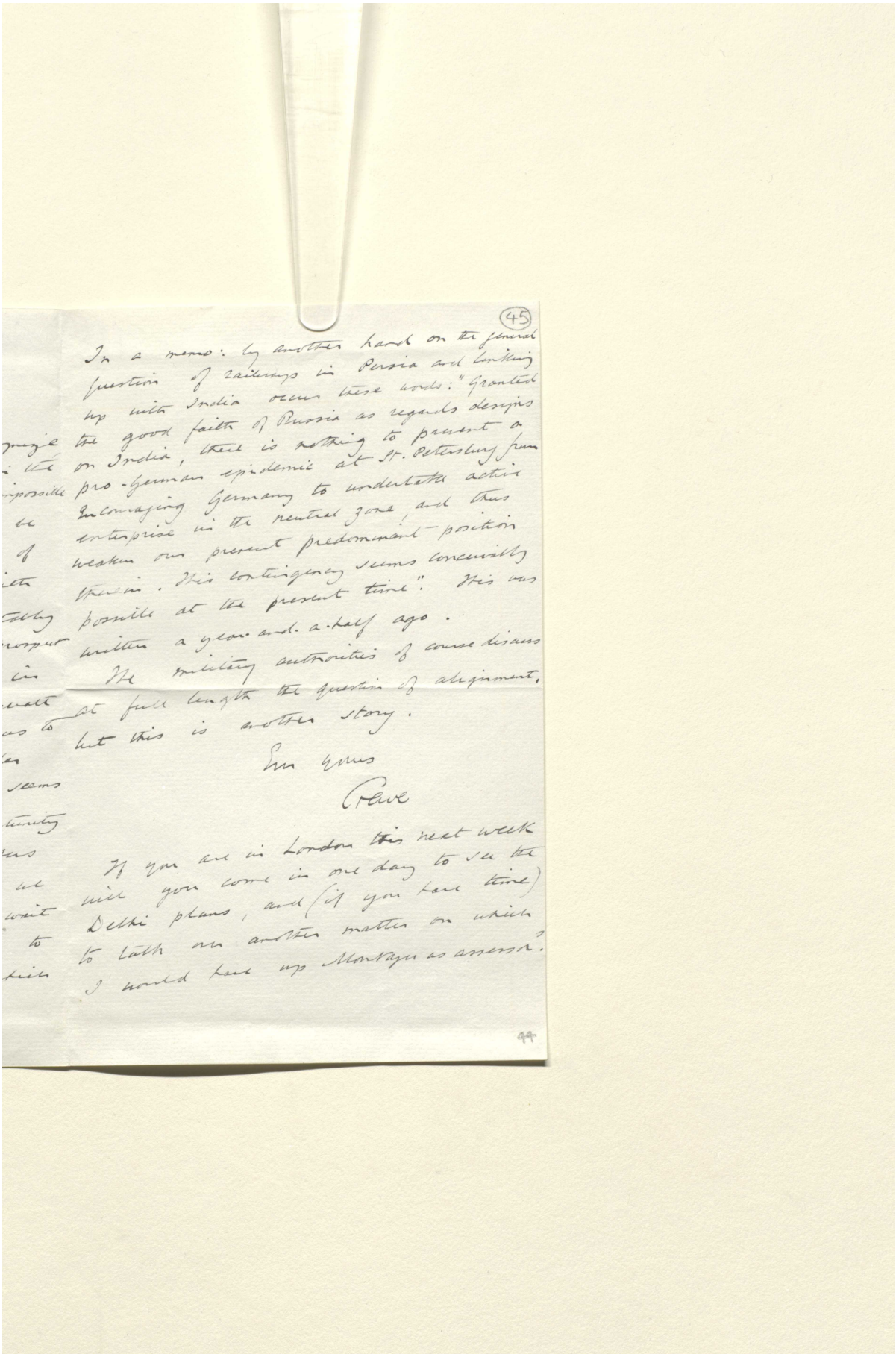

(45)

In a memo: by another hand on the general question of railways in Persia and linking up with India occurs these words: "Granted the good faith of Russia as regards designs on India, there is nothing to prevent a pro-German epidemic at St. Petersburg from encouraging Germany to undertake active enterprise in the neutral zone, and thus weaken our present predominant position there. This contingency seems conceivably possible at the present time". This was written a year and a half ago.

The military authorities of course discuss at full length the question of alignment, but this is another story.

Yrs ever

Cleve

If you are in London this next week will you come in one day to see the Delhi plans, and (if you have time) to talk on another matter on which I would have up Montagu as assessor?

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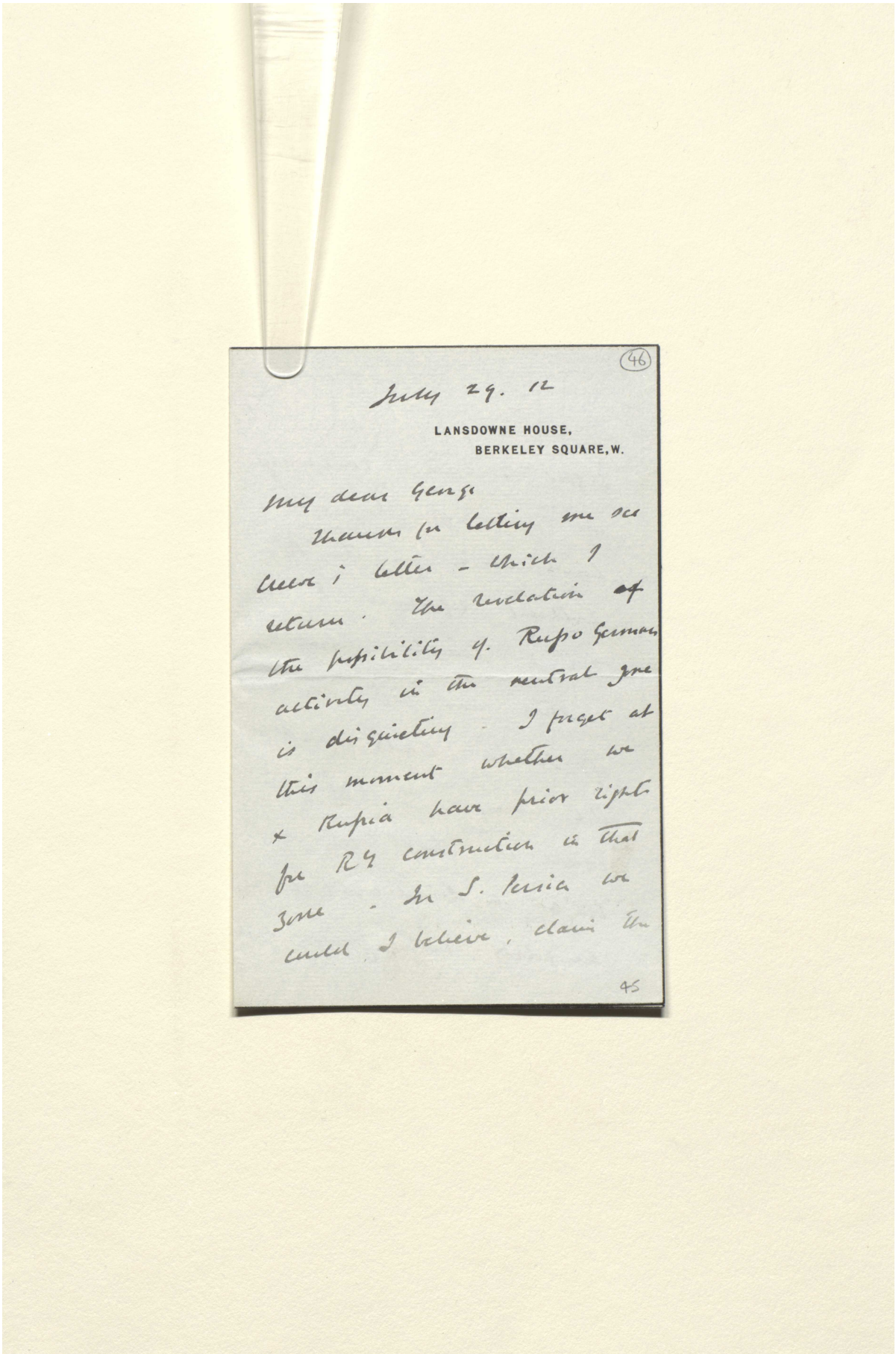

(46)

July 29. 12

LANSDOWNE HOUSE,
BERKELEY SQUARE, W.

My dear George

Thanks for letting me see Crewe's letter - which I return. The revelation of the possibility of Russo German activity in the neutral zone is disquieting. I forget at this moment whether we & Russia have prior rights for RY construction in that zone. In S. Persia we could, I believe, claim the

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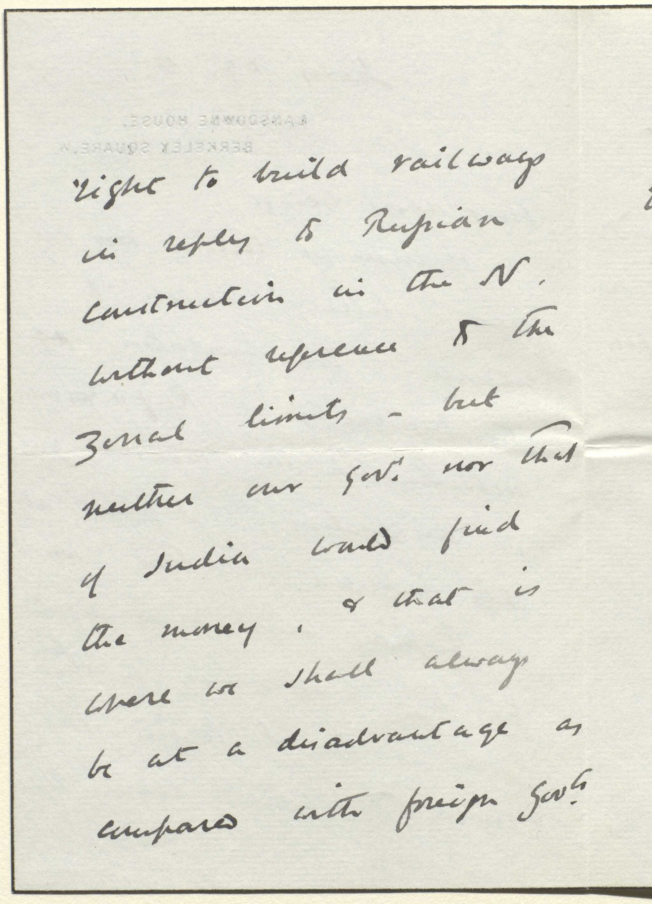

right to build railways
in reply to Russian
construction in the N.
without reference to the
Zonal limits - but
neither our Govt. nor that
of India would find
the money, & that is
where we shall always
be at a disadvantage as
compared with foreign Govts

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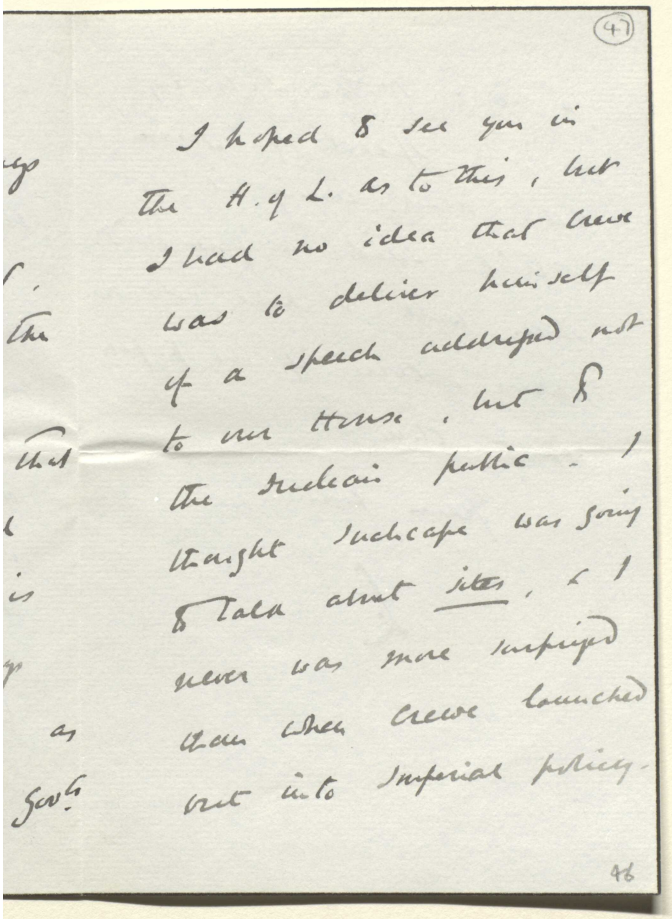

(47)

I hoped to see you in
the H. of L. as to this, but
I had no idea that Crewe
was to deliver himself
of a speech addressed not
to our House, but to
the Indian public. I
thought Inchcape was going
to talk about rates, & I
never was more surprised
than when Crewe launched
out into Imperial policy.

46

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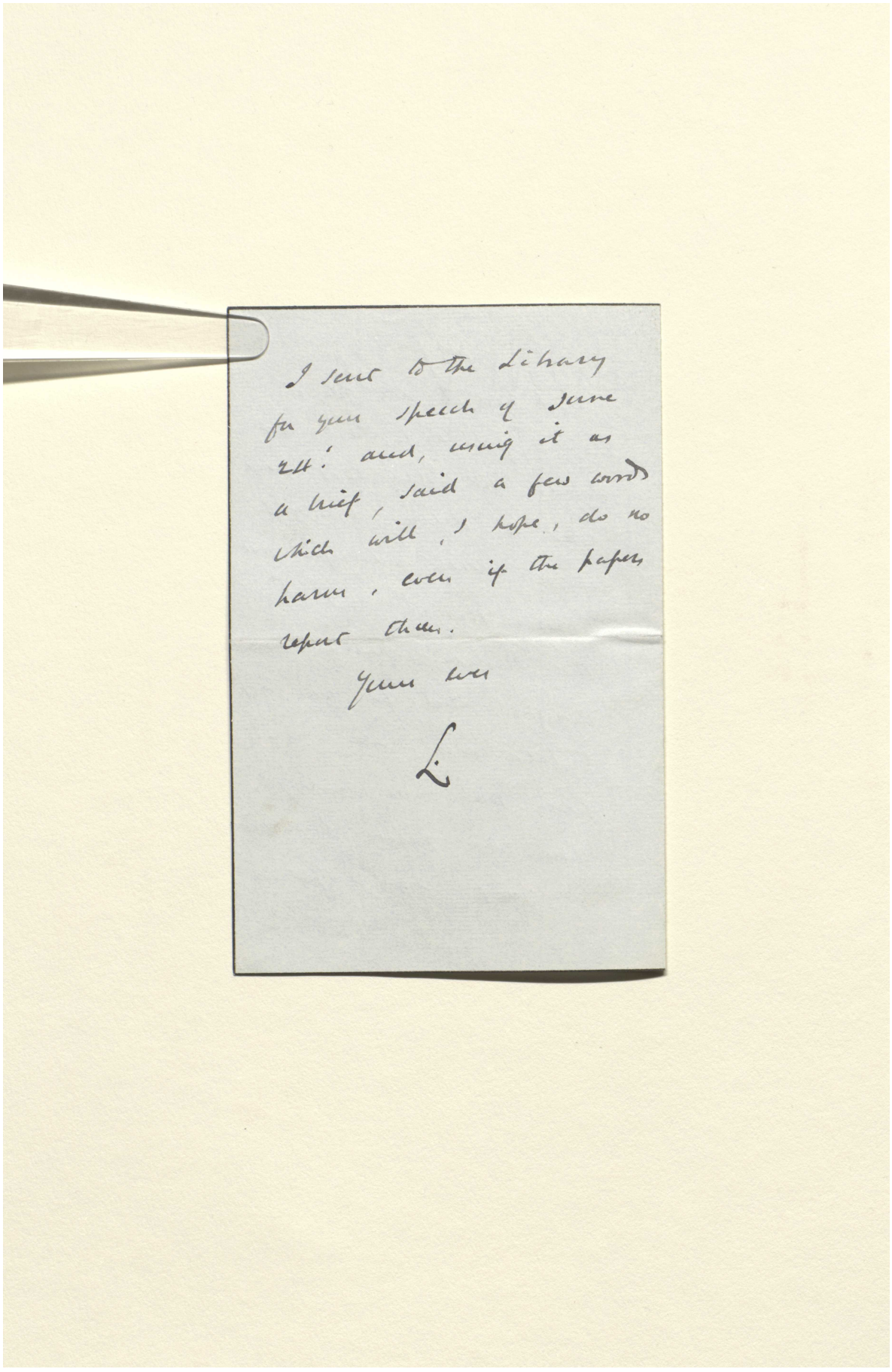

I sent to the Library for your speech of June 21st: and, using it as a brief, said a few words which will, I hope, do no harm, even if the papers report them.

Yours ever

L.

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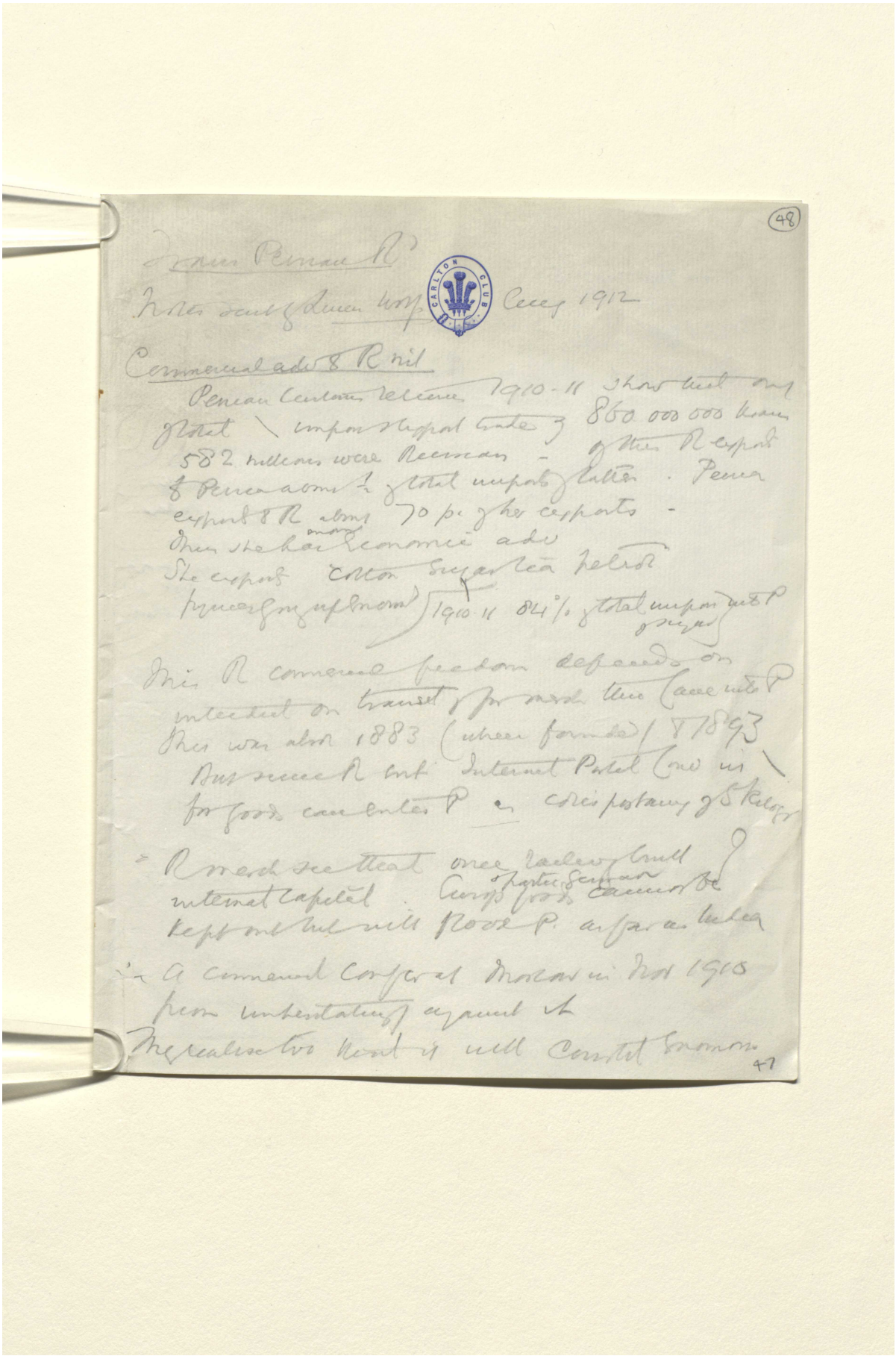

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(48)

Trans Persian R.

Notes sent by Lucien Wolf Aug 1912

Commercial adv & R nil

Persian Customs returns 1910-11 show that only of total import & export trade of 860 000 000 krans 582 millions were Russian - of this R exports to Persia about ½ of total imports of latter. Persia exports to R about 70 p.c. of her exports - thus she has enormous economic adv

She exports cotton sugar tea petrol

[illegible] 1910-11 84% of total import into P of sugar

This R commercial freedom depends on interdict on transit of for merch thro Caucasus into P

This was abrd 1883 (when formed) & 1893

But since R int Internat Postal Conv in for goods can enter P as colis postaux of 5 kilogr

= R merch see that once railway built internat capital Europ & partic German goods cannot be kept out but will flood P. as far as India

= A commercial Conference at Moscow in Nov 1910 from unhesitating against it

My realise too that it will constit enormous

47

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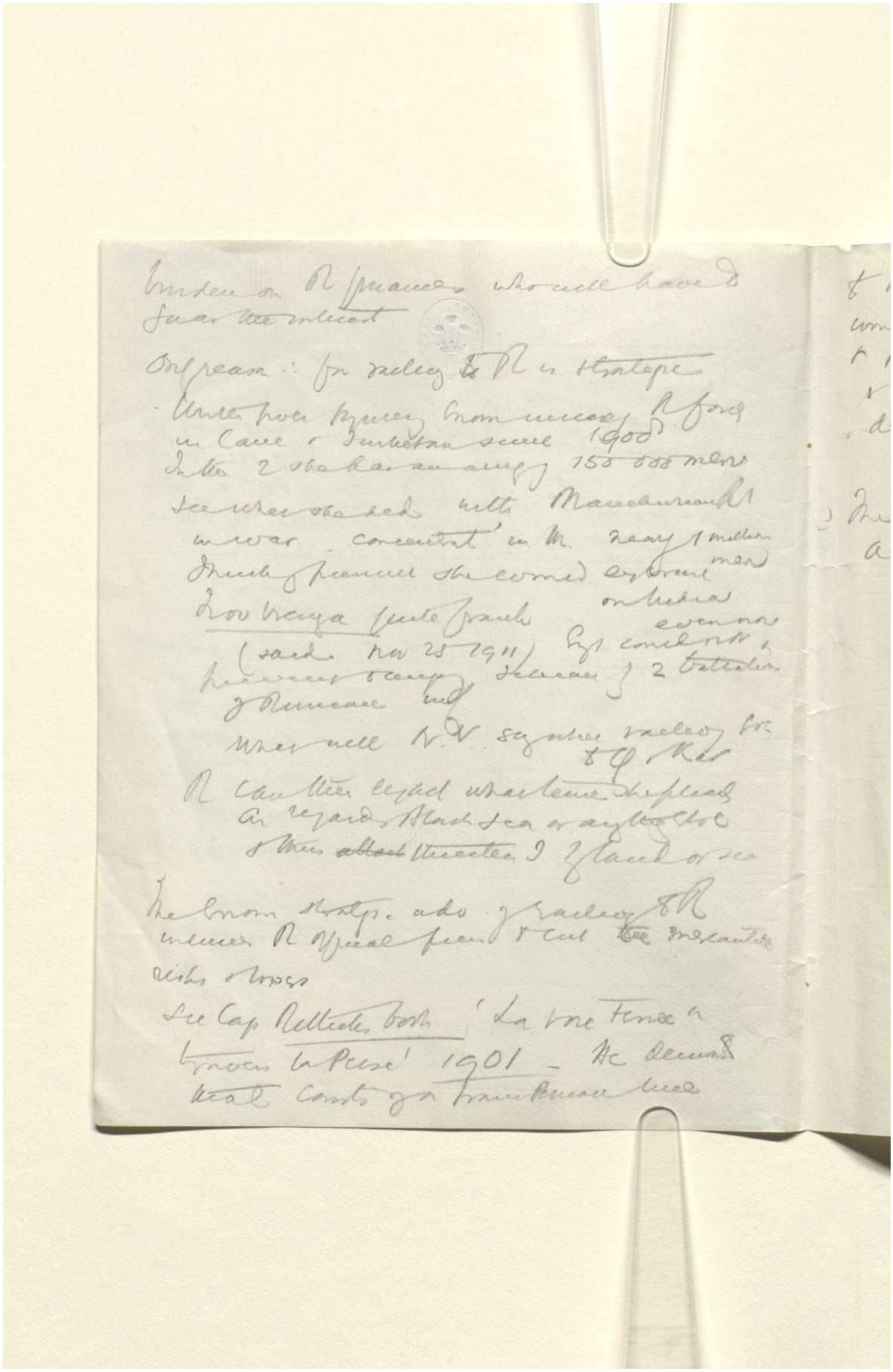

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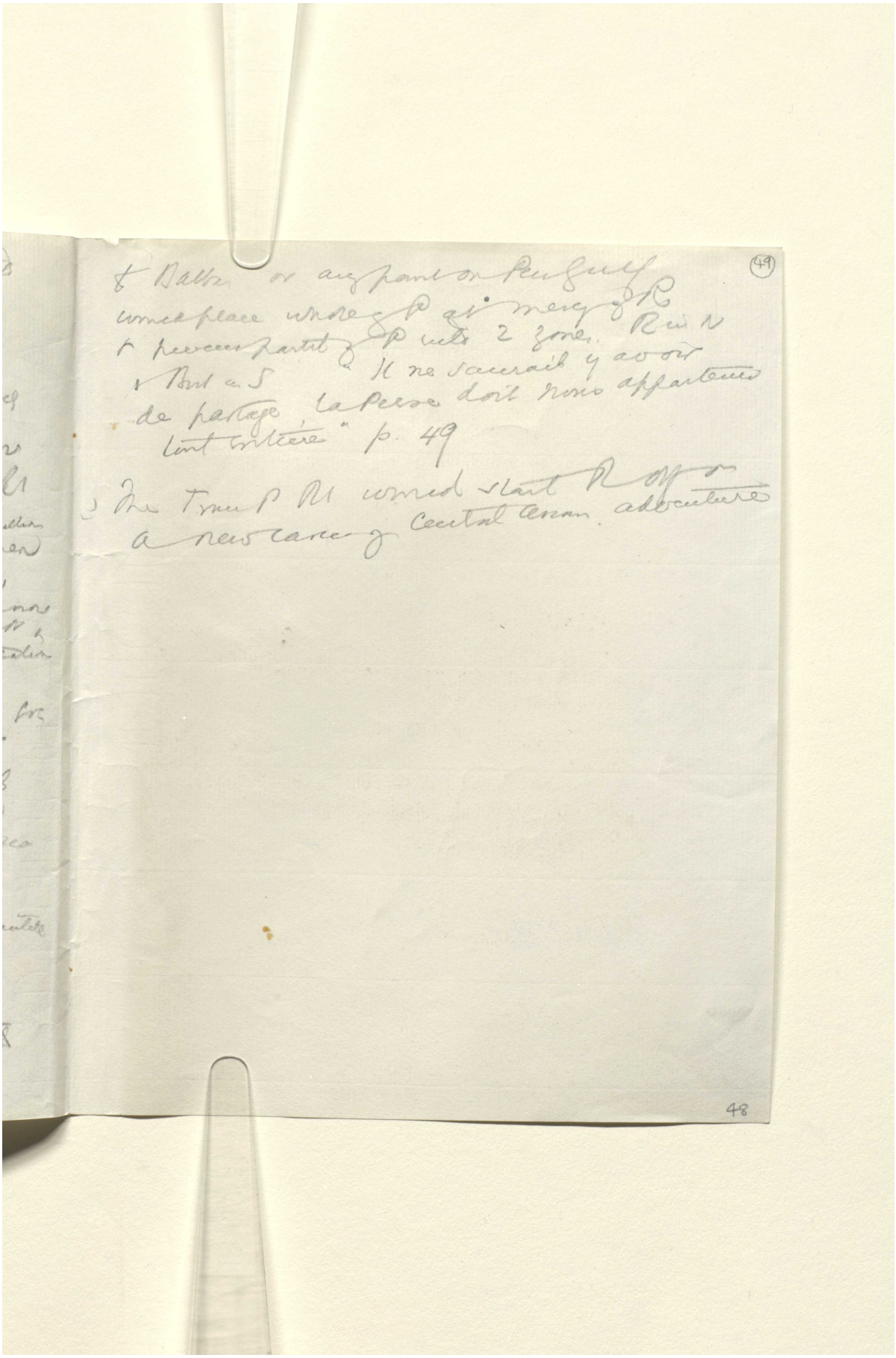

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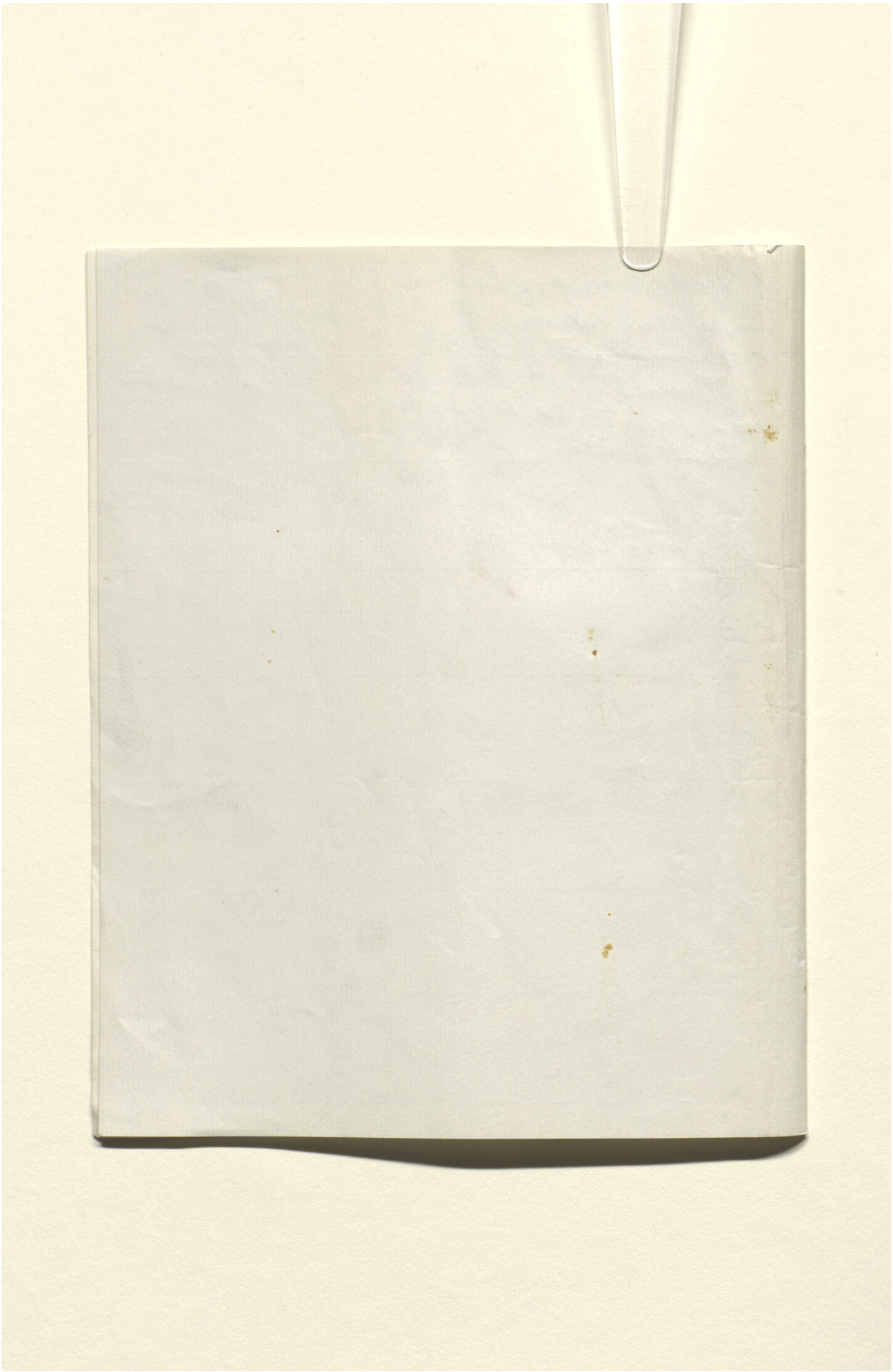

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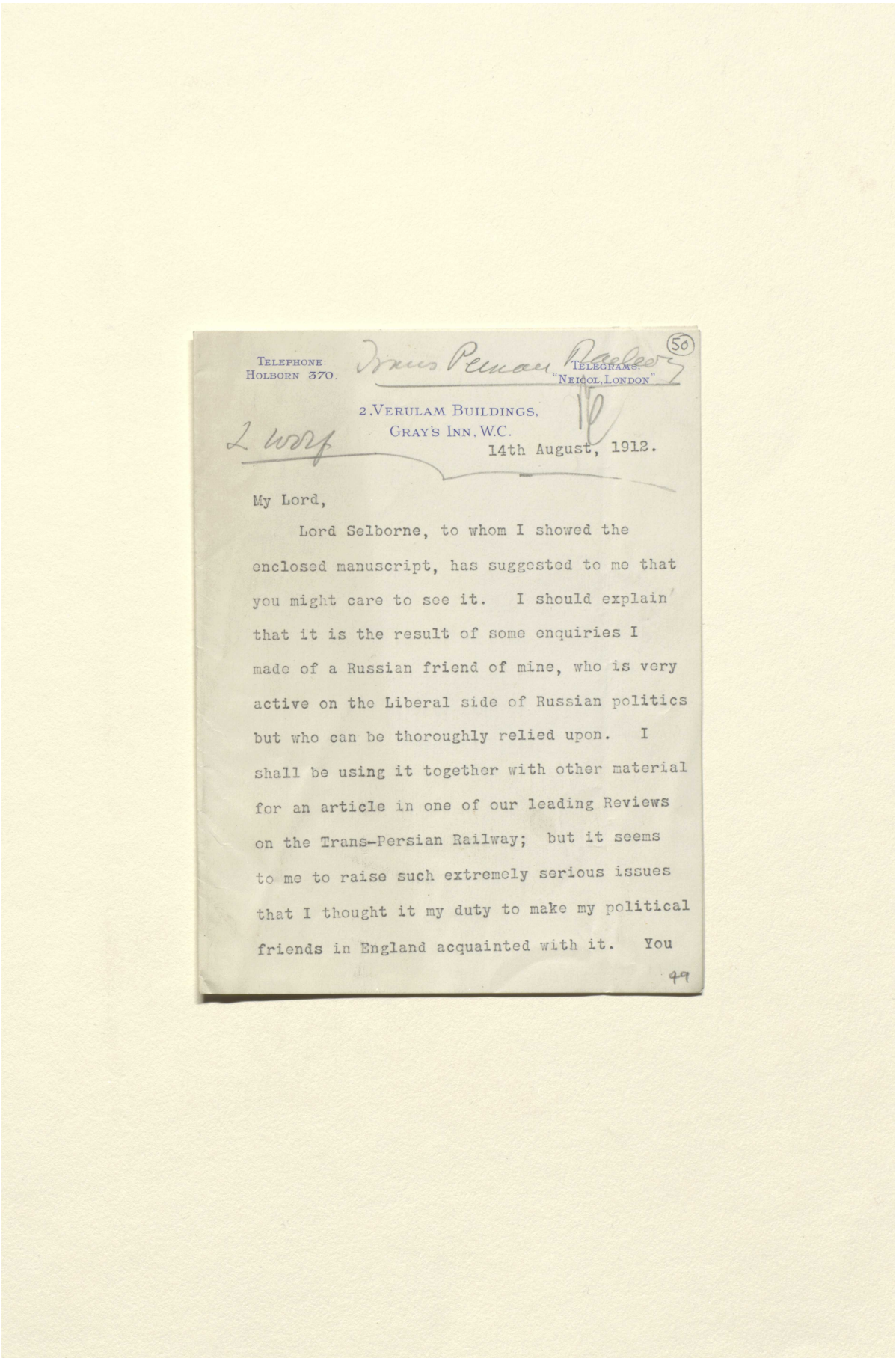

TELEPHONE:
HOLBORN 370.

Trans Persian Railway

TELEGRAMS:
"NEICOL, LONDON"

2, VERULAM BUILDINGS,
GRAY'S INN, W.C.

50

2 worp

14th August, 1912.

My Lord,

Lord Selborne, to whom I showed the enclosed manuscript, has suggested to me that you might care to see it. I should explain that it is the result of some enquiries I made of a Russian friend of mine, who is very active on the Liberal side of Russian politics but who can be thoroughly relied upon. I shall be using it together with other material for an article in one of our leading Reviews on the Trans-Persian Railway; but it seems to me to raise such extremely serious issues that I thought it my duty to make my political friends in England acquainted with it. You

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are at liberty, if you think fit, to show it confidentially to any of your own friends, but I should like to have it back as soon as possible as I have not a copy of it. The arguments and facts of the writer as to the real object of the Russians entirely confirms a view which I have ventured to put forward more than once in my own comments on the Railway scheme.

I am, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

Lucien Wolf

The Right Hon.

The Earl Curzon of Kedleston.

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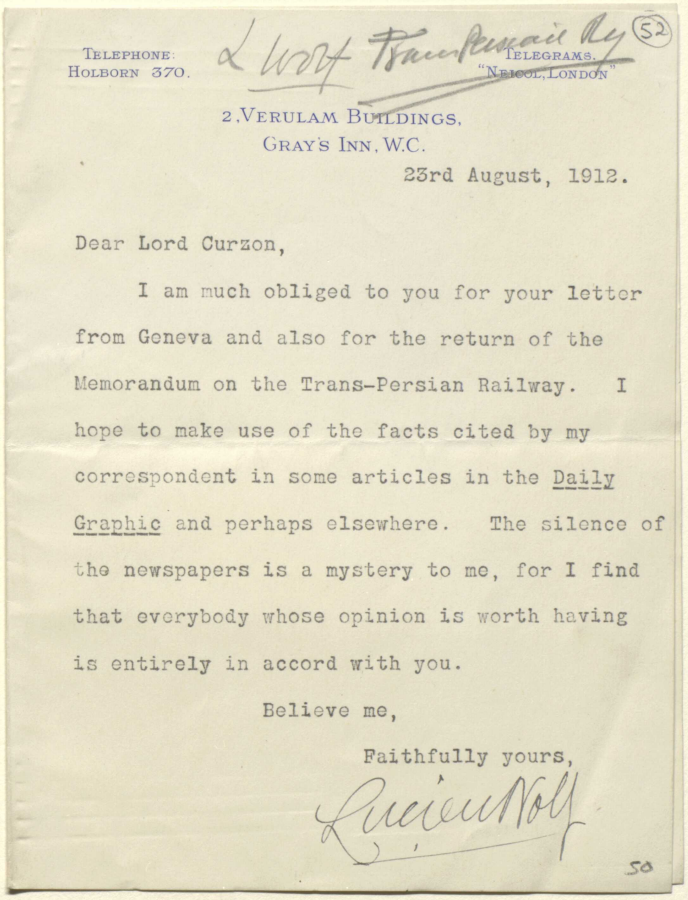

TELEPHONE:
HOLBORN 370.

TELEGRAMS.
"NICOL, LONDON"

2, VERULAM BUILDINGS,
GRAY'S INN, W.C.

23rd August, 1912.

Dear Lord Curzon,

I am much obliged to you for your letter from Geneva and also for the return of the Memorandum on the Trans-Persian Railway. I hope to make use of the facts cited by my correspondent in some articles in the Daily Graphic and perhaps elsewhere. The silence of the newspapers is a mystery to me, for I find that everybody whose opinion is worth having is entirely in accord with you.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

Lucien Wolf

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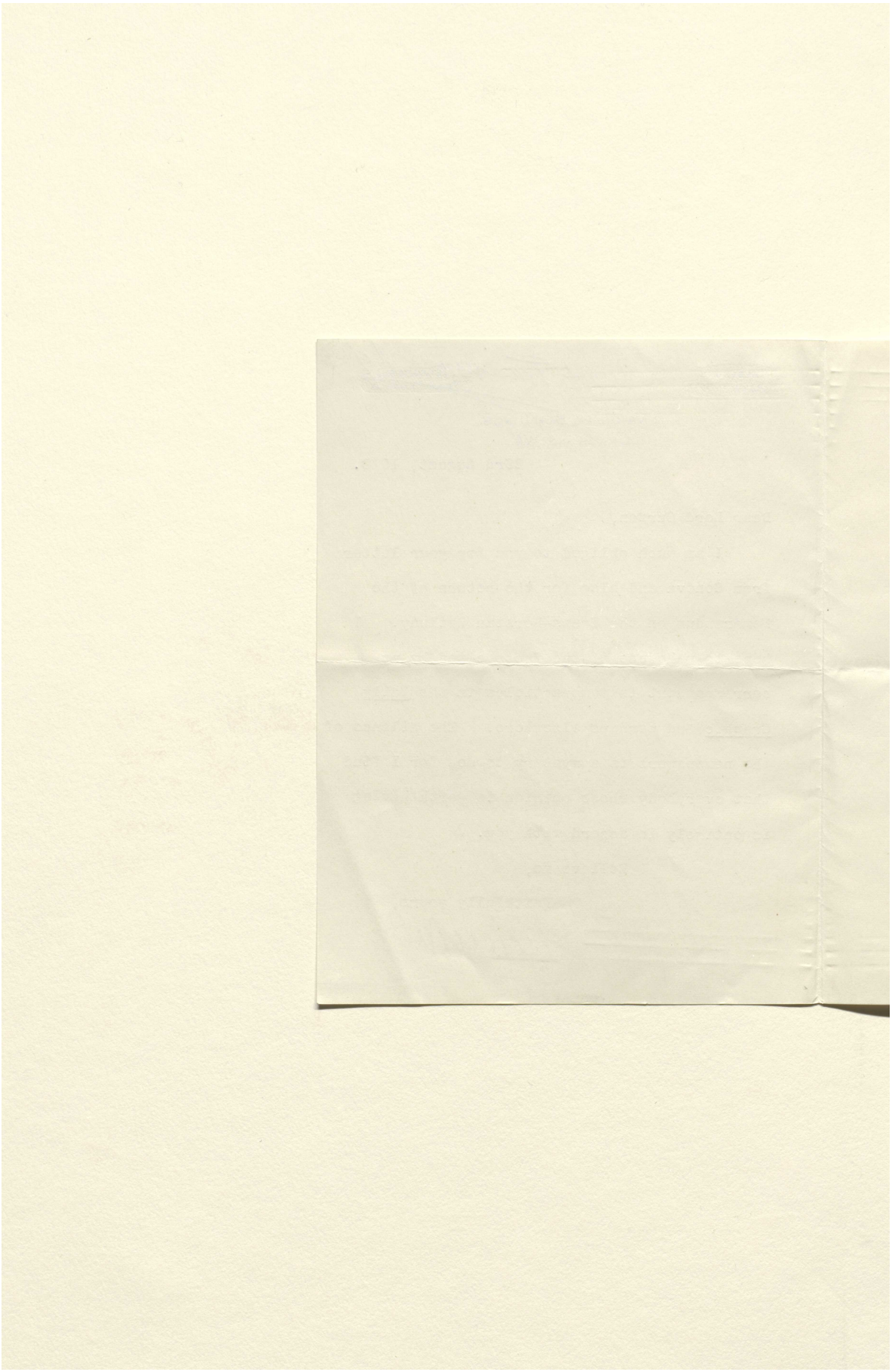

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(54)

St. James' Club
Piccadilly.
LONDON W. 30th July 1913.

The Right Honorable
Earl CURZON of KEDLESTON. P.C.
&c. &c. &c.
1 Carlton House Terrace, London S.W.

My Lord,

The BAGHDAD RAILWAY.

I read in the "Times" Parliamentary Report of the 29th instant your speech with regard to the Baghdad Railway and it has emboldened me to address you personally on a matter which has occupied many years of my life.

My late father John Staniforth was associated with the idea of a Railway to Baghdad almost from its inception, and shortly after the Crimean War he assisted General Chesney in his efforts to secure the concession for a line known as the Euphrates Valley Railway. Unable to obtain the support they wanted from the British Government, the promoters of the Railway were eventually obliged to abandon it.

TheScheme was revived later on under the leadership of the then Duke of Sutherland and my father was a member of the Stafford House Committee which the Duke convened with the

idea

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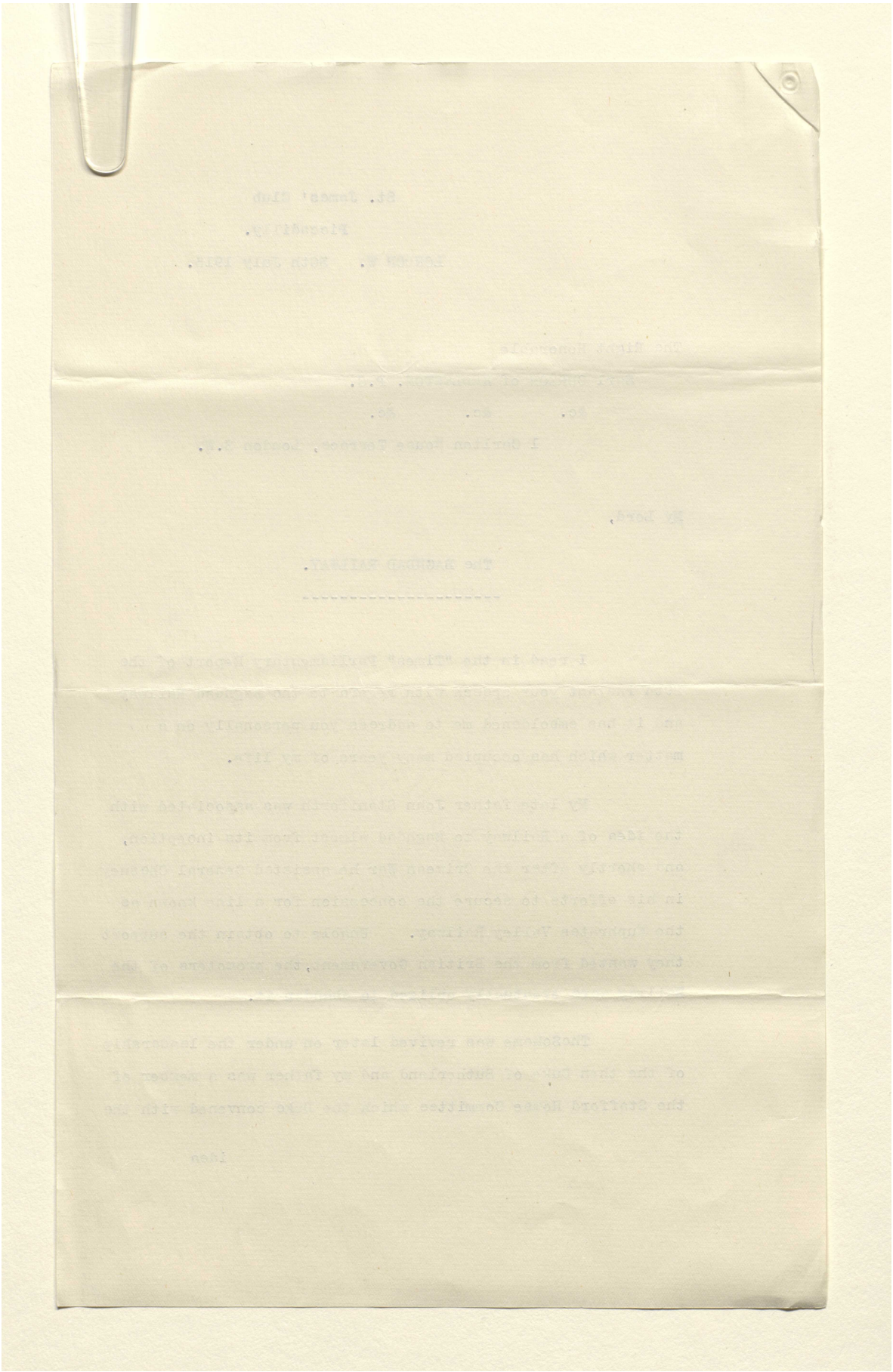

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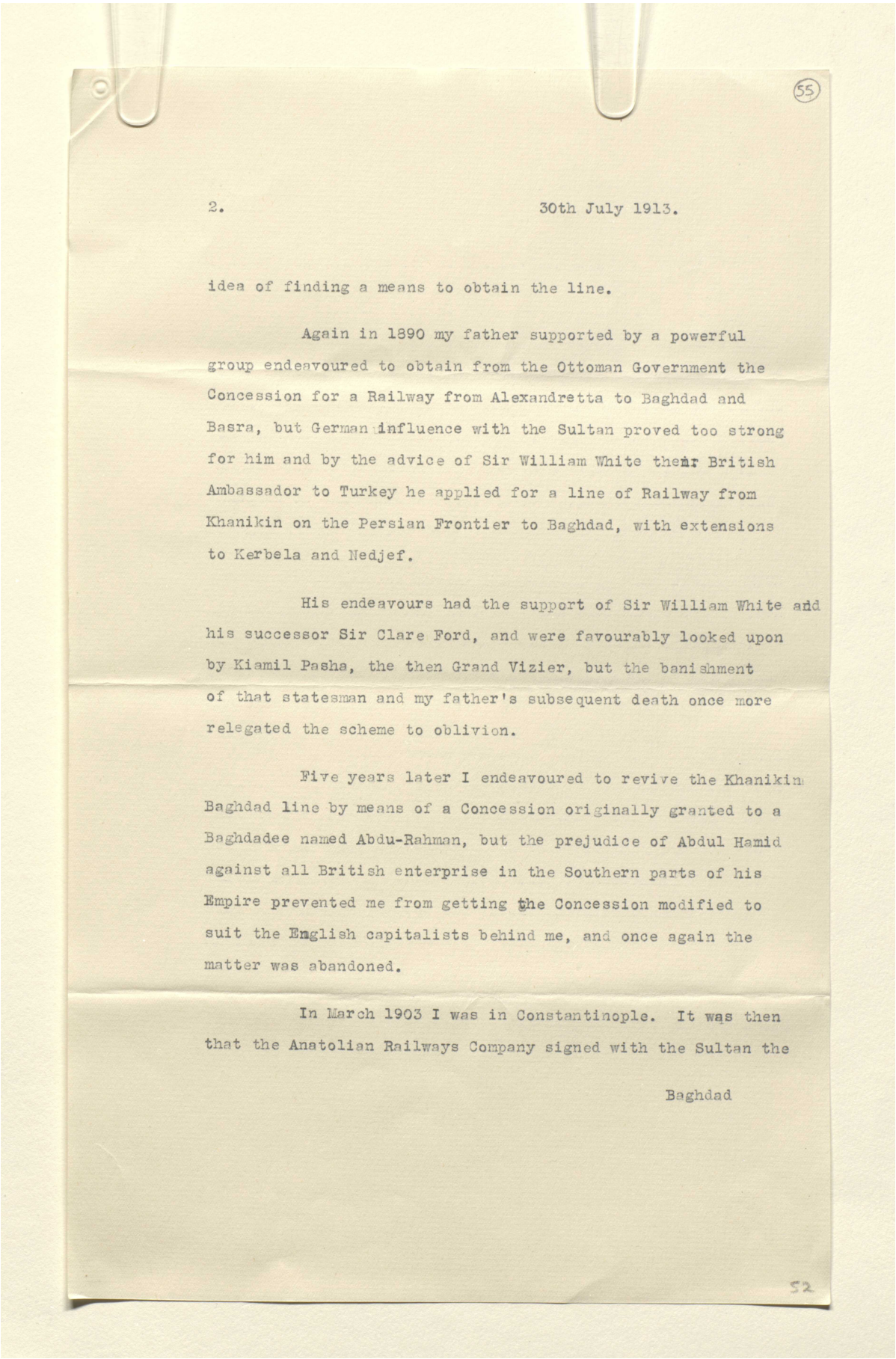

(55)

idea of finding a means to obtain the line.

Again in 1890 my father supported by a powerful group endeavoured to obtain from the Ottoman Government the Concession for a Railway from Alexandretta to Baghdad and Basra, but German influence with the Sultan proved too strong for him and by the advice of Sir William White then British Ambassador to Turkey he applied for a line of Railway from Khanikin on the Persian Frontier to Baghdad, with extensions to Kerbela and Nedjef.

His endeavours had the support of Sir William White and his successor Sir Clare Ford, and were favourably looked upon by Kiamil Pasha, the then Grand Vizier, but the banishment of that statesman and my father's subsequent death once more relegated the scheme to oblivion.

Five years later I endeavoured to revive the Khanikin Baghdad line by means of a Concession originally granted to a Baghdadee named Abdu-Rahman, but the prejudice of Abdul Hamid against all British enterprise in the Southern parts of his Empire prevented me from getting the Concession modified to suit the English capitalists behind me, and once again the matter was abandoned.

In March 1903 I was in Constantinople. It was then that the Anatolian Railways Company signed with the Sultan the

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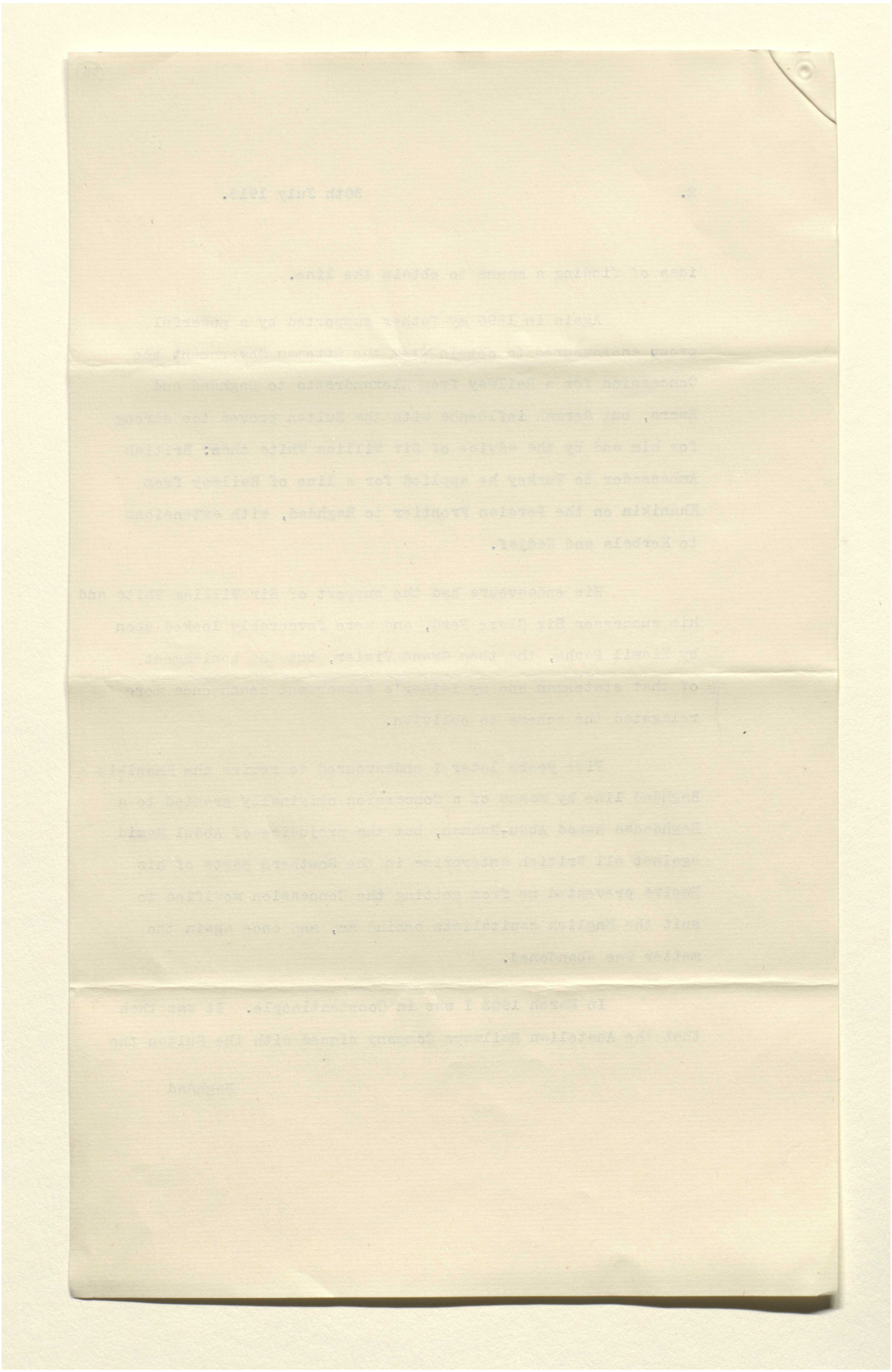

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 30th July 1913.

Baghdad Railway Convention by which the Anatolian Railways were to be continued from Konia via Baghdad and Basra to a point to be decided, on the Persian Gulf.

This line was to be completed within eight years. A heavy kilometric guarantee was granted to become operative on every 200 kilometres completed.

The German Company was to have the option to construct ALL BRANCH LINES TOWARDS THE MEDITERRANEAN and certain branches were approved in the Concession, including one to the other side of the line from Sadije, a point some sixty miles ABOVE Baghdad, to Khanikin. It was, however, stipulated that no branch should be constructed until the direct line was completed to Baghdad, and also that the direct line should be built from railhead.

The Anatolian Railways Company constructed the first section to Eregli, and then laid the rails as far as Burgulu, practically the entrance to the Taurus range. The difficulties of the Taurus mountains caused the Company to petition the Sultan to be allowed to commence the next section below the Taurus range, but Abdul Hamid, while willing to grant an extension of the time agreed on, would not listen to any proposals to commence a new section before the Taurus section had been built.

It

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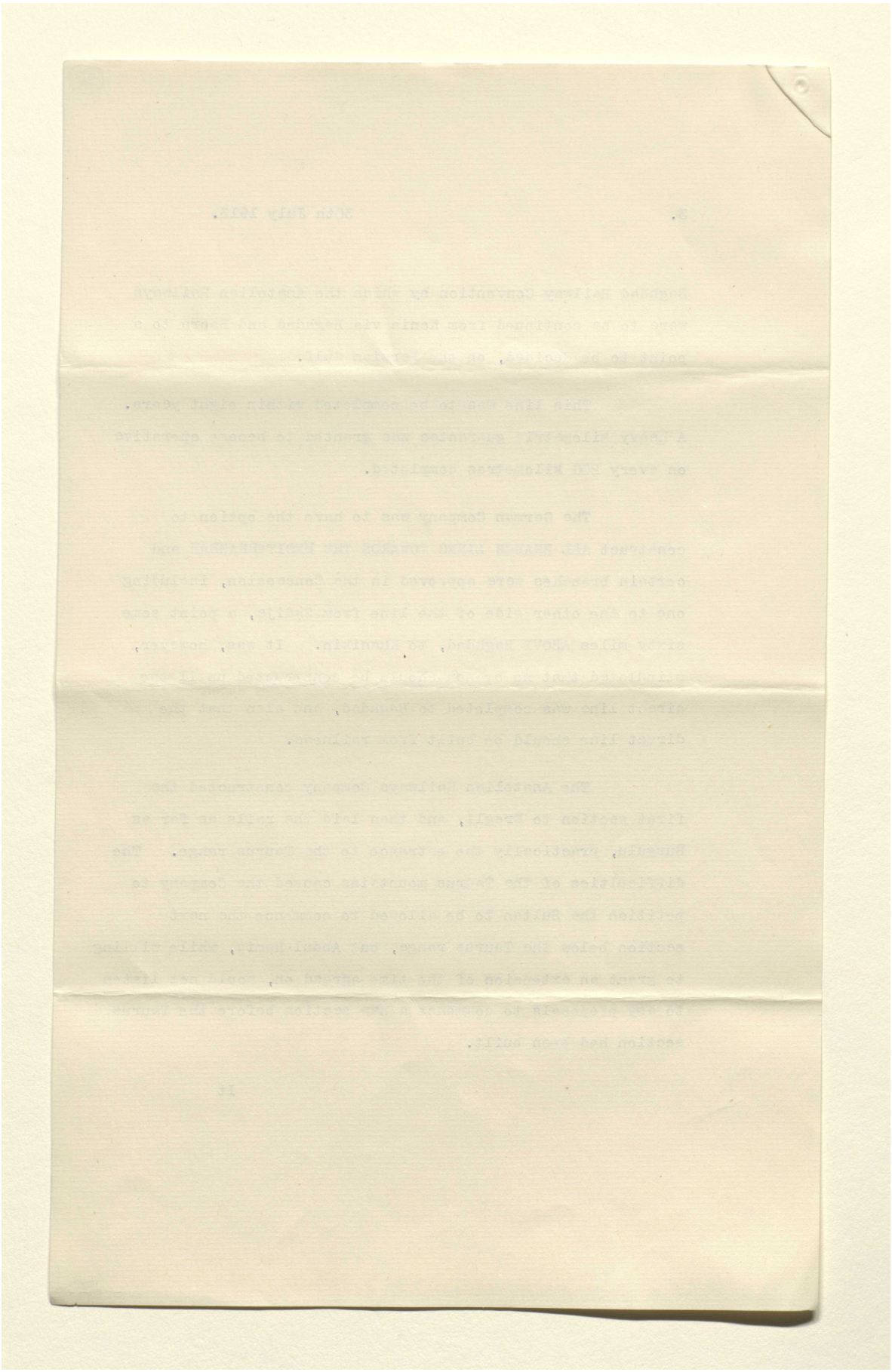

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4. 30th July 1913.

It was thought by many people who knew the difficulty attendant on the construction of this section that the line would have to be abandoned.

When Abdul Hamid was deposed, I again got together a group with the idea of obtaining a Concession for a line from Baghdad to Khanikin and entered into a long correspondence with the Foreign Office, endeavouring to show the enormous value of such a line to the British trade from the Persian Gulf, and hoping to get the support of His Majesty's Government for the Scheme.

At that time I also had frequent interviews with Sir Richmond Ritchie, then Chief Clerk and later Permanent Under Secretary of State for India. He highly approved of the scheme and so far as was in his power gave me every encouragement and assistance.

I was treated with the greatest courtesy and consideration at the India Office, and had it lain with them I should have had all the official support I needed.

The Foreign Office, however, inclined to the view that the Baghdad Railway Convention shut the door to all other Railway communication between Baghdad and Khanikin. Having copies of the Convention I was able to show that there was nothing in it to prevent me building a line direct from

Baghdad

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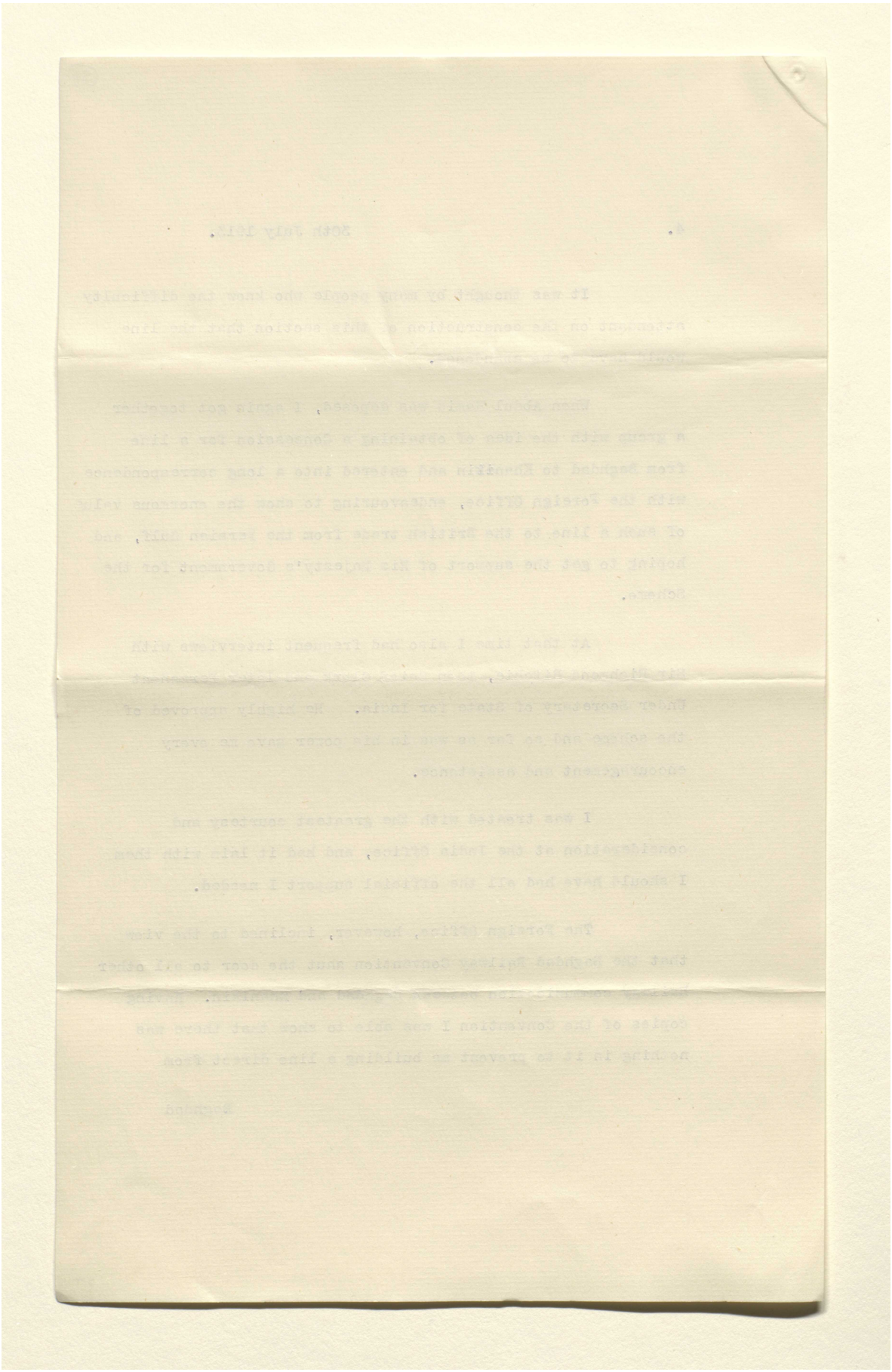

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 30th July 1913.

Baghdad to Khanikin along the old caravan route.

In the beginning of 1911 I obtained the support of a powerful group and proceeded to Constantinople to make another attempt to secure this Concession.

I had previously been to the Foreign Office and at their request had given them a written statement as to what I intended doing, which Statement they forwarded to Sir Gerard Lowther, the British Ambassador to Turkey. Before leaving London I had a final interview with Sir Francis Campbell, Chief Clerk at the Foreign Office, and was assured by him that I had their fullest sympathy, and that they would in no way oppose my project -- quite the contrary. I am quoting his very words.

The question of official support they held over for further consideration.

I arrived in Constantinople in the middle of March at the very time that Mr. Huguenin, the representative of the Baghdad Railway, had persuaded the Turkish Government to allow the Company to commence work on the section below the Taurus Range while continuing work on the Taurus section: and further had obtained a new Concession to build a branch from Alexandretta to the main line, and also to make extensive Harbour Works at

Alexandretta

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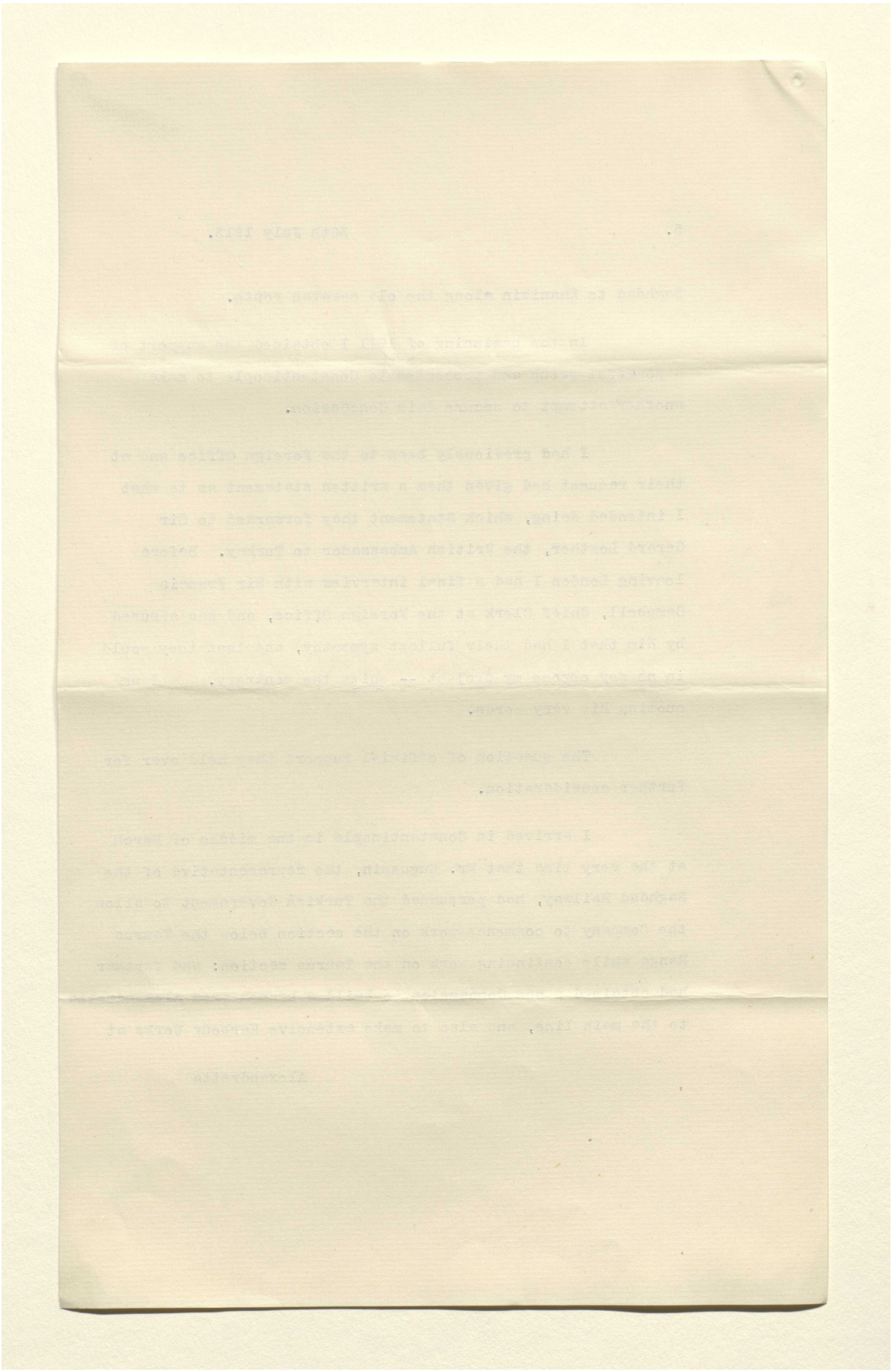

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(59)

6. 30th July 1913.

Alexandretta. These Concessions were in direct contravention of the spirit and the letter of the Baghdad Railway Convention.

I made my proposals to the Turkish Government, and I was given very clearly to understand that I must have the official support of the British Ambassador if I wished to get them seriously considered.

I was not new to Constantinople and its politics and was able to get behind the scenes in a way impossible for a stranger, and was told very frankly that I was asking for a Concession which, if granted, would seriously interfere with German aims on the Persian trade. It was admitted that Great Britain had certain established trade rights in the region of Baghdad and that the Railway I proposed to build would be of paramount importance to those rights: but it was strongly argued that under such circumstances it was only to be expected that I ought to come with the official support of the British Ambassador if I wished those rights to be safeguarded.

Sir Gerard Lowther, to whom I went with a strong introduction, and who also had received from the Foreign Office a copy of my Memorandum, found himself unable to move in the matter without specific instructions from the Foreign Office. He was extremely courteous but owned he did not attach any great importance to the projected line, and he was very

sceptical

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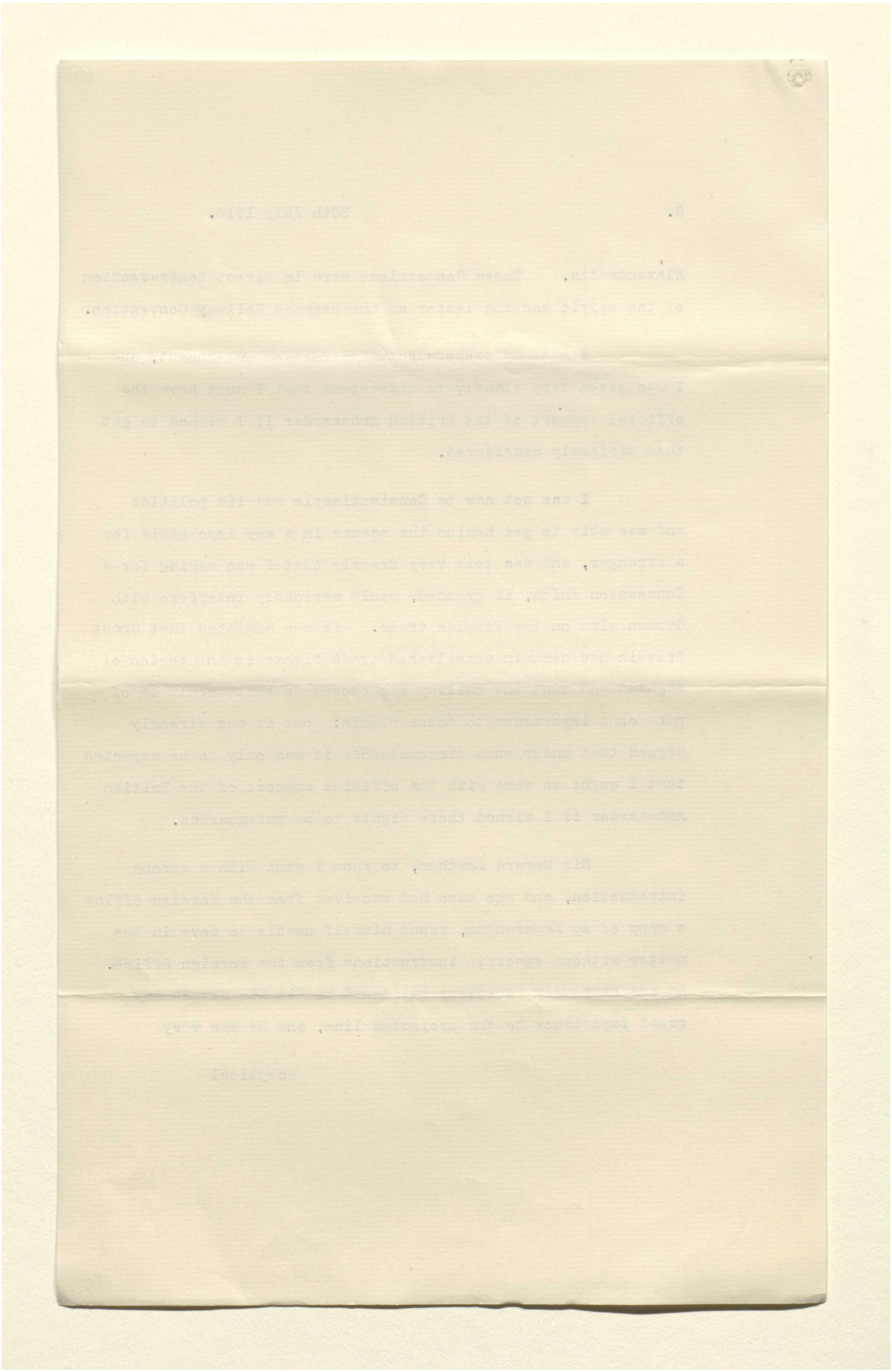

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sceptical as to my obtaining it even with the support of the British Government.

I returned to England and endeavoured to get that support, giving an account of my experiences in Constantinople.

At the same time I offered to furnish a letter from a leading Bank addressed to the Foreign Office to satisfy them as to my ability to comply with all the demands of the Turkish Government.

I was asked to make a written request and after some delay received an answer to the effect that after due consideration the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs regretted that in view of certain political considerations His Majesty's Government was unable to accede to my request for official support for my project.

Since that time I have endeavoured without success to obtain a more favourable answer. I have also endeavoured to obtain the Concession without the aid of Great Britain, and during the last Kiamil Administration my hopes were high, but the Balkan War put a stop to all businesswith the Sublime Porte and with the fall of Kiamil I lost my best support in Turkey.

Once more the Young Turk Party is in the ascendant

but

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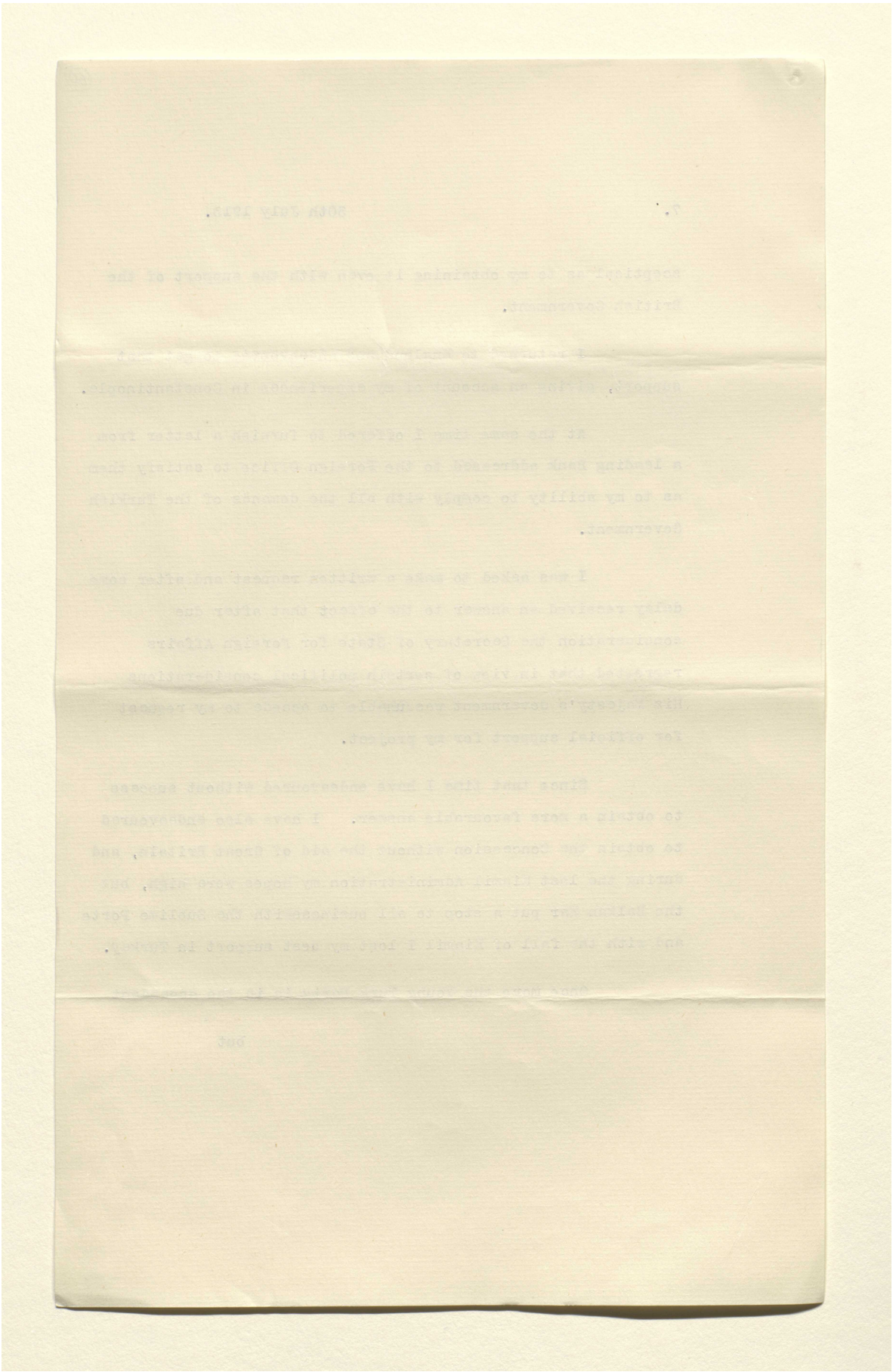

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but it is a chastened Young Turk Party, and the Germanophile element is not conspicuous in the new Administration.

Baghdad now has a voice in political and administrative questions, and Baghdad is all for commercial expansion.

I am convinced that if my project were supported by His Majesty's Government I should succeed in obtaining this Concession which would give a great impetus to the trade of Baghdad, and I would submit, my Lord, that there are far higher considerations which should incline His Majesty's Government to support this project.

There is at present a considerable trade between the Persian Gulf and Khanikin. This trade is almost exclusively British and Indian. The merchandise is carried from Basra to Baghdad up the Tigris by a British Steam Navigation Company, and from Baghdad to Khanikin by caravan, on which latter place all the great trade routes of Persia converge.

Once the Germans have built their Railway to Baghdad and connected Khanikin with the main line at Sadije ABOVE Baghdad, they will be able to rail their goods over a highly guaranteed line from Alexandretta to the Persian frontier; and the Persian Gulf Trade will be wiped out.

Sir Edward Grey has argued that when the German line to Baghdad is completed, British goods from the Gulf can be

carried

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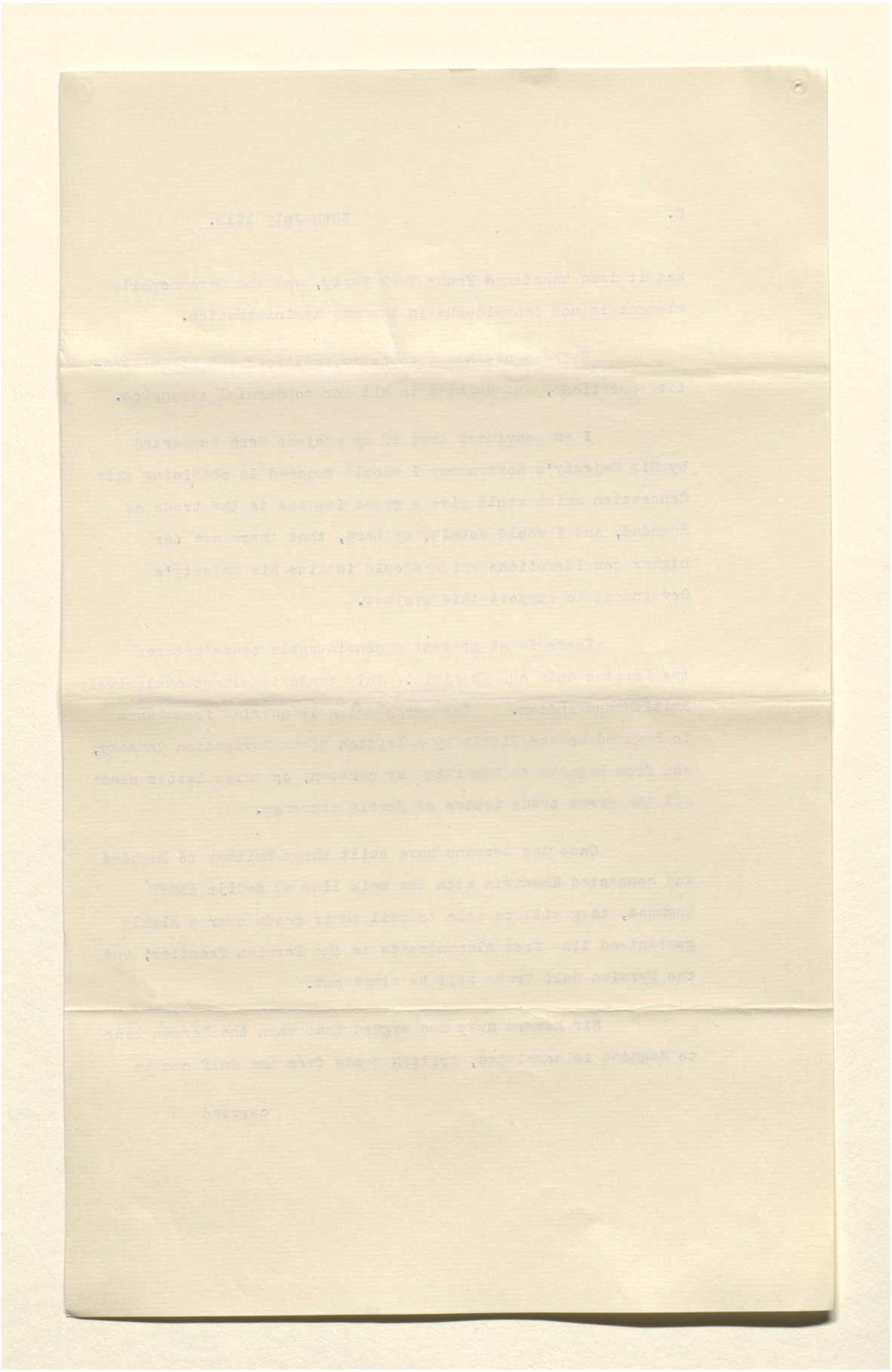

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(62)

carried to Khanikin via Sadije, and it has more than once been officially stated that the British Government will insist on equal rates for the carriage of the merchandise of all nationalities on this route. It is possible that the German Railway will give equal rights to all nationalities from Baghdad to Khanikin, but it must be borne in mind that there is no German trade worth mentioning from the Persian Gulf to, from, or via Baghdad so that German goods will be unaffected by the prohibitive rates which are sure to be put on all merchandise from the Gulf.

The aim of Germany has been from the very beginning to get into direct ~~trade~~ touch with Persian trade centres by means of the Baghdad Railway, and their goods can be brought to Alexandretta on German steamers and railed direct to Khanikin.

Is it likely that they will encourage competition from the Persian Gulf once they are masters of the situation?

There is only one way to save British interests in lower Asia Minor and to preserve the present British Trade with lower and middle Persia, and that is to construct a line from Baghdad to Khanikin direct under British auspices. The distance is ninety four miles, the country flat, and there are no engineering difficulties.

The Railway could be built and running within two years.

There

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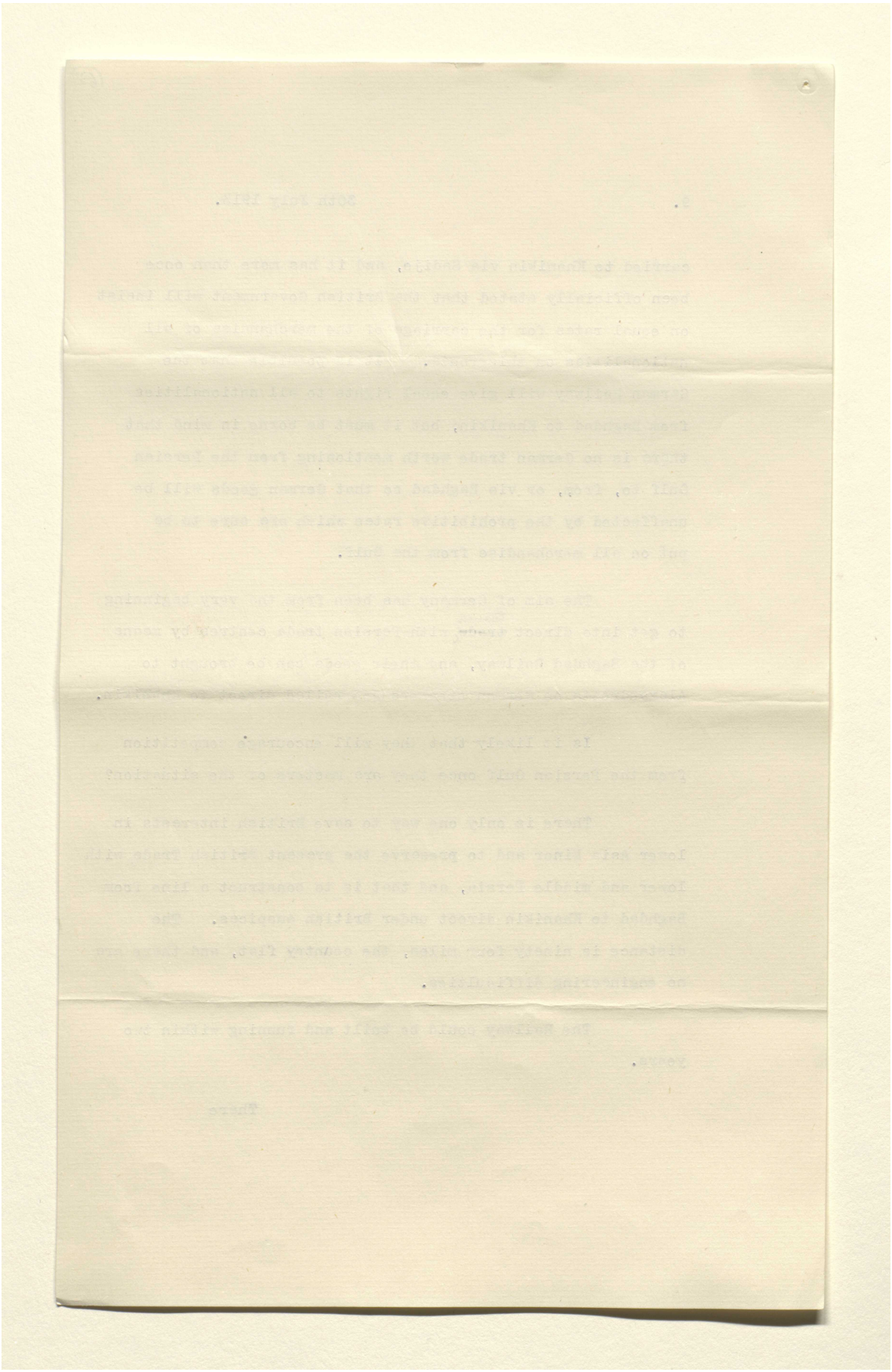

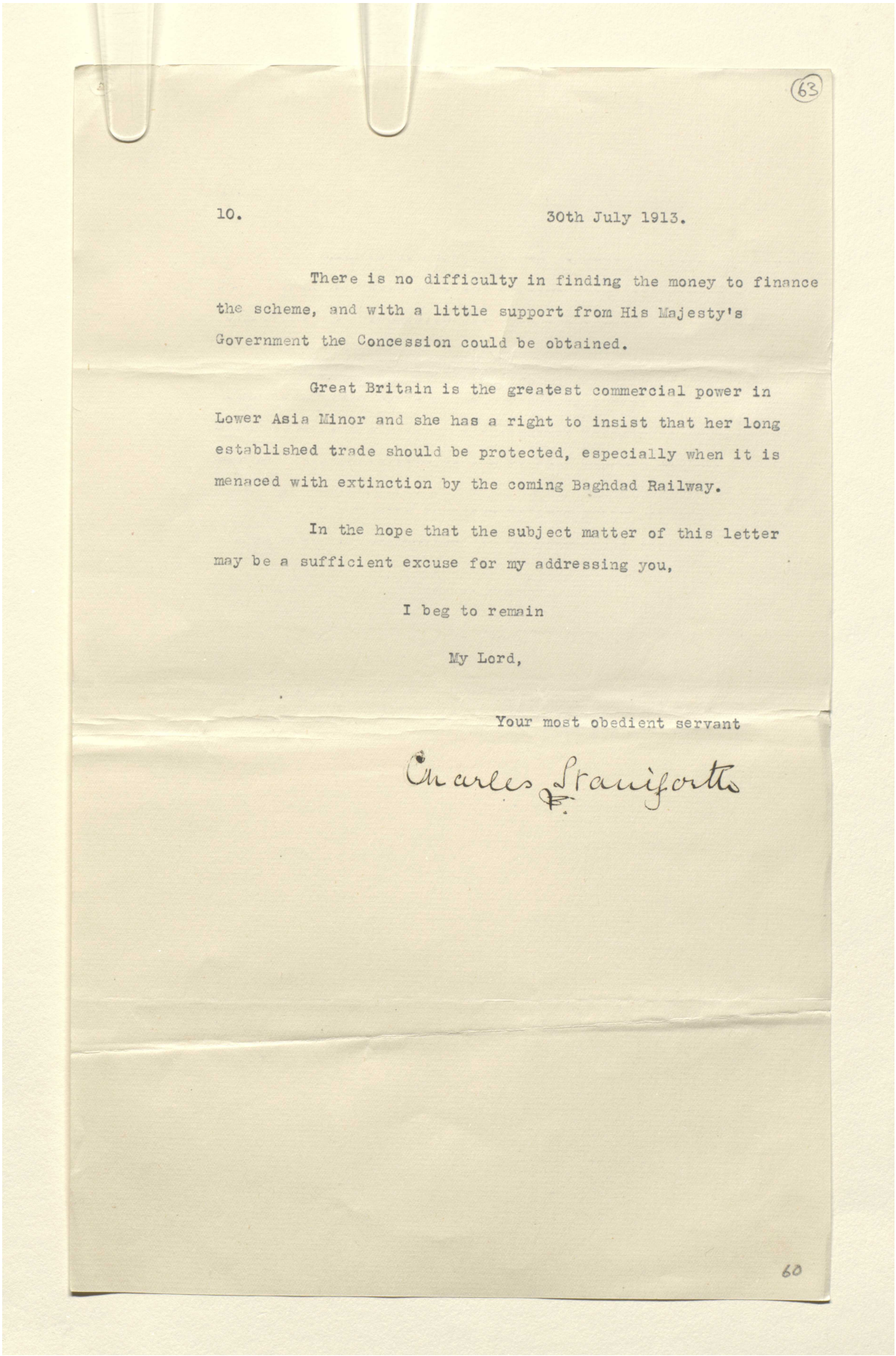

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10. 30th July 1913.

There is no difficulty in finding the money to finance the scheme, and with a little support from His Majesty's Government the Concession could be obtained.

Great Britain is the greatest commercial power in Lower Asia Minor and she has a right to insist that her long established trade should be protected, especially when it is menaced with extinction by the coming Baghdad Railway.

In the hope that the subject matter of this letter may be a sufficient excuse for my addressing you,

I beg to remain

My Lord,

Your most obedient servant

Charles Trevelyan

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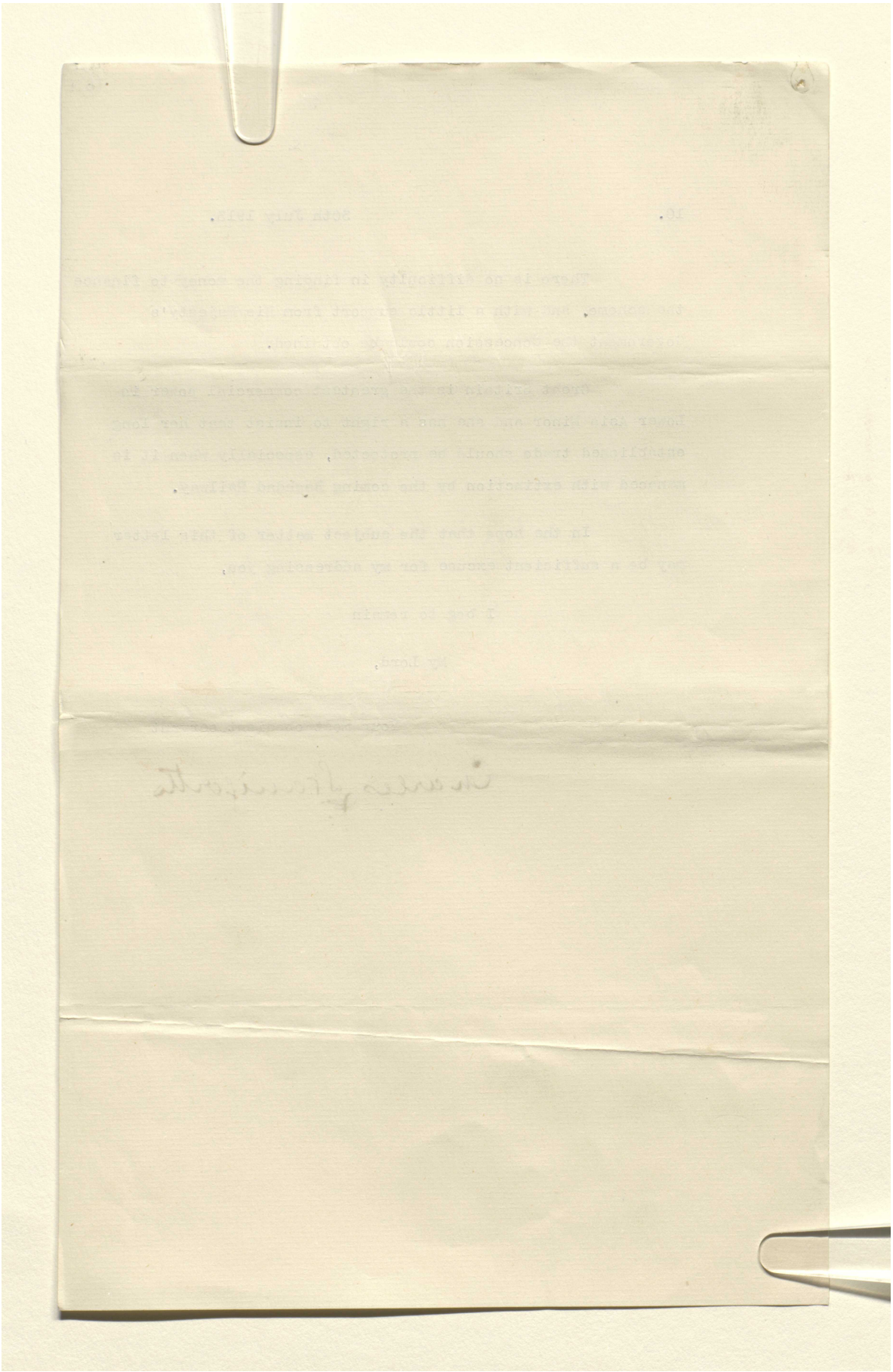

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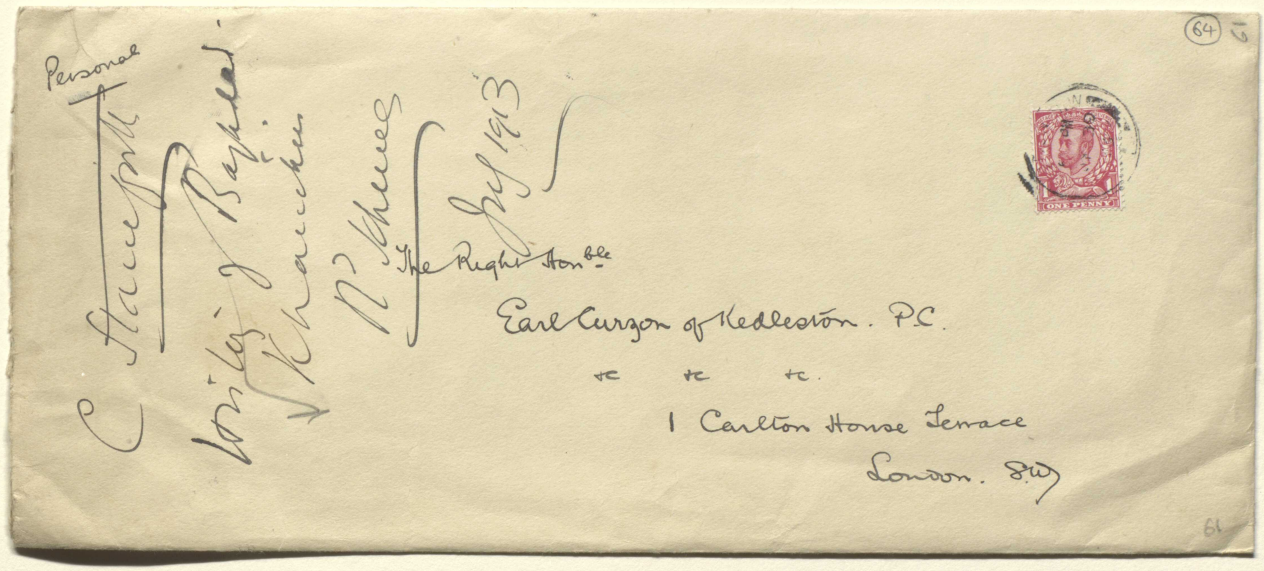

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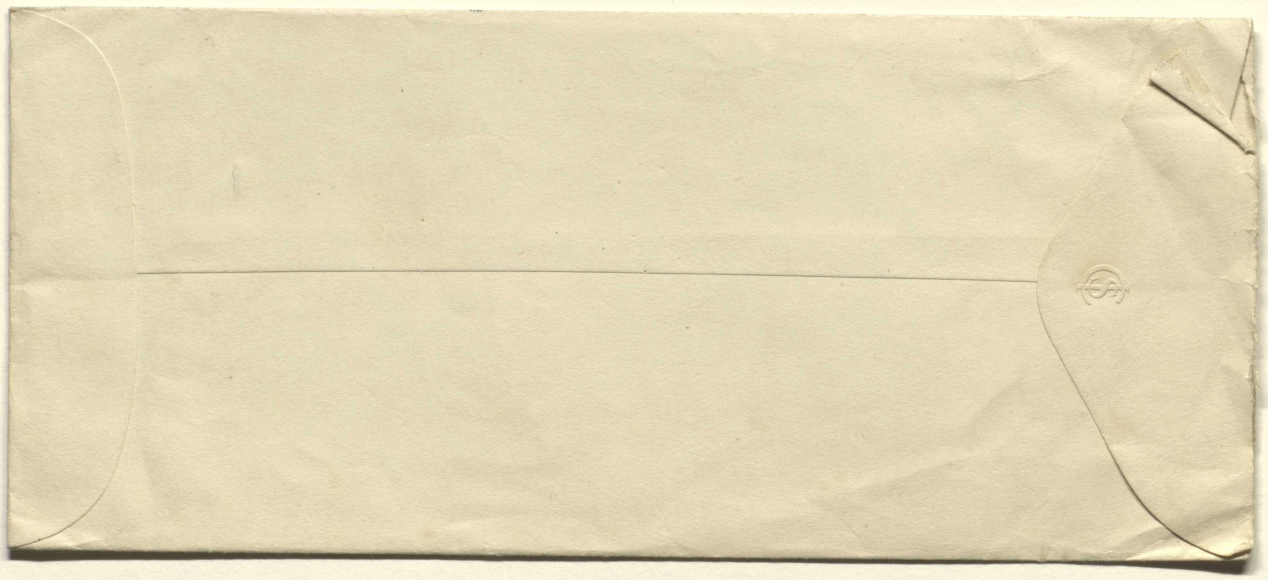

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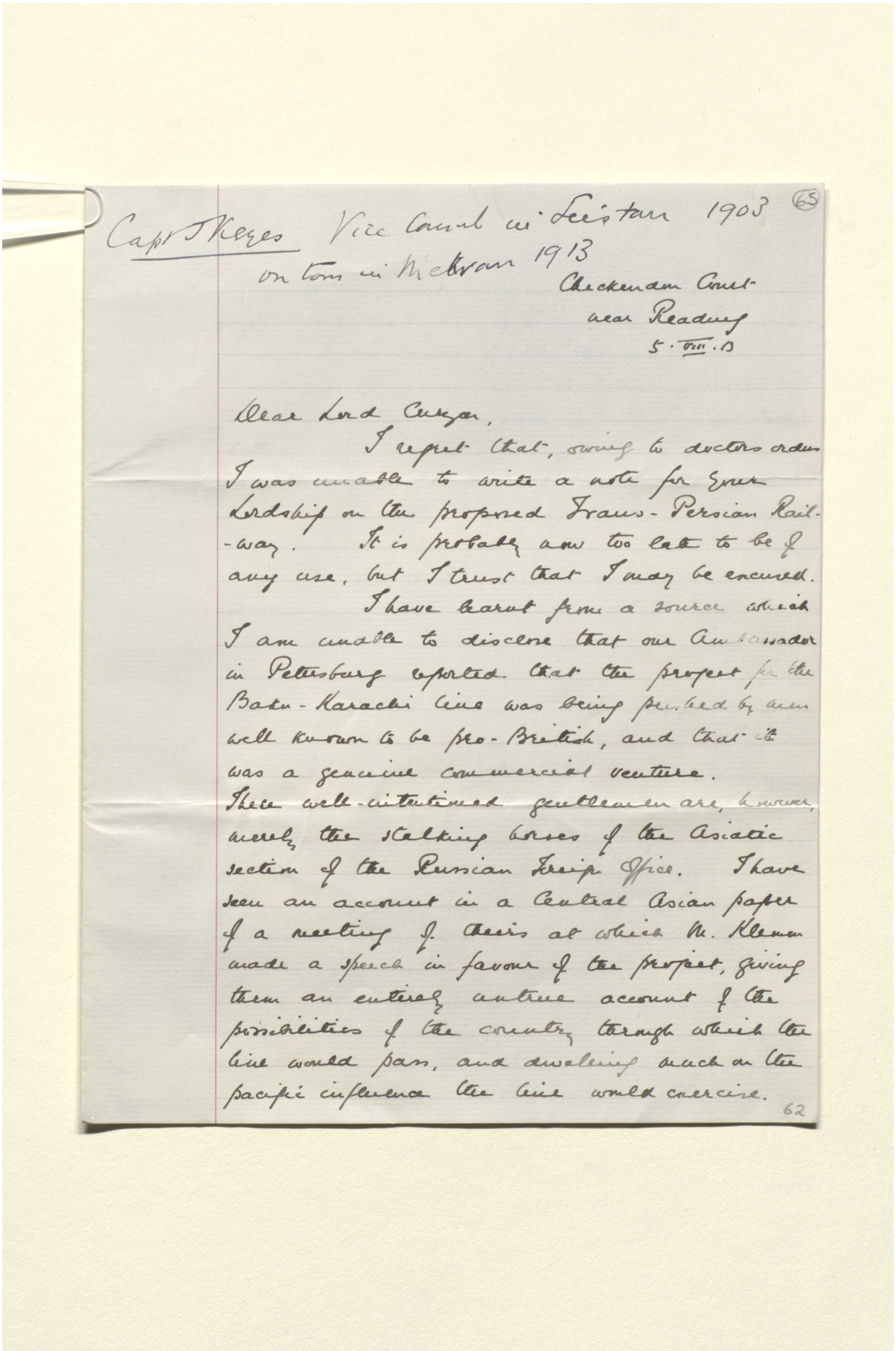

Capt J Keyes Vice Consul in Seistan 1903
on loan in Mekran 1913

(65)

Checkendon Court
near Reading
5. VIII. 13

Dear Lord Curzon,

I regret that, owing to doctors orders I was unable to write a note for your Lordship on the proposed Trans-Persian Railway. It is probably now too late to be of any use, but I trust that I may be excused.

I have learnt from a source which I am unable to disclose that our Ambassador in Petersburg reported that the project for the Baku-Karachi line was being pushed by men well known to be pro-British, and that it was a genuine commercial venture.

These well-intentioned gentlemen are, however, merely the stalking horses of the Asiatic section of the Russian Foreign Office. I have seen an account in a Central Asian paper of a meeting of theirs at which M. Klemm made a speech in favour of the project, giving them an entirely untrue account of the possibilities of the country through which the line would pass, and dwelling much on the pacific influence the line would exercise.

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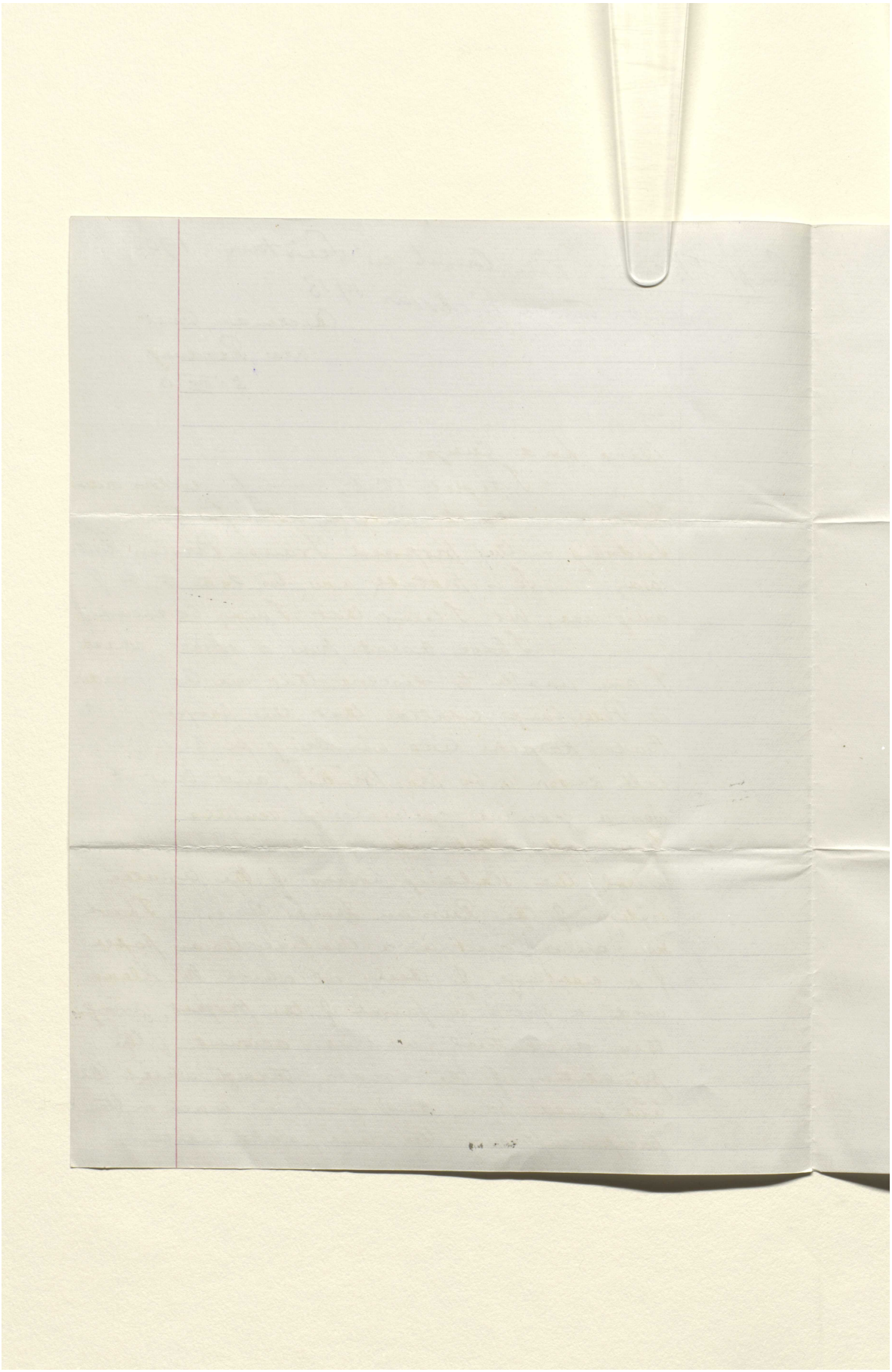

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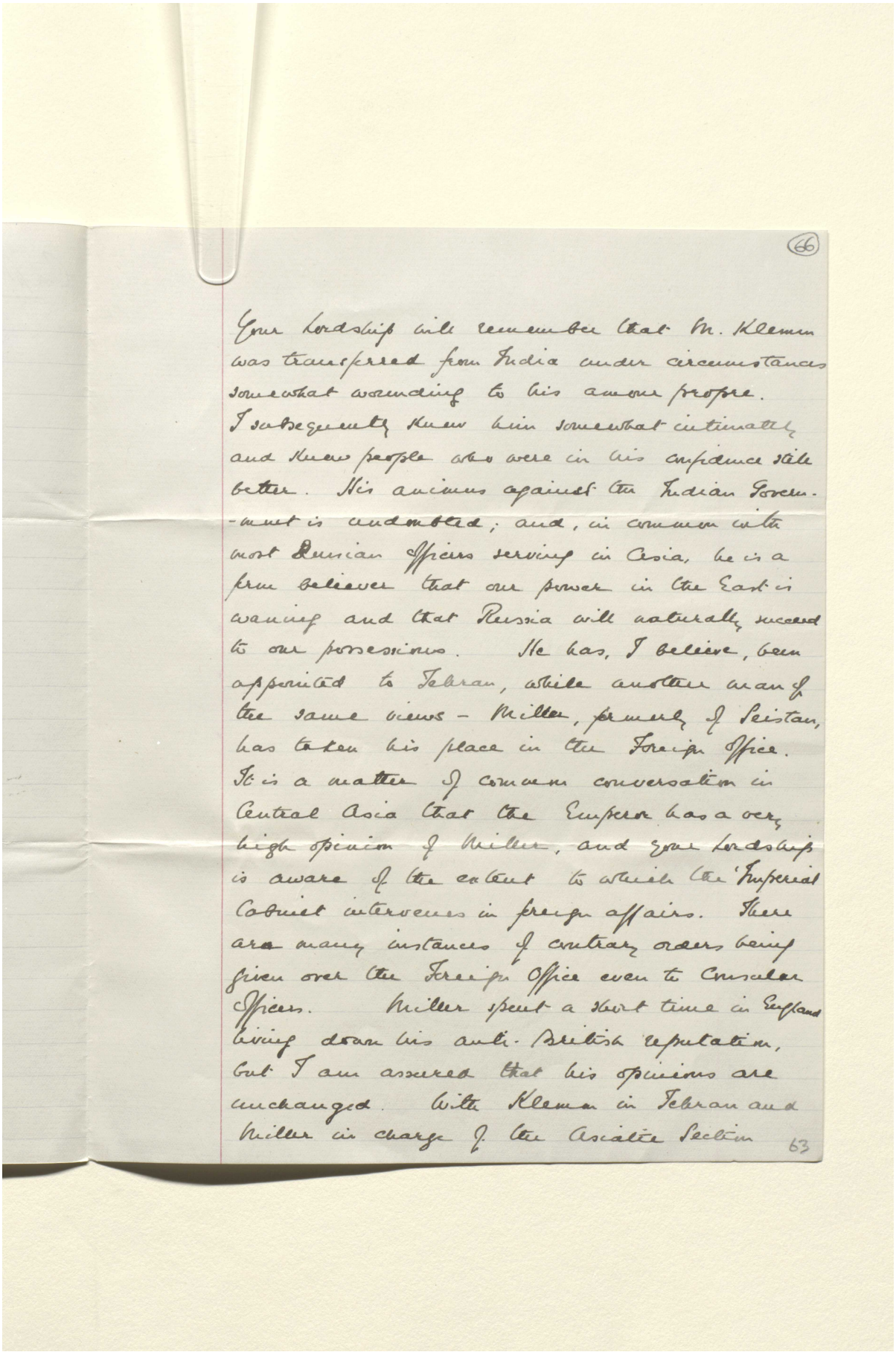

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Your Lordship will remember that M. Kleman was transferred from India under circumstances somewhat wounding to his amour propre. I subsequently knew him somewhat intimately and knew people who were in his confidence still better. His animus against the Indian Govern-ment is undoubted; and, in common with most Russian Officers serving in Asia, he is a firm believer that our power in the East is waning and that Russia will naturally succeed to our possessions. He has, I believe, been appointed to Tehran, while another man of the same views - Miller, formerly of Seistan, has taken his place in the Foreign Office. It is a matter of common conversation in Central Asia that the Emperor has a very high opinion of Miller, and your Lordship is aware of the extent to which the Imperial Cabinet intervenes in foreign affairs. There are many instances of contrary orders being given over the Foreign Office even to Consular Officers. Miller spent a short time in England living down his anti-British reputation, but I am assured that his opinions are unchanged. With Kleman in Tehran and Miller in charge of the Asiatic Section

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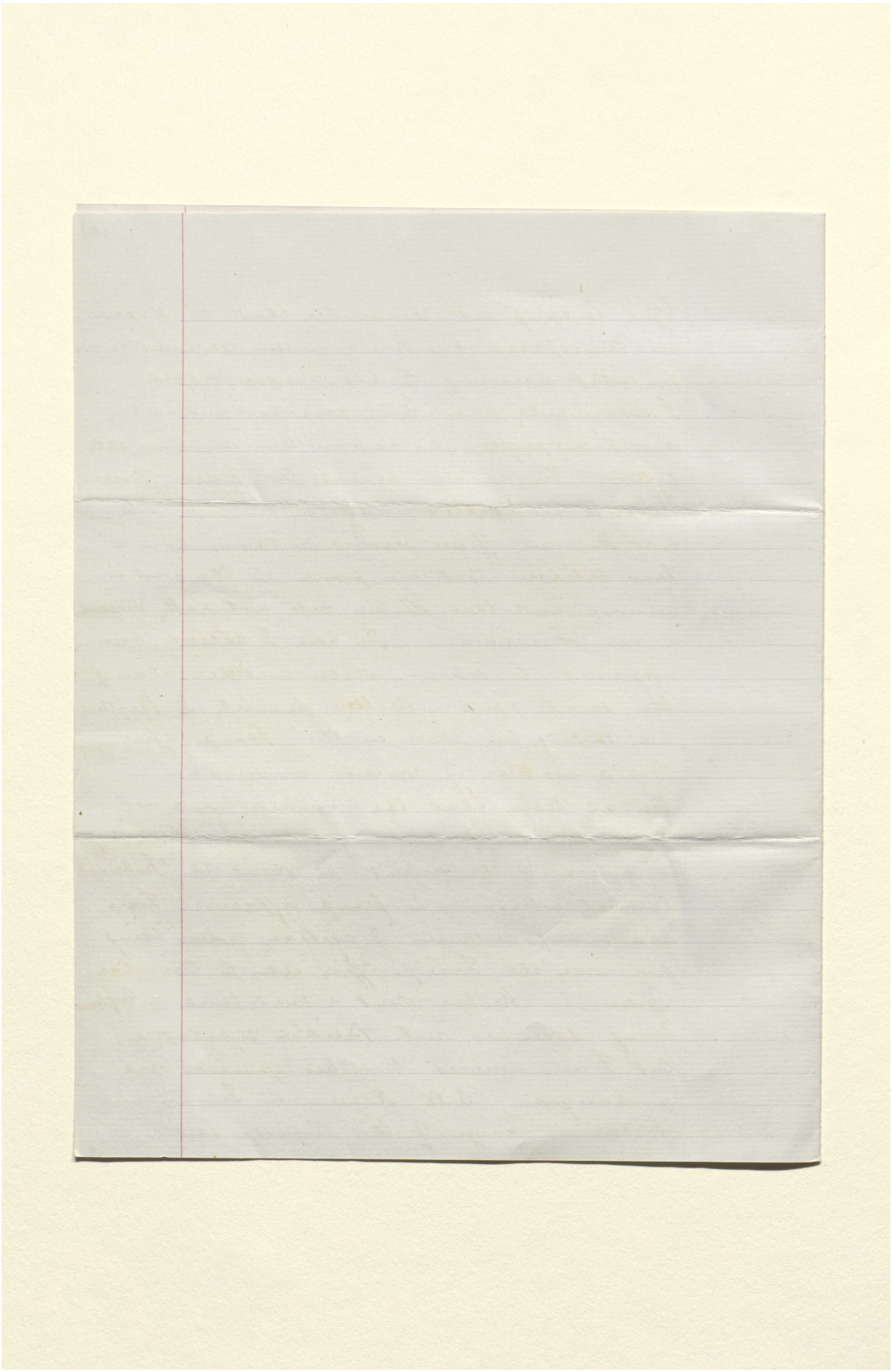

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one can be quite certain that M. Sazonov, who is notoriously not very much interested or well informed in Asiatic affairs, will not be in a position to weigh the reasonableness of any objections we may make to this or similar projects.

So much for the bona fides of the Trans-Persian Railway as a commercial undertaking.

I am convinced that the real promoters never expected that the whole of the railway would actually be built – they intentionally overshot the mark with a view to lessening our opposition to the construction of a line from Baku & via Tehran to Yazd and even Kerman – so much the better if they could get it to Bandar Abbas.

They seem to be in a fair way to get all the want. The Government of India has, while I understand, while opposing what was never intended, given in to the Baku-Tehran-Yazd-Kerman-Bandar Abbas alignment.

Even if we do not consider the commercial side of the question, which is much more favourable to Russia than to us, the strategic situation will be entirely changed.

As far as we understand Russia's dispo. 64

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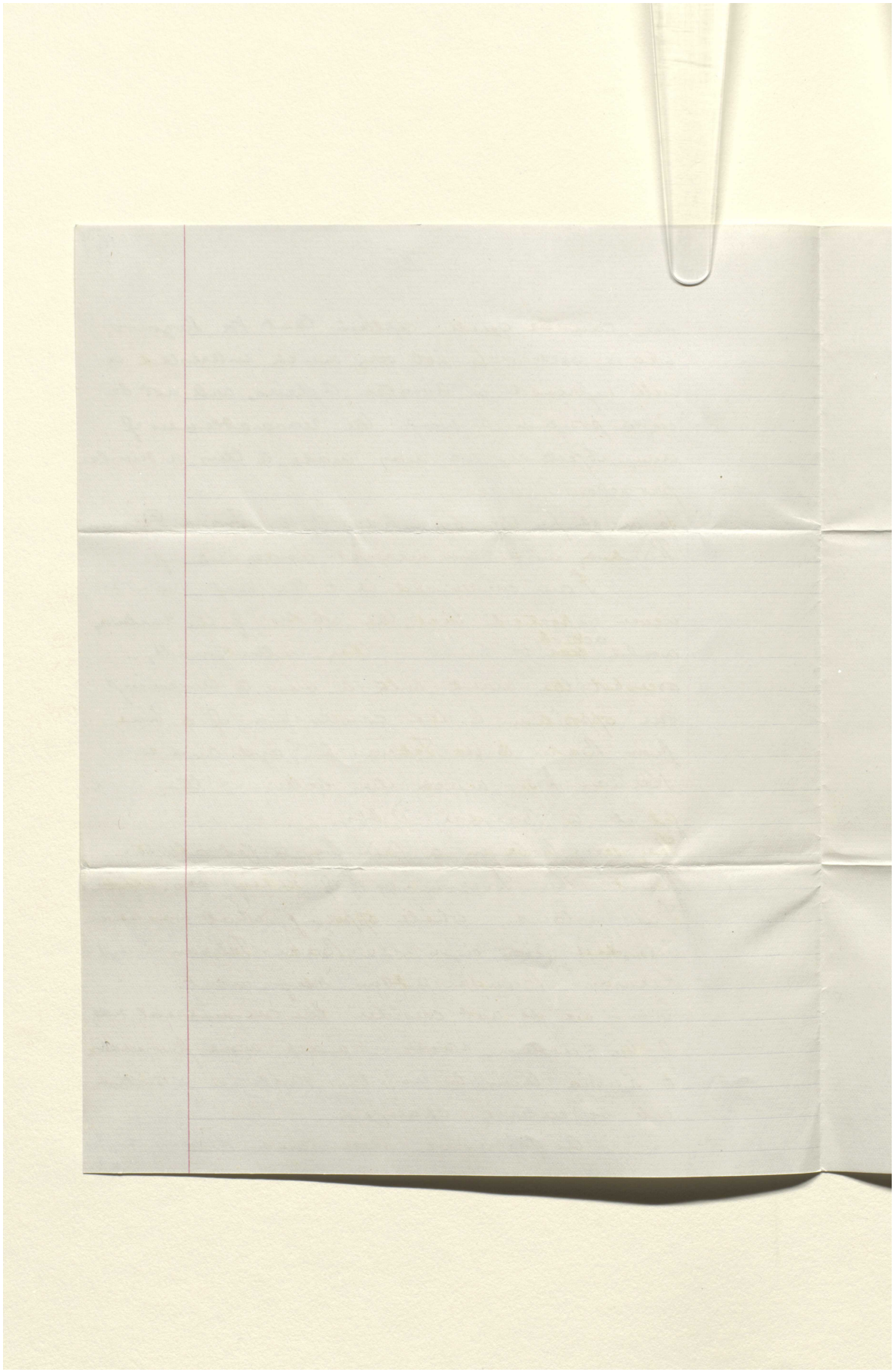

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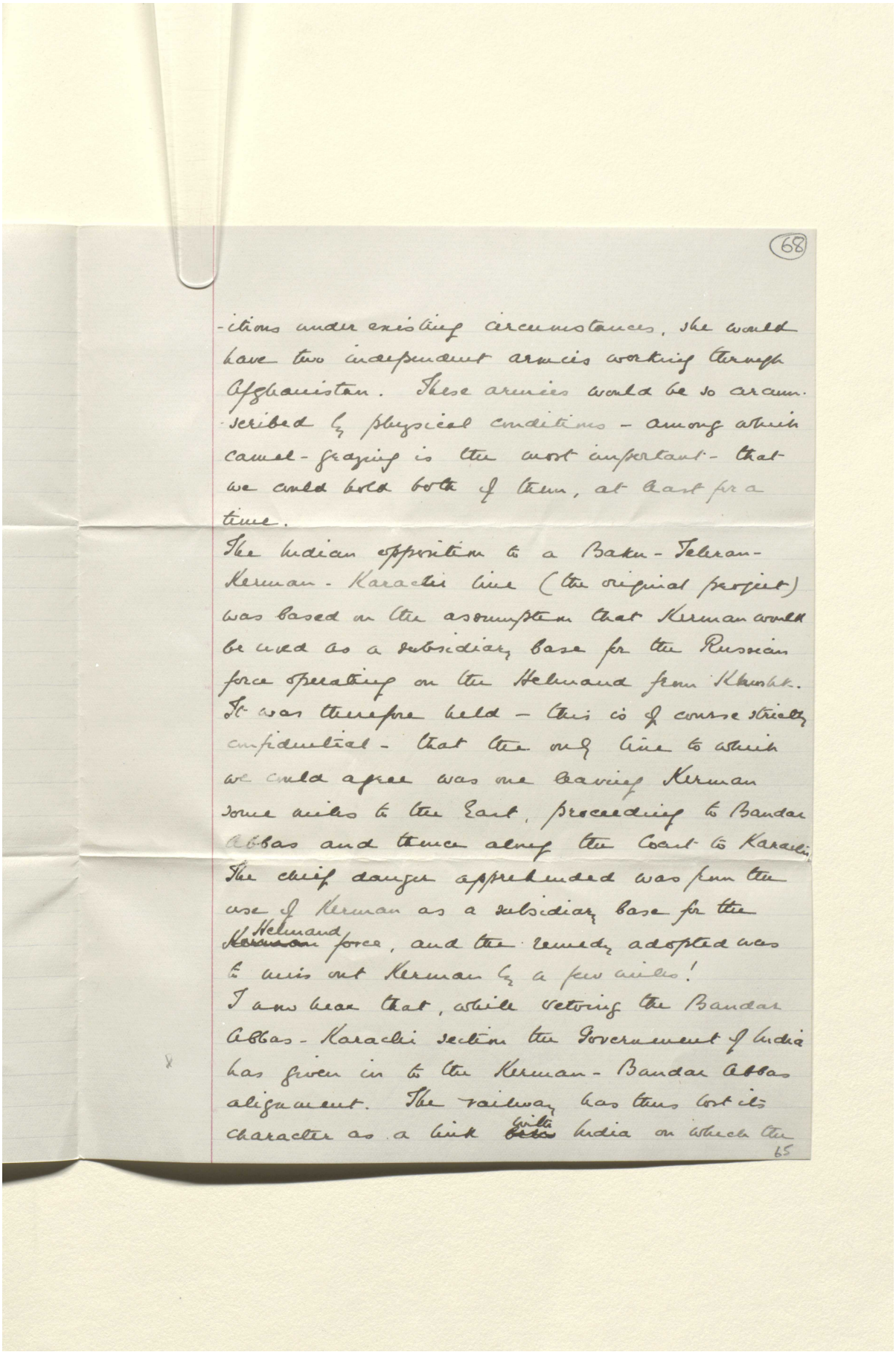

(68)

-itions under existing circumstances, she would have two independent armies working through Afghanistan. These armies would be so circumscribed by physical conditions - among which camel-forging is the most important - that we could hold both of them, at least for a time.

The Indian opposition to a Baku - Teheran - Kerman - Karachi line (the original project) was based on the assumption that Kerman would be used as a subsidiary base for the Russian force operating on the Helmand from Khanikin. It was therefore held - this is of course strictly confidential - that the only line to which we could agree was one leaving Kerman some miles to the East, proceeding to Bandar Abbas and thence along the Coast to Karachi. The chief danger apprehended was from the use of Kerman as a subsidiary base for the ~~Kerman~~ Helmand force, and the remedy adopted was to miss out Kerman by a few miles!

I am hear that, while vetoing the Bandar Abbas - Karachi section the Government of India has given in to the Kerman - Bandar Abbas alignment. The railway has thus lost its character as a link ~~with~~ with India on which the

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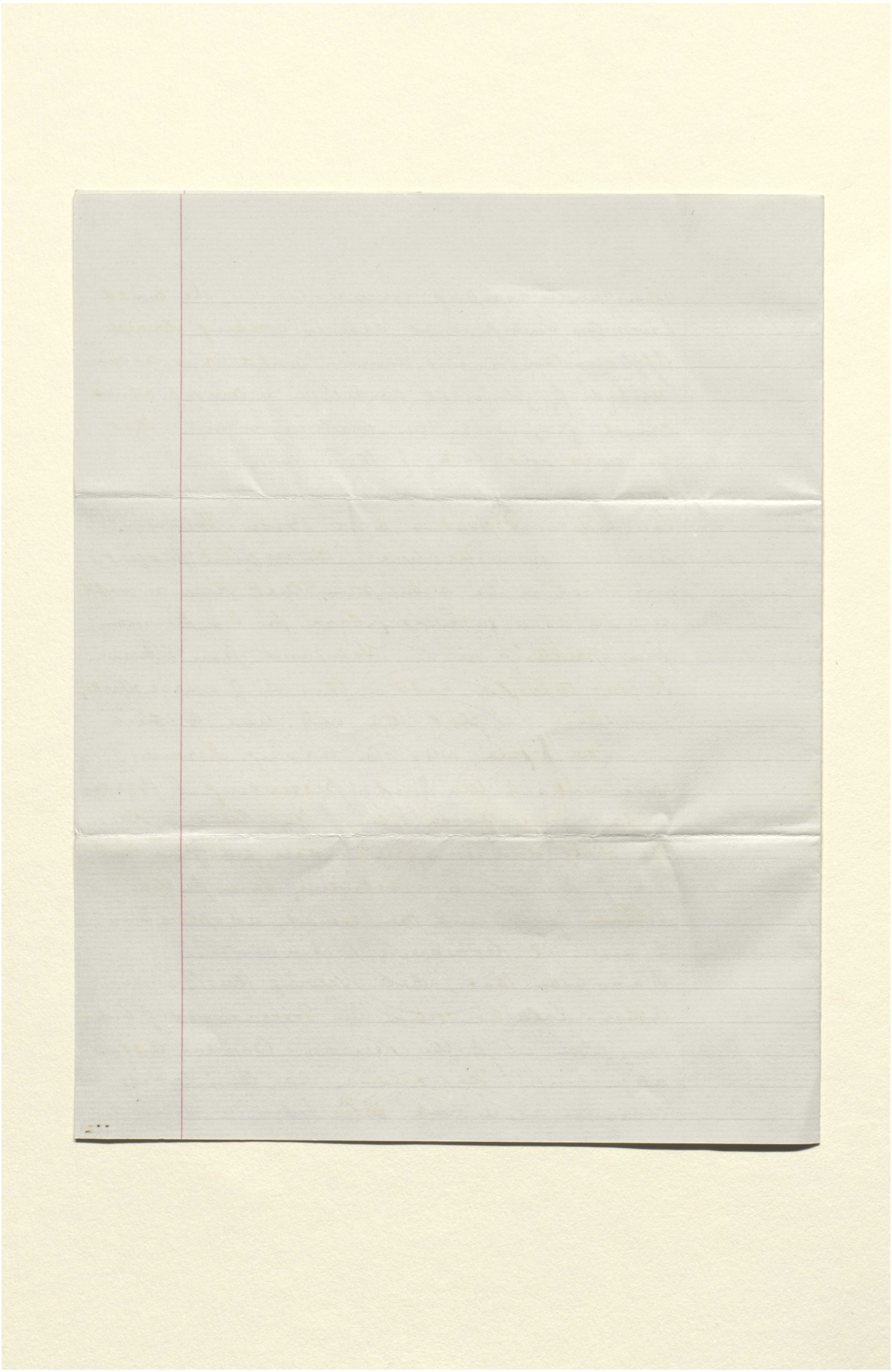

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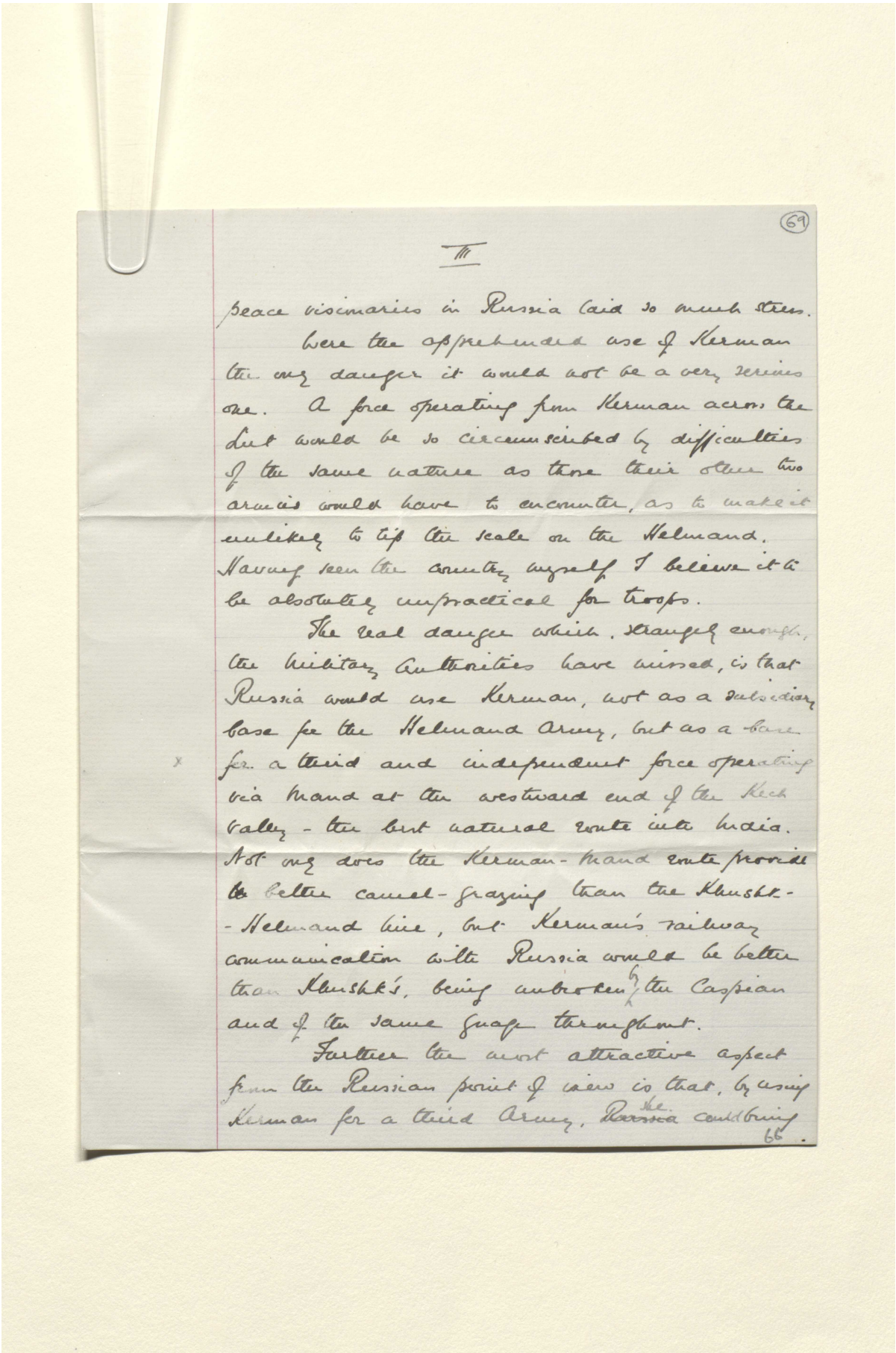

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III

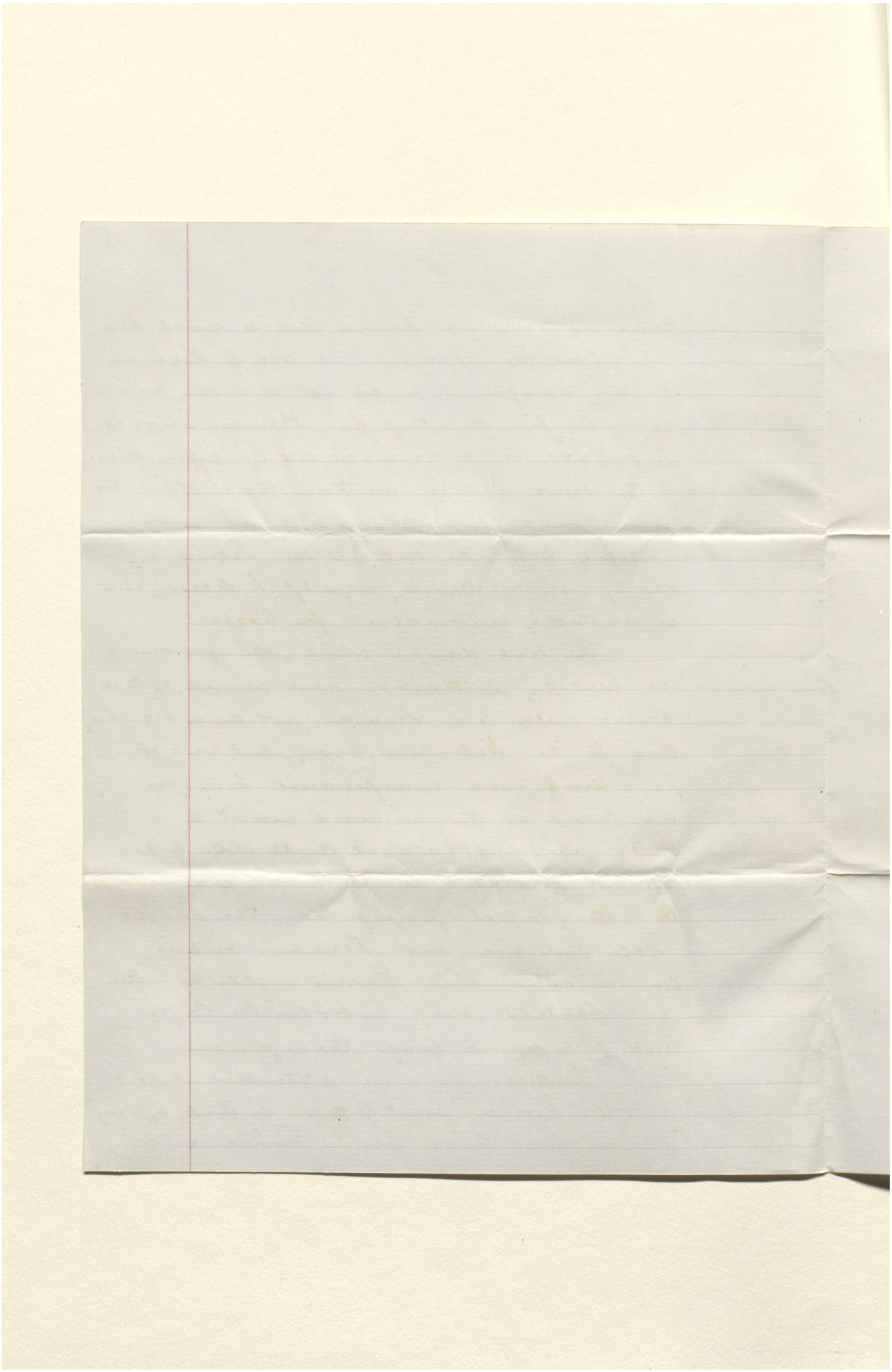
peace visionaries in Russia laid so much stress.

Were the apprehended use of Kerman the only danger it would not be a very serious one. A force operating from Kerman across the Lut would be so circumscribed by difficulties of the same nature as those their other two armies would have to encounter, as to make it unlikely to tip the scale on the Helmand. Having seen the country myself I believe it to be absolutely impractical for troops.

The real danger which, strangely enough, the military authorities have missed, is that Russia would use Kerman, not as a subsidiary base for the Helmand Army, but as a base for a third and independent force operating via Nand at the westward end of the Kech valley - the best natural route into India. Not only does the Kerman-Nand route provide better camel-grazing than the Khushk-Helmand line, but Kerman's railway communication with Russia would be better than Khushk's, being unbroken by the Caspian and of the same gauge throughout.

Further the most attractive aspect from the Russian point of view is that, by using Kerman for a third Army, Russia could bring

66



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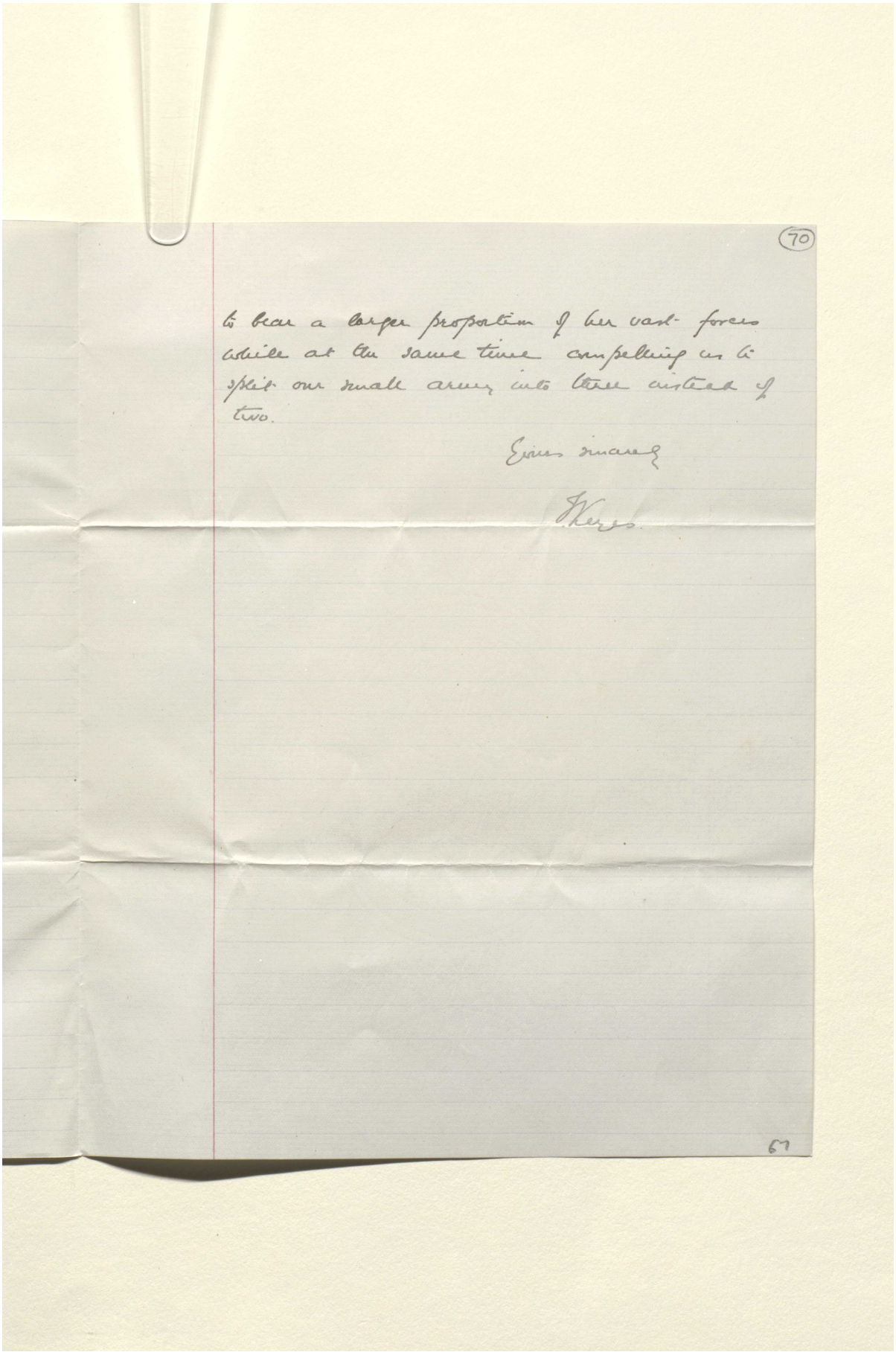

(70)

to bear a larger proportion of her vast forces
while at the same time compelling us to
split our small army into three instead of
two.

Yours sincerely

J. Keyes.

67

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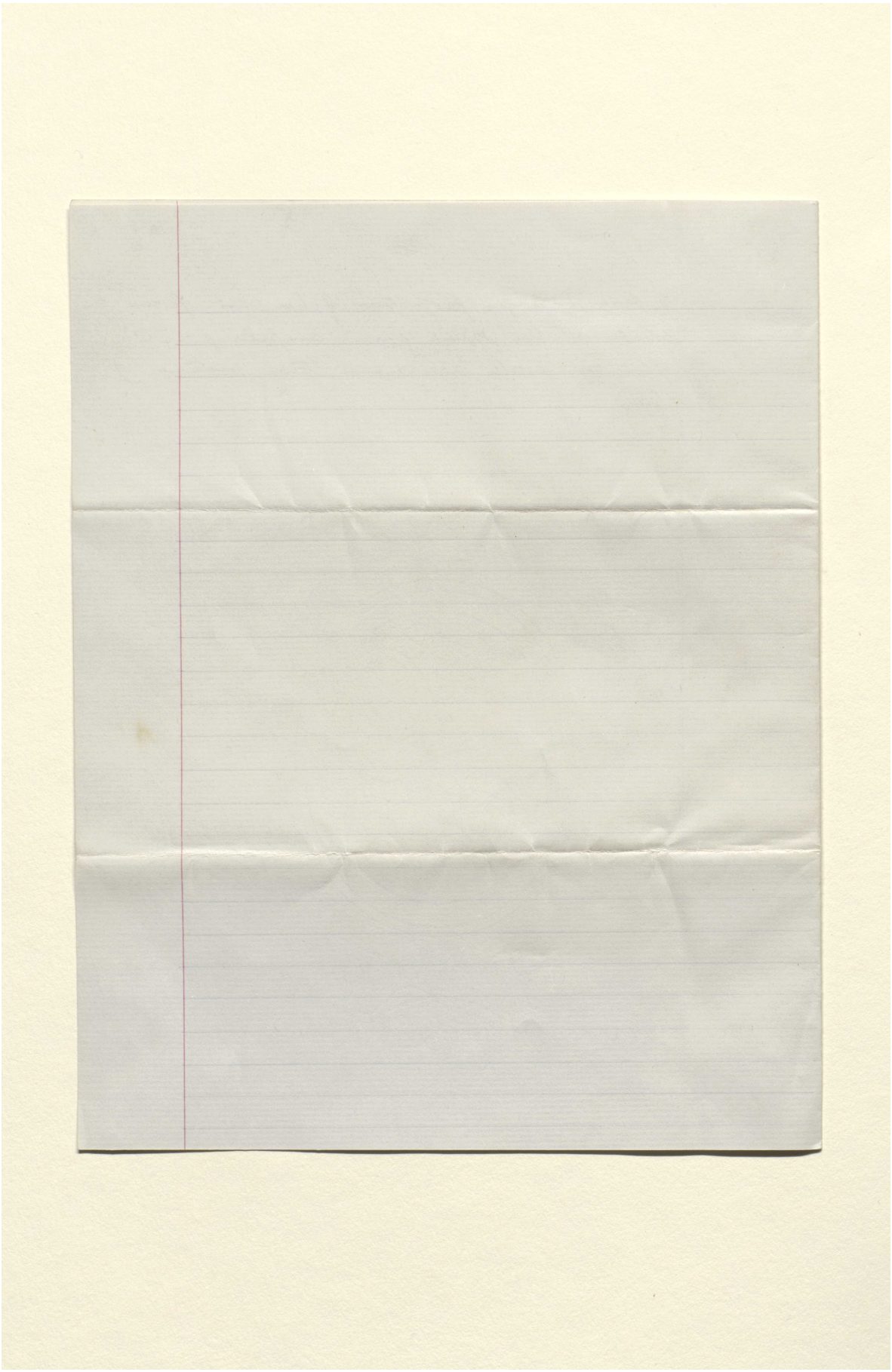

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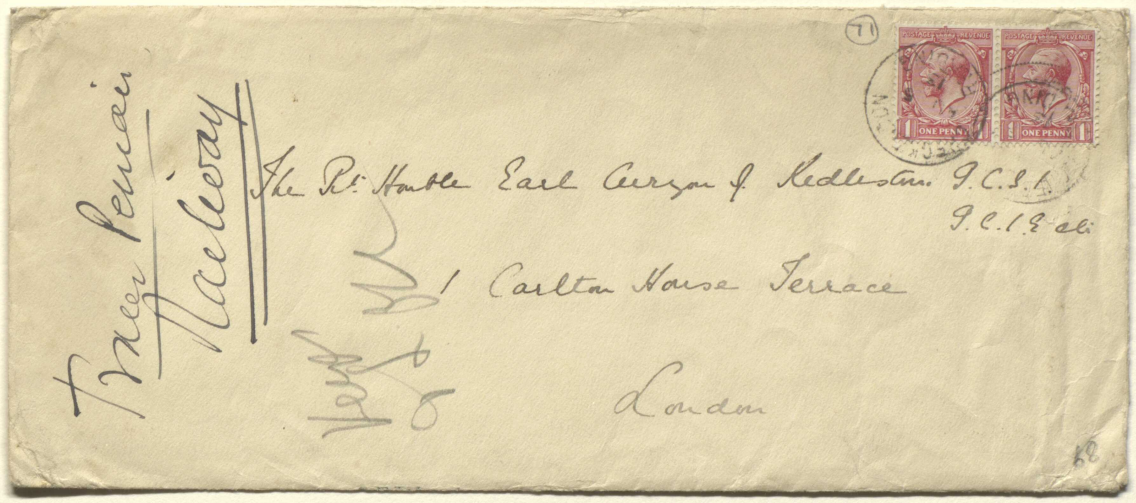

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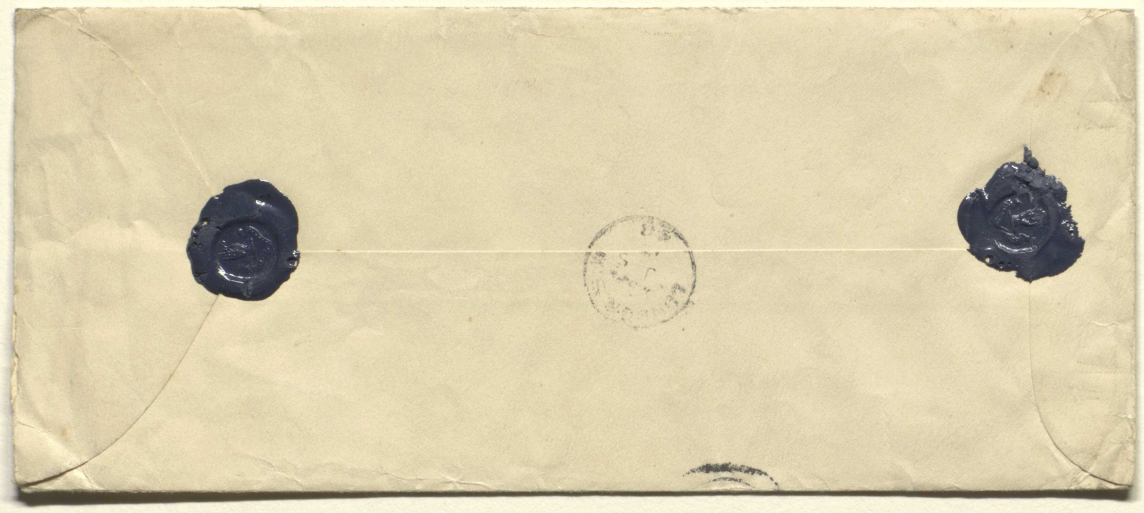

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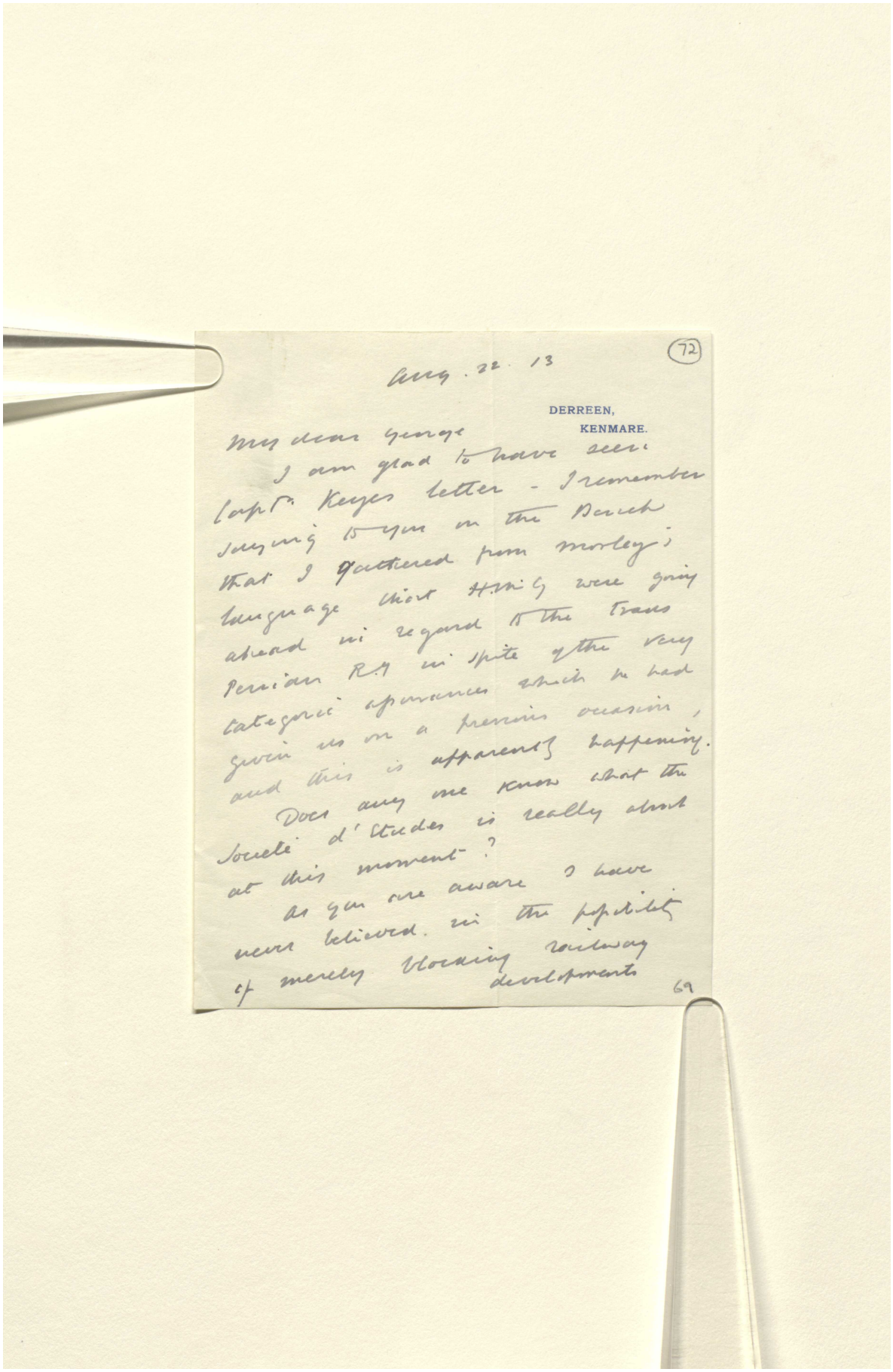

Aug. 22. 13

(72)

DERREEN,
KENMARE.

My dear George

I am glad to have seen Capt. Keyes letter - I remember saying to you in the Bench that I gathered from Morley's language that things were going ahead in regard to the Trans Persian R.y in spite of the very categoric assurances which we had given us on a previous occasion, and this is apparently happening. Does any one know what the Societé d'Etudes is really about at this moment?

As you are aware I have never believed in the possibility of merely local railway developments

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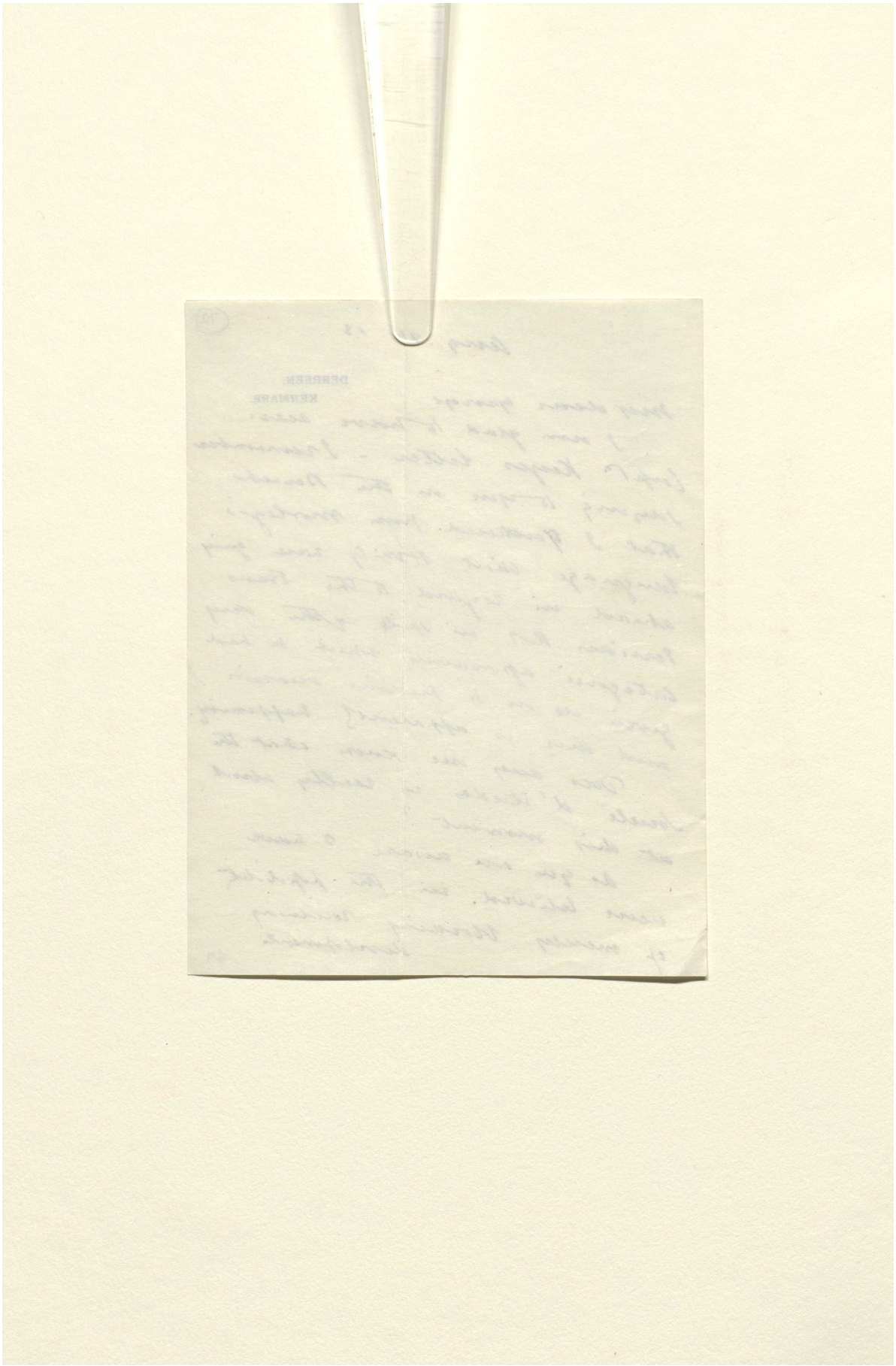

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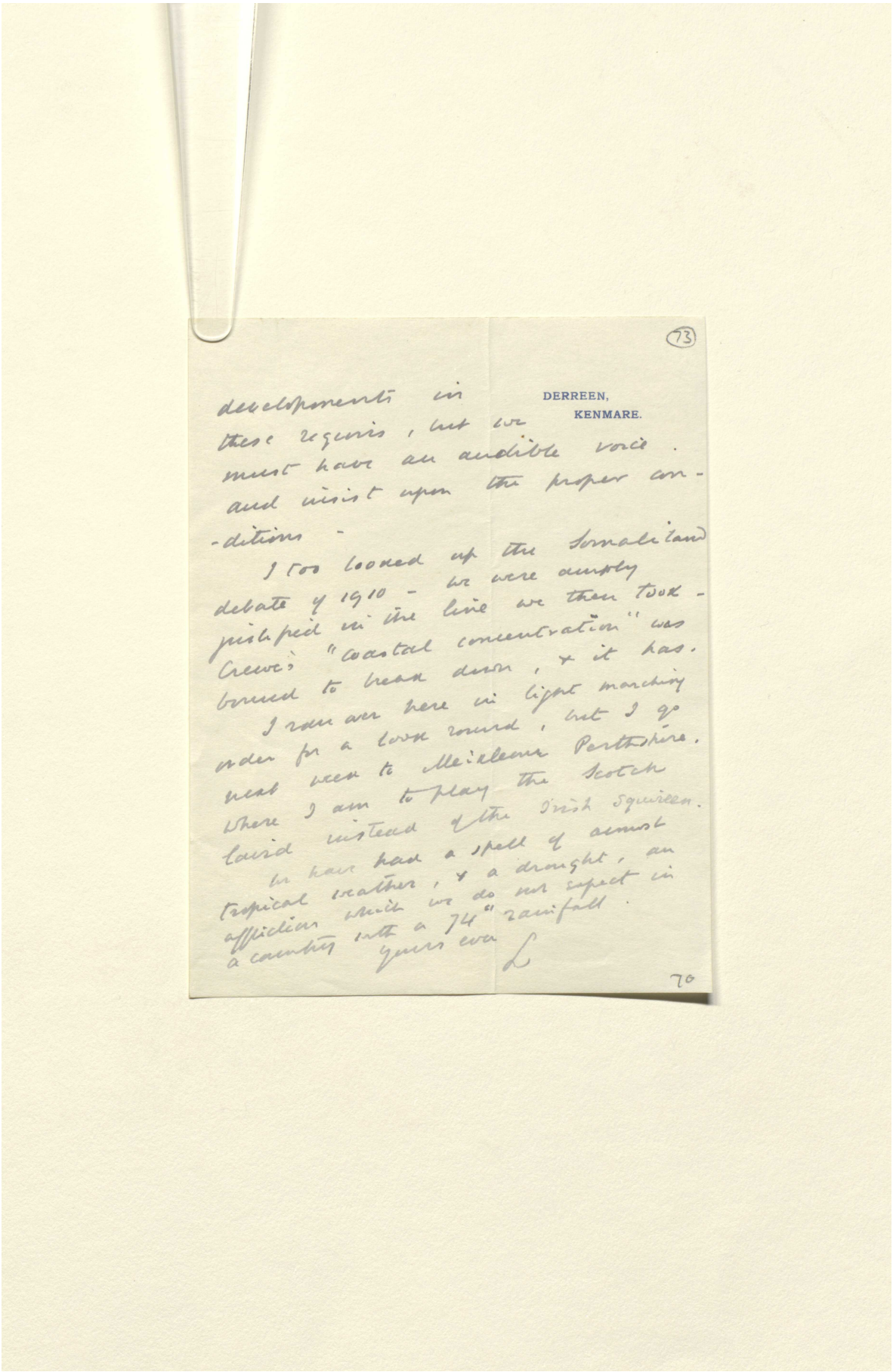
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [73r] (145/442)



(73)

DERREEN,
KENMARE.

developments in these regions, but we must have an audible voice and insist upon the proper conditions -

I too looked up the Somaliland debate of 1910 - we were amply justified in the line we then took - Crewe's "coastal concentration" was bound to break down, & it has.

I ran over here in light marching order for a look round, but I go next week to Meikleour Perthshire. Where I am to play the Scotch laird instead of the Irish Squireen.

We have had a spell of almost tropical weather, & a drought, an affliction which we do not expect in a country with a 74" rainfall.

Yours ever
L

70

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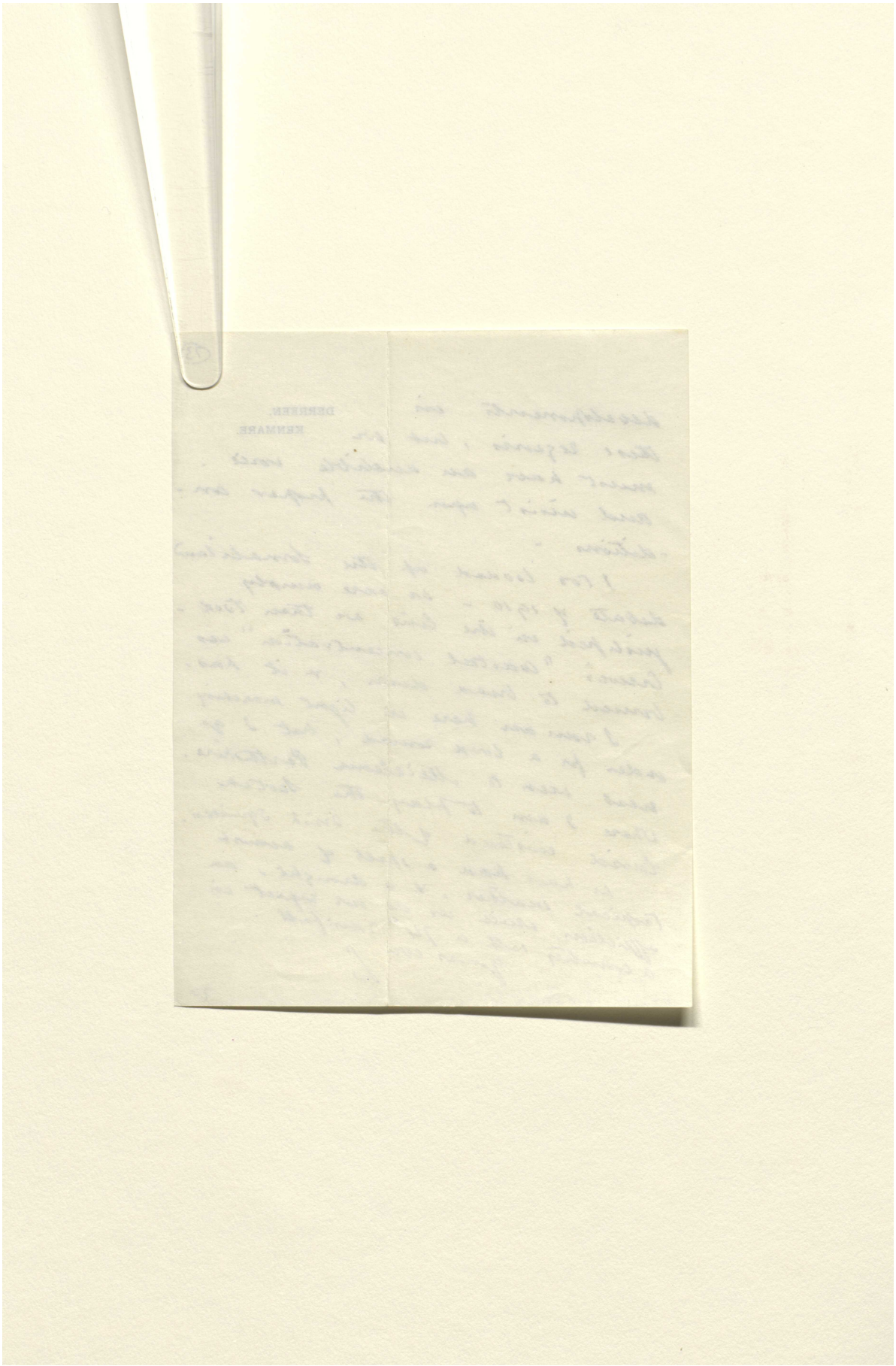

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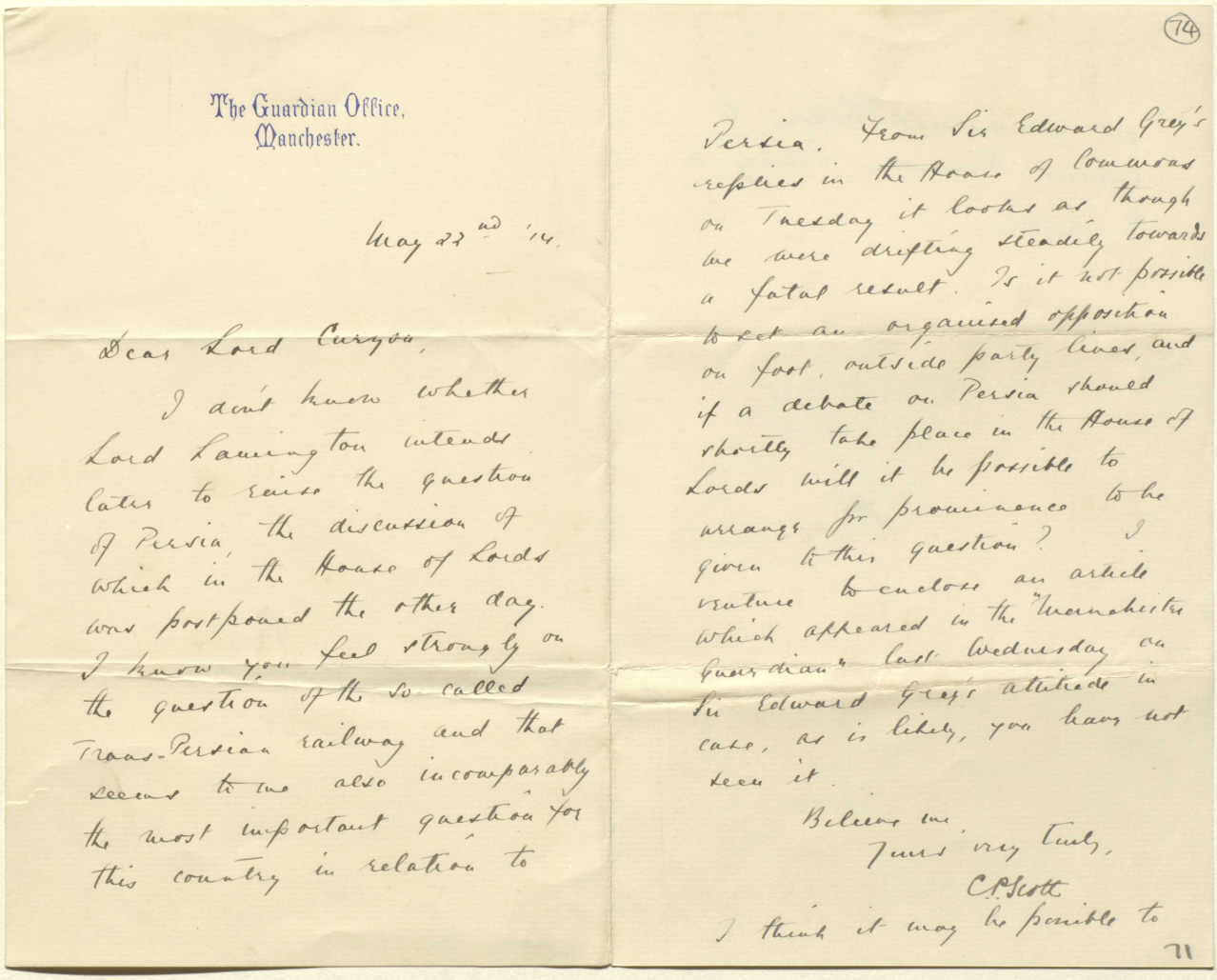

The Guardian Office,
Manchester.

May 22nd '14.

Dear Lord Curzon,

I don't know whether Lord Lamington intends later to raise the question of Persia, the discussion of which in the House of Lords was postponed the other day. I know you feel strongly on the question of the so-called Trans-Persian railway and that seems to me also incomparably the most important question for this country in relation to

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Persia. From Sir Edward Grey's replies in the House of Commons on Tuesday it looks as though we were drifting steadily towards a fatal result. Is it not possible to set an organised opposition on foot, outside party lines, and if a debate on Persia should shortly take place in the House of Lords will it be possible to arrange for prominence to be given to this question? I venture to enclose an article which appeared in the "Manchester Guardian" last Wednesday on Sir Edward Grey's attitude in case, as is likely, you have not seen it.

Believe me,
Yours very truly,
C.P.Scott

I think it may be possible to

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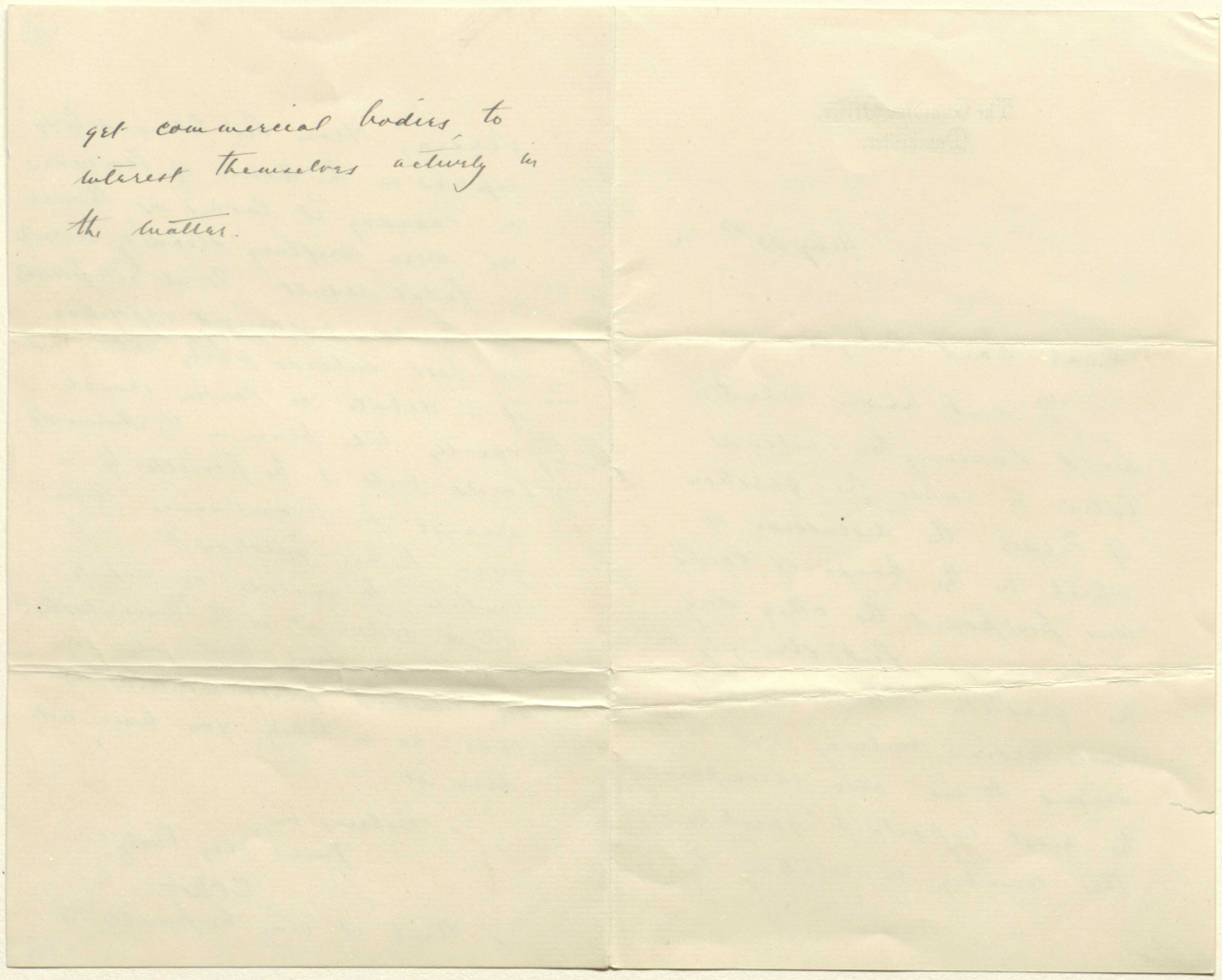
get commercial bodies to
interest themselves actively in
the matter.

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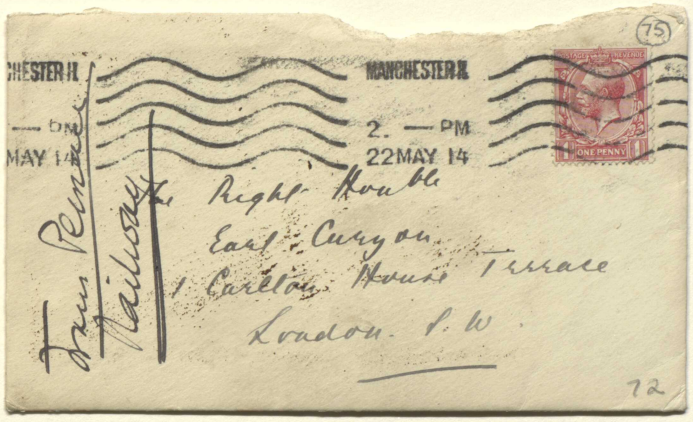

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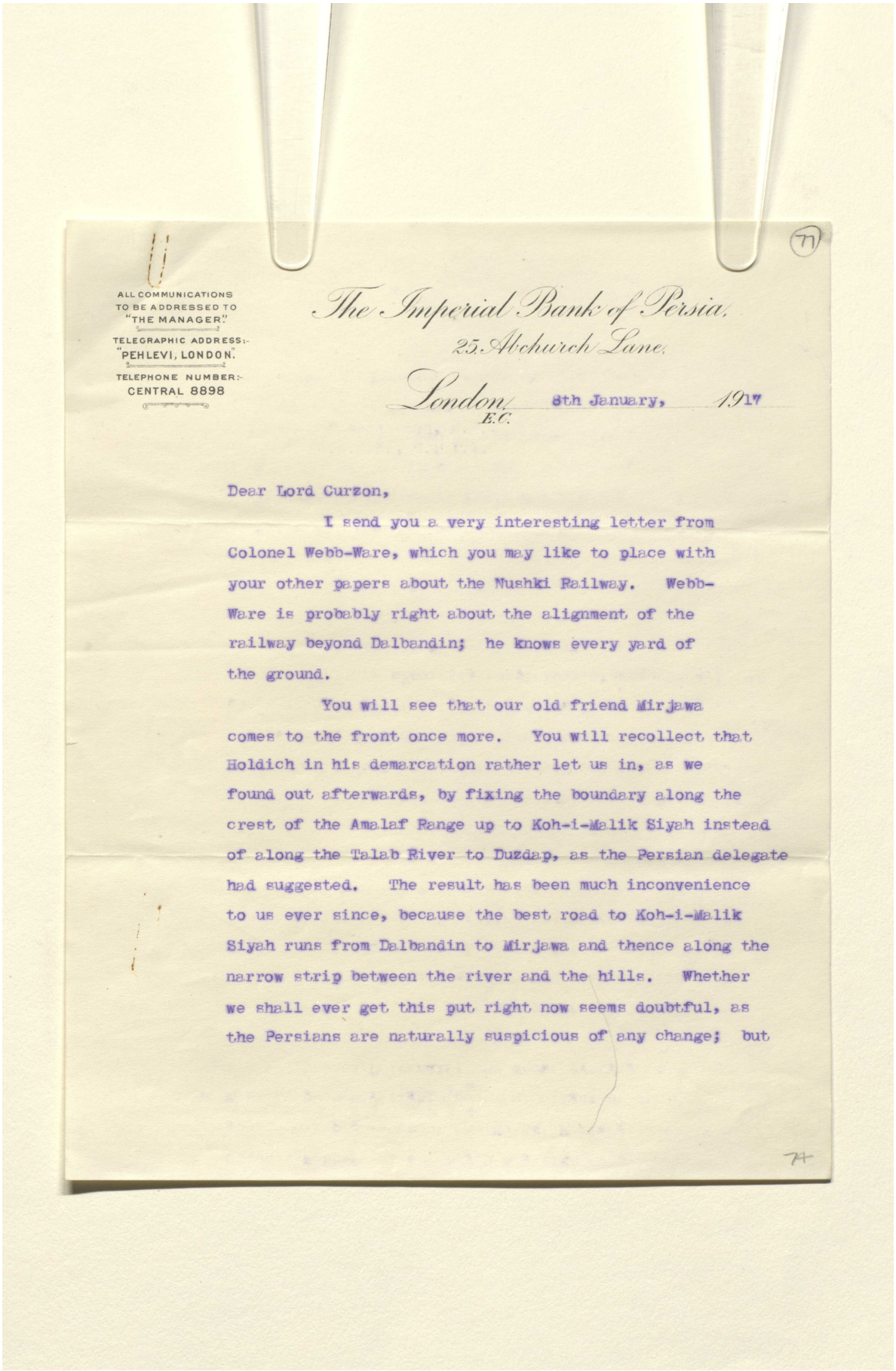

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TO BE ADDRESSED TO
"THE MANAGER."
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:-
"PEHLEVI, LONDON."
TELEPHONE NUMBER:-
CENTRAL 8898

The Imperial Bank of Persia,
25, Abchurch Lane,
London, E.C. 8th January, 1917

77

Dear Lord Curzon,

I send you a very interesting letter from Colonel Webb-Ware, which you may like to place with your other papers about the Nushki Railway. Webb-Ware is probably right about the alignment of the railway beyond Dalbandin; he knows every yard of the ground.

You will see that our old friend Mirjawa comes to the front once more. You will recollect that Holdich in his demarcation rather let us in, as we found out afterwards, by fixing the boundary along the crest of the Amalaf Range up to Koh-i-Malik Siyah instead of along the Talab River to Duzdap, as the Persian delegate had suggested. The result has been much inconvenience to us ever since, because the best road to Koh-i-Malik Siyah runs from Dalbandin to Mirjawa and thence along the narrow strip between the river and the hills. Whether we shall ever get this put right now seems doubtful, as the Persians are naturally suspicious of any change; but

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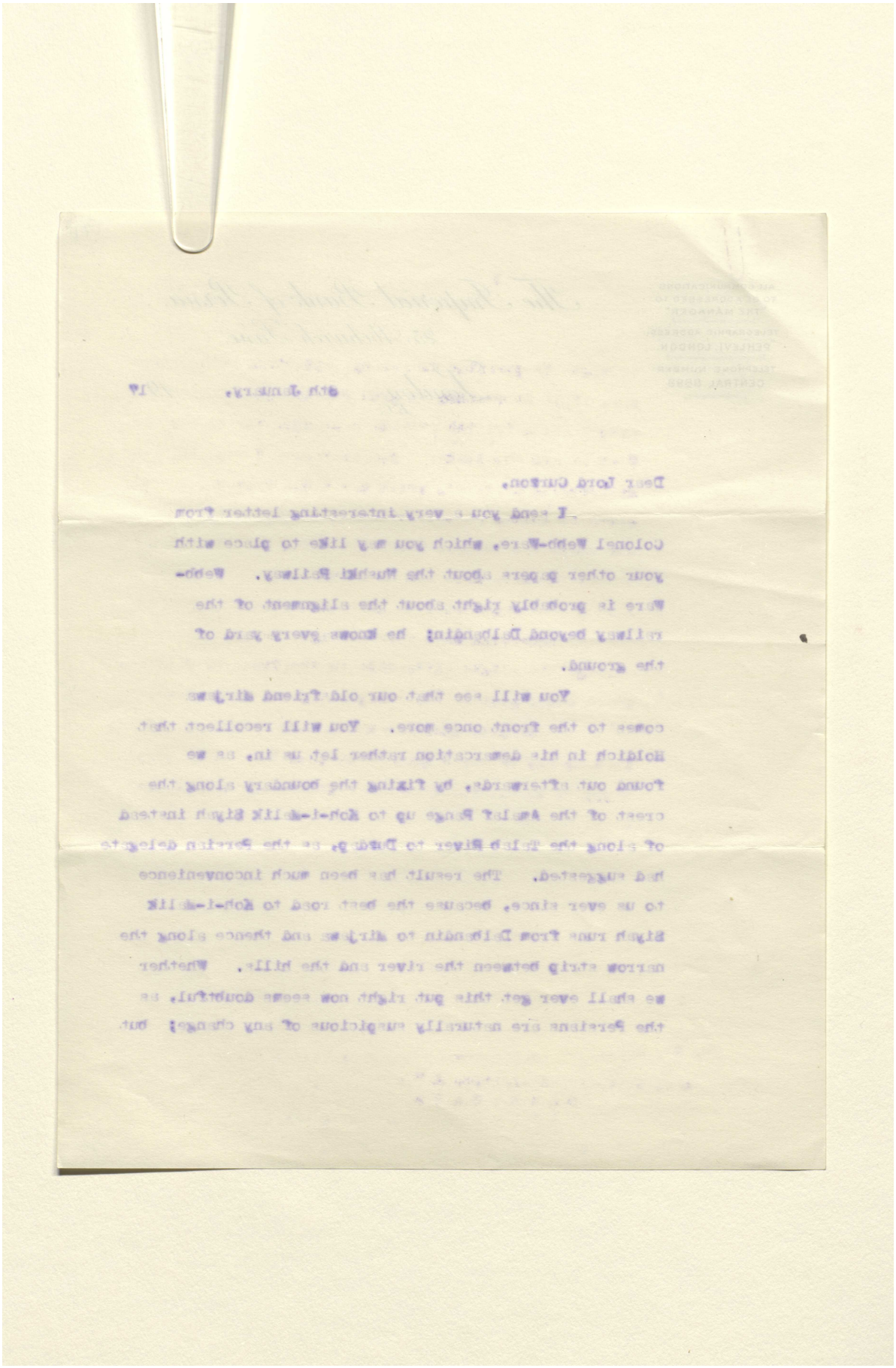

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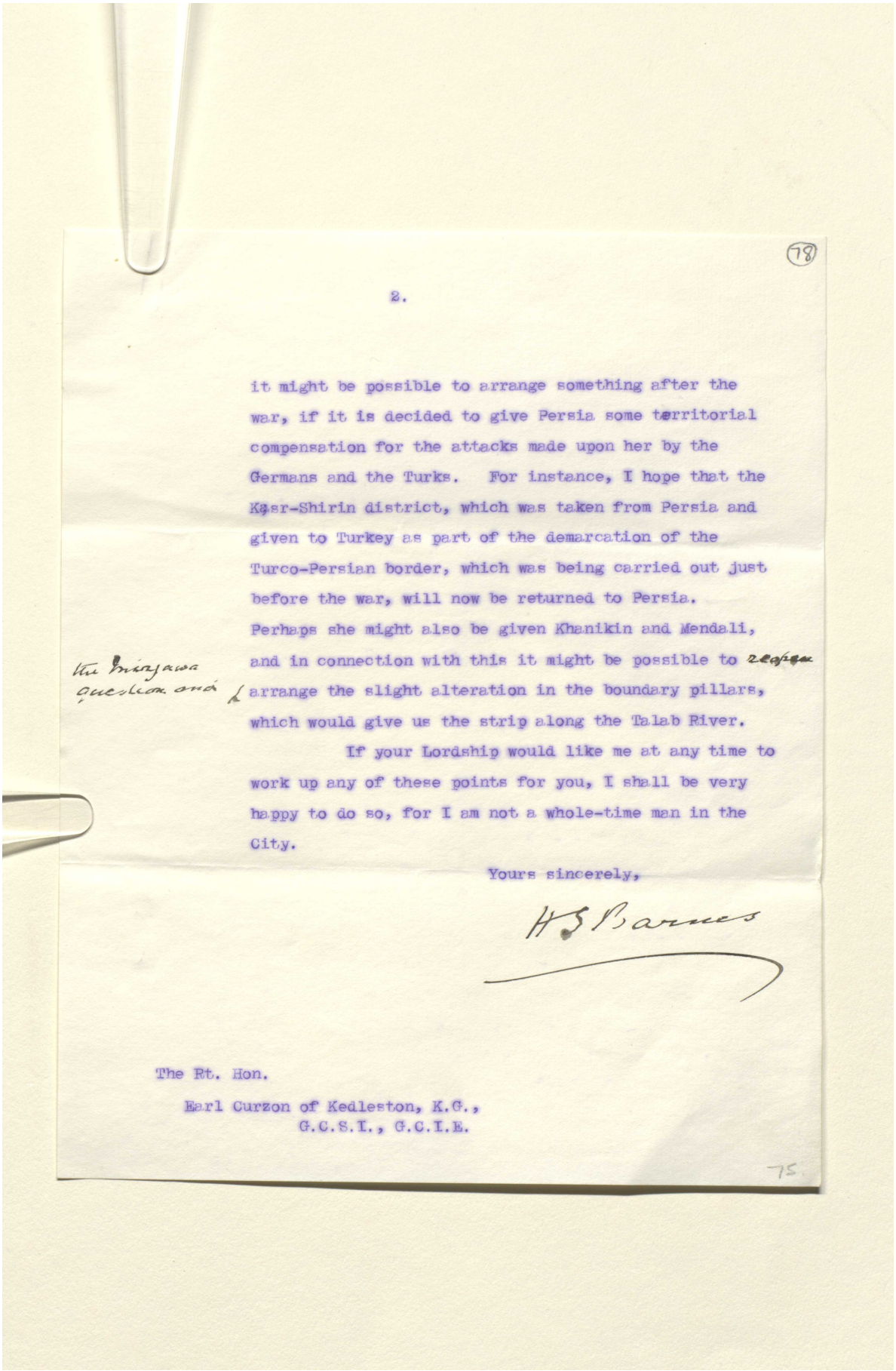

(78)

2.

it might be possible to arrange something after the war, if it is decided to give Persia some territorial compensation for the attacks made upon her by the Germans and the Turks. For instance, I hope that the Kasr-Shirin district, which was taken from Persia and given to Turkey as part of the demarcation of the Turco-Persian border, which was being carried out just before the war, will now be returned to Persia. Perhaps she might also be given Khanikin and Mendali, and in connection with this it might be possible to arrange the slight alteration in the boundary pillars, which would give us the strip along the Talab River.

the Bahrein question and

If your Lordship would like me at any time to work up any of these points for you, I shall be very happy to do so, for I am not a whole-time man in the City.

Yours sincerely,

H S Barnes

The Rt. Hon.
Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.,
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

75.

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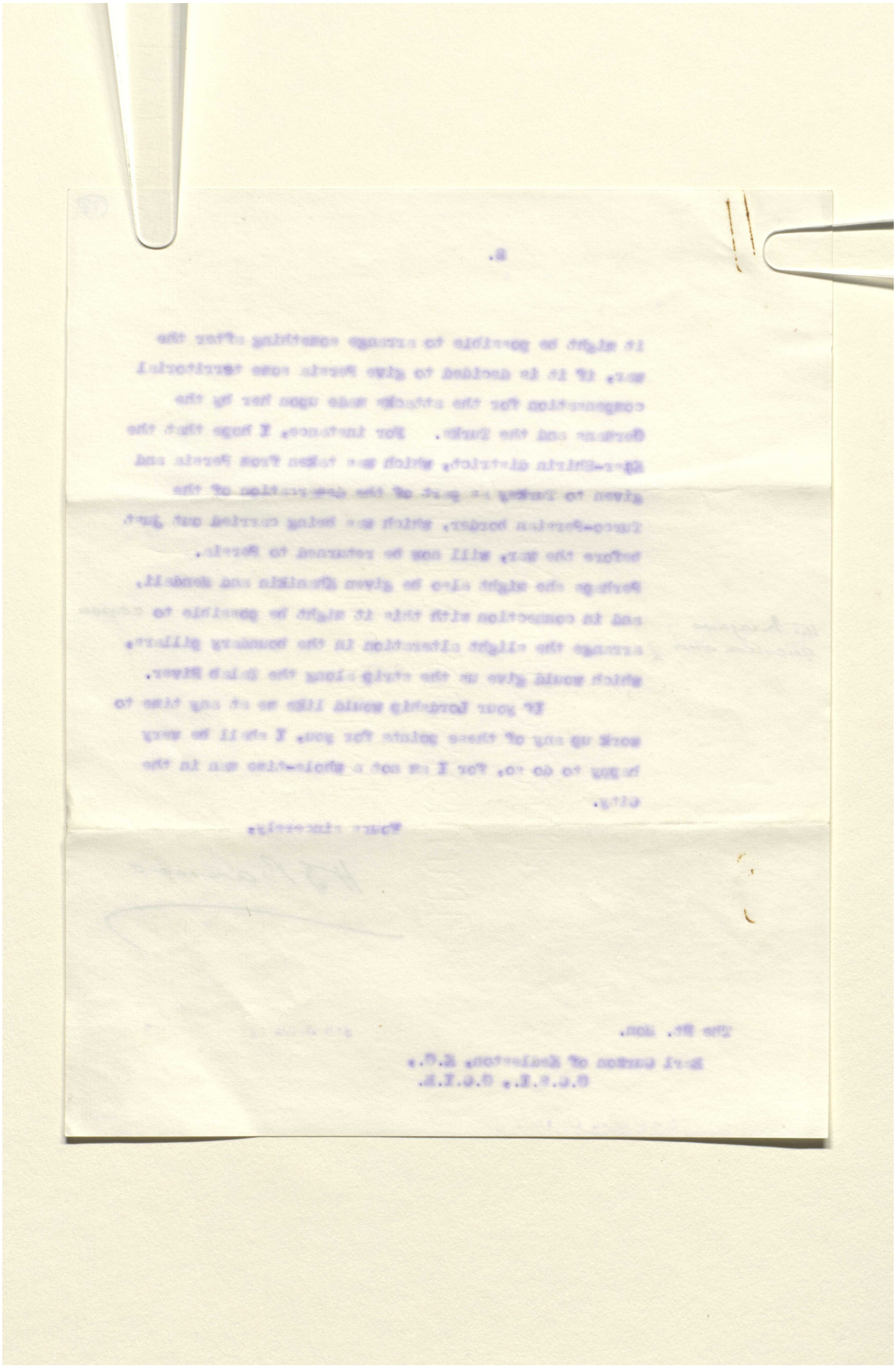

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(79)

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Crescent Hotel, Buxton.
December 3rd (1916)

Dear Sir Hugh Barnes,

I have just heard from Ramsay. He writes that out in India they are pressing the Nushki extension work vigorously: that the D.G.M. Works has just returned to Quetta from a visit to Kundi, which you will remember, is the 5th Stage beyond Dalbandin and the 7th on the Nushki side of Robat: and that it would seem that later proposals are, for military reasons, likely to take the form of a Railway to Saindak which is 45 miles short of Robat itself. The foregoing will, I know, interest you as will also the fact that they have now satisfied themselves that anything in the form of a motor propelled Commercial service, beyond Dalbandin, which I infer is what their original proposals favoured has, on expert advice, been ruled out as inadvisable.

I am writing Ramsay pointing out that should military reasons necessitate the early consideration of an extension of the line beyond Dalbandin, it would be as well for us to bear in mind that Mirjawa, and not Saindak, would form the best temporary terminus. The question is one in which many important considerations of a Political, Military as well as Commercial and engineering nature are directly involved.

Wherever the temporary terminus may be, the ultimate terminus must be on the Baluchistan-Seistan Frontier, either at Dewan Chah or some other suitable spot in its vicinity.

From the Gulf to Koh-i-Malik Siah, there runs a chain of hills, the Eastern ridge of which forms, to all intents, the borders between British Baluchistan and Persia. At Koh-i-Malik Siah this chain makes a right-angled turn to the West and thence becomes the boundary between the Persian Governorships of Kerman and Khorassan (Seistan Depy Governorship).

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From Koh-i-Malik Siah there projects, for a distance of some 75 miles, into the Baluchistan Desert in a South-easterly direction, an isolated range of hills knows as the Robat-Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range. In general characteristic this range is a knife edge placed on the top of a steep Daman which stretches down into Afghan Territory. Our trade route posts of Robat, Chah Mahd Raza, Kacha, Saindak are all situated on the Northern side of this range, where the foot of the knife edge and the Daman meet.

Very little consideration will show the disadvantages of such a trade route alignment for the purposes of a railway track. No Railway engineer would willingly build a railway which, hugging the base of a range of hills, conforms to the upper edge of a Baluchistan Daman, as doing so would involve frequent culvert bridges with repeated changes of gradient. Nor is it advisable to build a line through a desert area possessing no water suitable for locomotive purposes. It is true that these engineering difficulties can be avoided by following the foot of the Daman but the difficulty here is that at the foot of this Daman, which has an average depth of some 6-8 miles, there is no water and the Afghan Frontier is too close to be pleasant. In addition, a very decided climb up would remain to be faced when a point opposite Robat is reached with six miles of heavy engineering outside Robat and about the same number of mile stiff work beyond Robat, should the railway line be taken on to Dewan Chah. Robat as the terminus of an important railway system not only has no advantage to recommend it but it possesses many disadvantages, but while so, should it be decided to place the temporary terminus at Saindak, we are then committed to carrying the line along the top edge of the Daman either to, or through, Robat.

We can avoid all these troubles by running our line south of the Robat-Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range and making Mirjawa, outside the desert area, the objective. From Mushki Chah

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(the Stage beyond Kundi) this line would cross a practically dead level plain to Mirjawa with a straight run in from there to Dewan Chah up a valley with a particularly easy gradient which not only offers no engineering difficulty but has the great additional advantage of excellent water, suitable for locomotive purposes, at easy intervals. Should this alignment be selected, as I trust it will, I am inclined to think that the best terminus would then be Duzdab and not Dewan Chah. Duzdab has much to recommend itself as a railway terminus as it has plenty of excellent water, open ground, good soil, and a healthy cool climate, all points where Dewan Chah fails.

When planning the Frontier extension it is necessary to bear well in mind the important part that the water question is destined to play. The Dalbandin-Mushki Chah - Mirjawa-Dewan Chah (or Duzdab) alignment possesses the necessary locomotive and other water requirements at either end, with a desert stretch in the centre which will have to be supplied with water, half from one end and half from the other. The Dalbandin-Mushki Chah-Saindak-Robat alignment only possesses water suited for locomotive purposes at the Dalbandin end and as in the case of this alignment, the desert area extends right up to Robat, it follows that drinking water for the Staff and water for locomotives would have to be sent up from the Dalbandin end, a matter which, in itself, seems to render this alignment inadvisable. At both Saindak, Kacha, and Robat, so medical officers say, it is necessary to distil drinking water. But the Mirjawa alignment has additional points in its favour.

From Mirjawa those troublesome predatory Baluch tribes which, of late years, have given us as well as the Governor of Kerman and the Depy Governors

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of Seistan, Birjand and Khain, so much trouble could be dominated with ease. Mirjawa, from its position, also controls the various routes leading East from S. Persia, through Sarhad. The posts we have at present, situated on the isolated Robat-Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range are quite unable to do this as experience, extending over many years, has proved.

The effect of holding the Mirjawa valley-Duzdab line would show itself in various other ways as well and would be followed by permanent Political effects of great and probably growing importance, as years go by. It has always struck me as very remarkable that no one appears to pay any regard to the important fact that Seistan and Birjand, as well as the country for a long distance between Birjand and Meshed, is separated from Kerman, and so from the Gulf, by an almost impassable waste called the Great Kerman Desert. This desert is a desolate region from 100-150 miles and more broad of "Shora" and mud without grass, wood, or water, and which is only passable, at long distances apart by tracks which form causeways so narrow that in many places to stray off them a few yards spells destruction. The only means of avoiding this desert is to skirt the near, i.e. Baluchistan, extremity by hugging the West foot of the Sarhad-Koh-i-Malik Siah range. Arms caravans, on their way to India from the Gulf, always do this and the ancient Trade Route which connected India with the Gulf, at Ormuz, through Seistan and Afghanistan, did the same. But opposite (i.e. West of) the Mirjawa-Duzdab line the Sarhad-Koh-i-Malik Siah hills fine down until they become a ridge only a few miles across and it therefore, follows that by holding the Mirjawa line we would not only have our hand on the link which connects Seistan with Persia proper but we would also guard Seistan, and with it Afghanistan, from any hostile influence or aggression directed from the Gulf or from

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elsewhere in Southern Persia. In other words we would be in a position to guard, at least to a very material extent, Western Afghanistan. If Afghanistan forms the advance bastion of our Indian Defence and if Seistan is, as is generally admitted, the key of Western Afghanistan, then the Southern key of Seistan is the narrow ridge of hills alluded to which intervenes between the Great Kerman Desert on the one side, and the Baluchistan Desert area on the other, and to hold this by a military force renders an attack on Seistan, from the South, impossible.

From the point of view of camel borne trade, the distance from Mirjawa to Dewan Chah on the Seistan border, is probably a few miles longer than the distance from Saindak to Dewan Chah but against this Saindak lies rather in advance of Mirjawa. I forget the precise difference in mileage, between the two routes, but it is something very small as the detour caravans have now to make from Dewan Chah round Robat and which takes them several miles off their direct road, would be avoided.

If the advantages in favour of the Mirjawa alignment are so very pronounced what then is there to prevent its adoption? There is one difficulty, but it is a difficulty which can, and should, I think be overcome. The best situation for the Mirjawa railway station lies about 2 miles beyond the Frontier, and from Mirjawa on to either Duzdab or Dewan Chah the railway line would traverse Persian territory throughout. In the year 1896, when the Baluch-Persian Frontier was delimitated, this tract of country which undoubtedly belonged to us was made over to Persia. The Persians wanted us to retain it and indeed begged us to do so, but our Commissioner who seemed to regard this country as valueless, declined and returned to India from Jalk without approaching it within

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a hundred miles and without demarcating its frontier himself. Our Convention with Russia would seem to give us the necessary latitude for rearranging the matter and I would propose that this be now done. If it is possible to realign the Frontier, as laid down in the Boundary agreement, by prevailing on Persia to sell this strip of country to us then so much the better but if it is not or if there is a likelihood of the matter giving rise to differences or suspicion of our motives, then we should arrange amicably with Persia in some other way to carry the line through their Territory to Mirjawa and Duzdab.

I have gone into the matter at some little length because it is quite possible that the question may be referred home before so very long and it appears to me that it would be well that the interests which are involved may be fully understood. I feel assured that if we commit ourselves to the Northern alignment, following the foot of Saindak hills we commit ourselves to an alignment which is not only faulty in itself but is one which we will have frequent cause to regret hereafter.

The present political crisis is no doubt occupying Lord Curzon's time fully, but should you have an opportunity of either discussing the matter with him or passing this letter on to him, I would be glad.

I hear that work on the Hindu Bagh Gomal railway is likely to be started before long, and that as recent events have emphasised the paramount importance of lateral military communications, a move is being made to run a military railway right along the Frontier from the Gomal to Peshawar.

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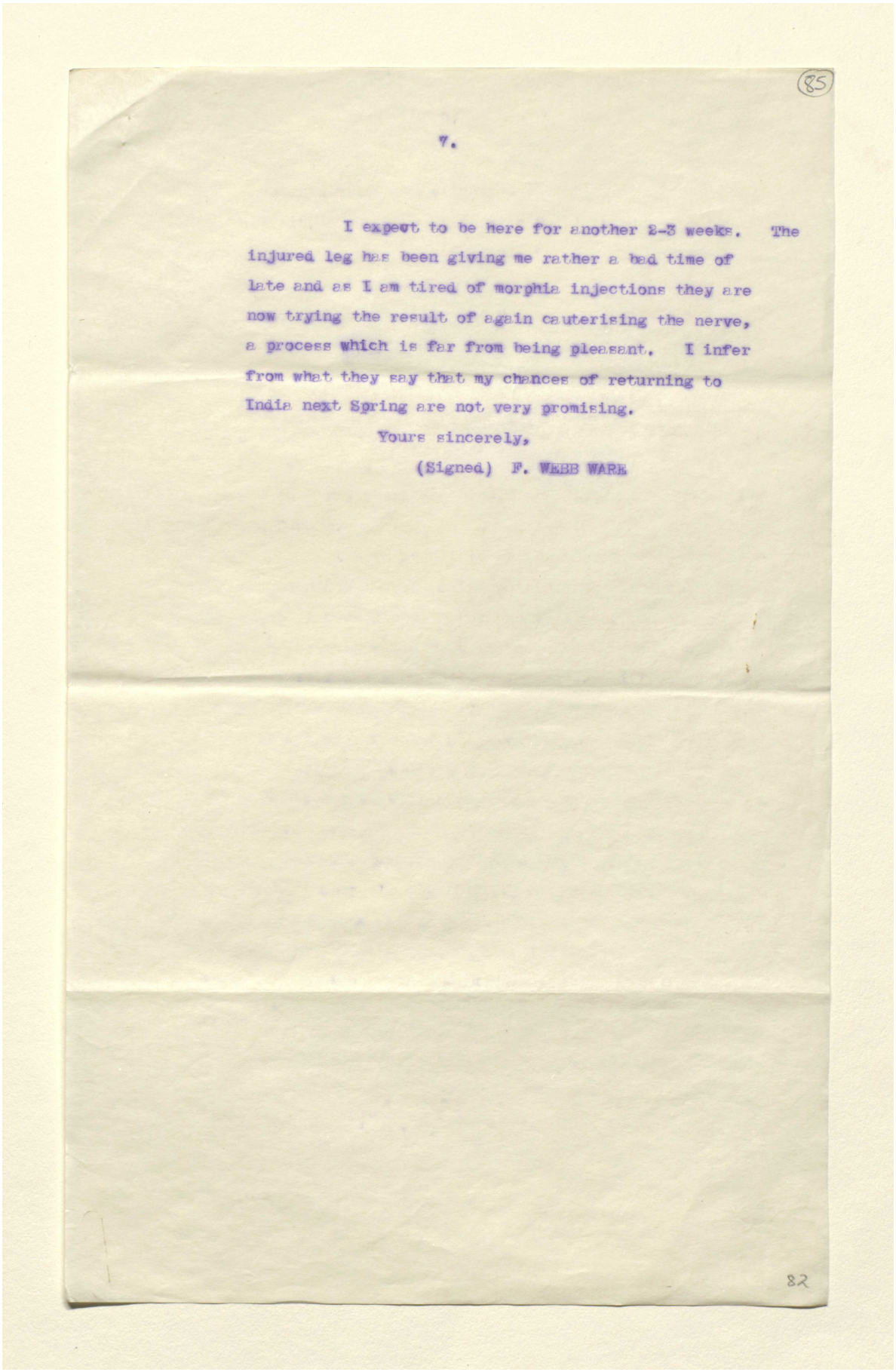

85

7.

I expect to be here for another 2-3 weeks. The injured leg has been giving me rather a bad time of late and as I am tired of morphia injections they are now trying the result of again cauterising the nerve, a process which is far from being pleasant. I infer from what they say that my chances of returning to India next Spring are not very promising.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) F. WEBB WARE

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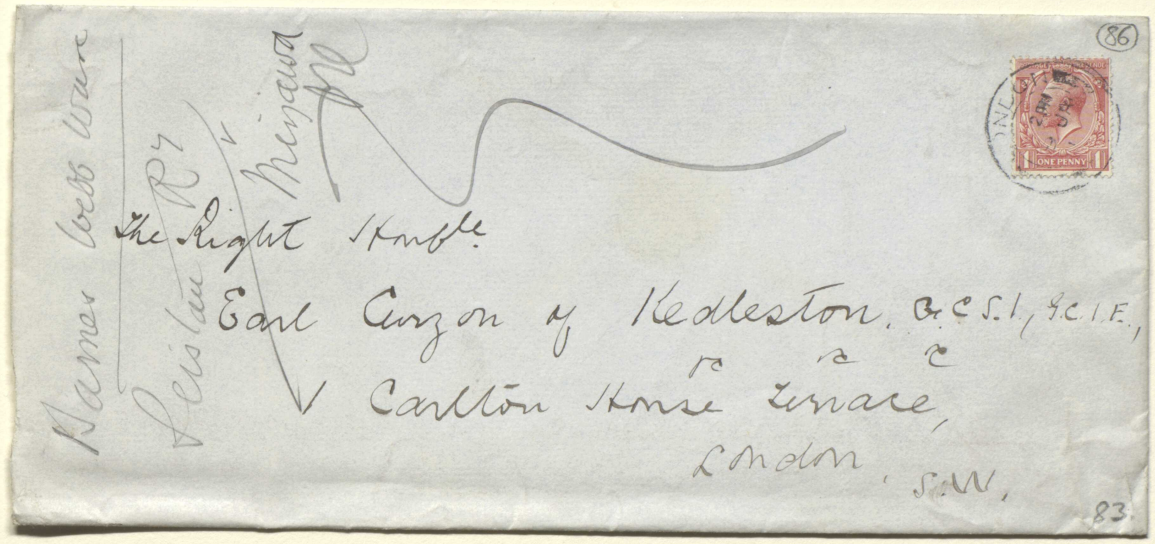

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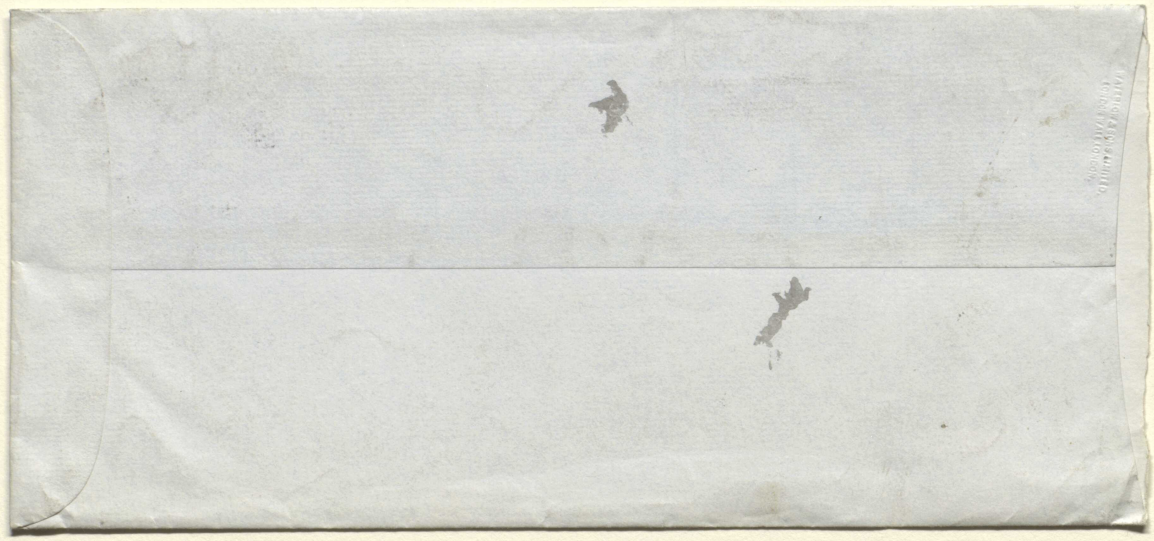

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(87)

ALL COMMUNICATIONS
TO BE ADDRESSED TO
"THE MANAGER"
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:-
"PEHLEVI, LONDON."
TELEPHONE NUMBER:-
CENTRAL 8898

The Imperial Bank of Persia,
25. Abchurch Lane,
London, E.C.

14th February, 1917

Dear Lord Curzon,

I think you will be interested in the enclosed letter which I have received from Webb Ware. You will see that the Nushki Railway extension reached Dalbandin a month ago - a very quick and creditable piece of work.

Perhaps the Government will now consider the advisability of carrying it up to the frontier. To leave the railhead at Dalbandin is rather like building a bridge halfway across a river, and the line cannot hope to earn from increased traffic what it might reasonably be expected to earn if the desert were completely crossed.

Another point I might mention is this, though perhaps you may think it far-fetched, or at any rate too late to be worth considering now. If this line reached Seistan, which it might do, with an effort, in four or five months, barely 500 miles would separate our railhead from the Russian Railway to Merv beyond Sarrakhs, while

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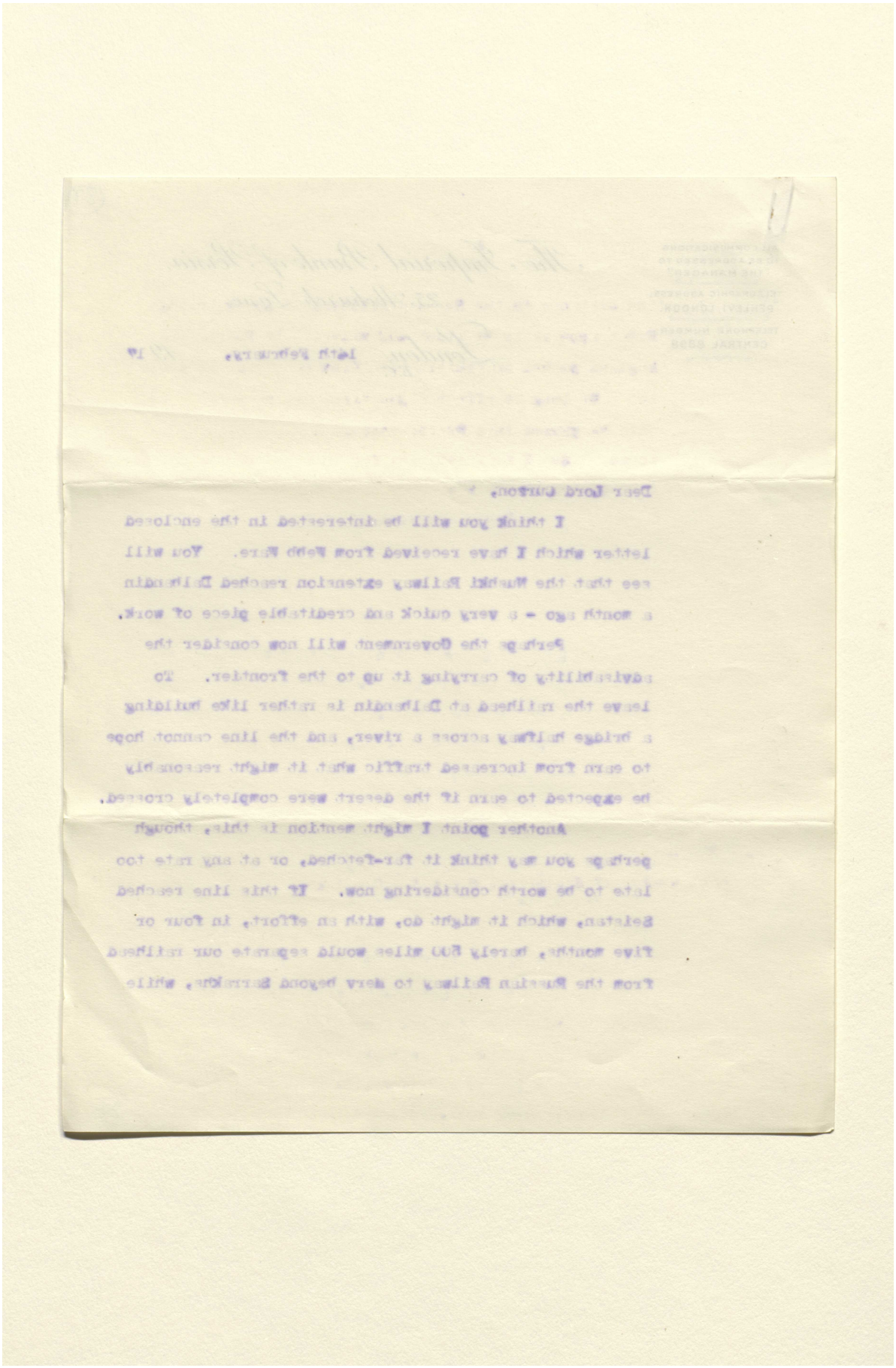

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the distance to the Russian railhead at Kushk through Robat appears to be about 400 miles. If Russia and England pushed on construction from each end, it would not take long to effect a junction, and munitions could then be poured into Russia through Karachi all the year round. But I fear the time for this has passed at this late period of the war. Believe me

Yours sincerely,

H S Barnes

The Rt. Hon.

Earl Curzon of Kedleston, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

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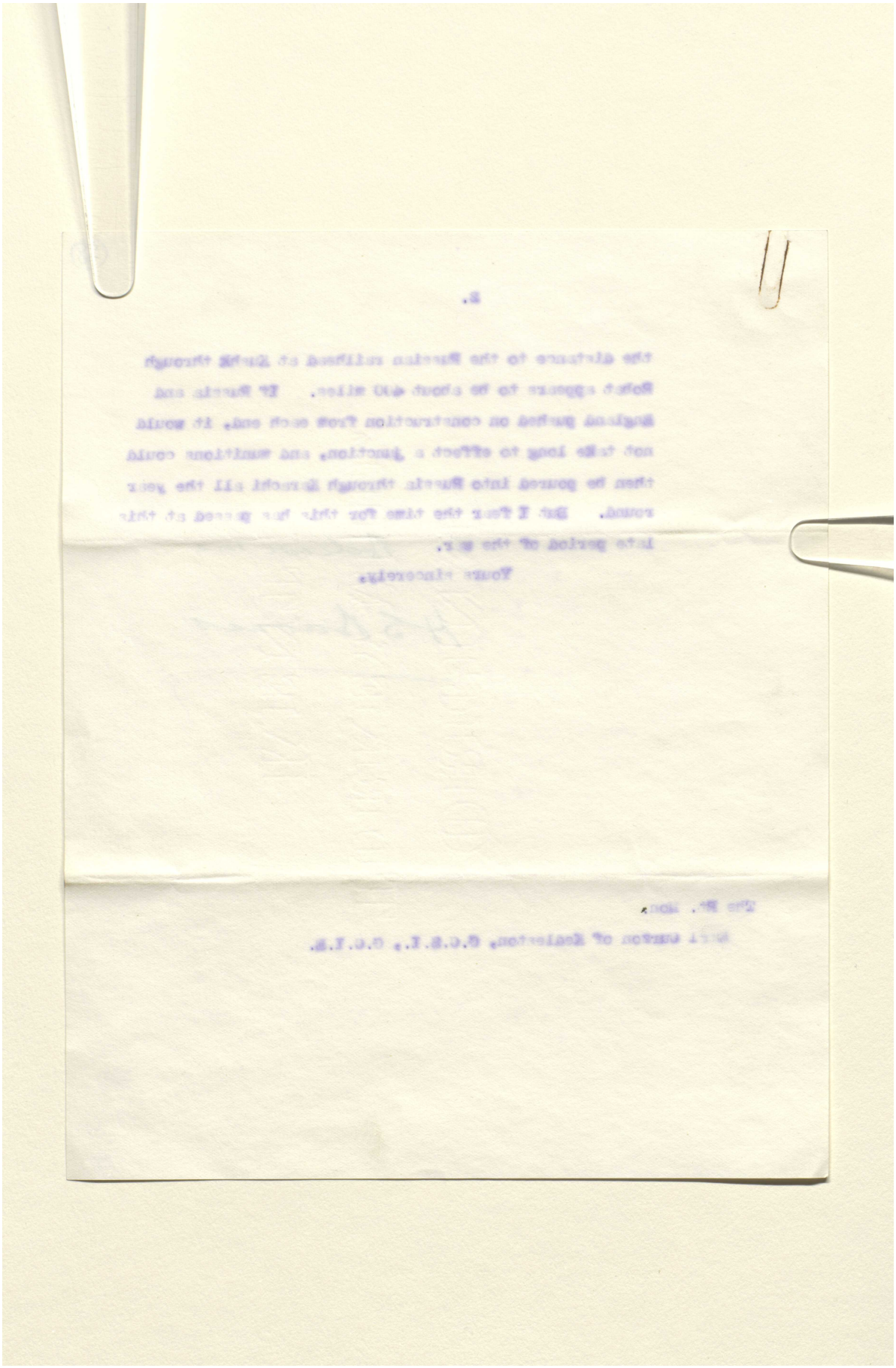

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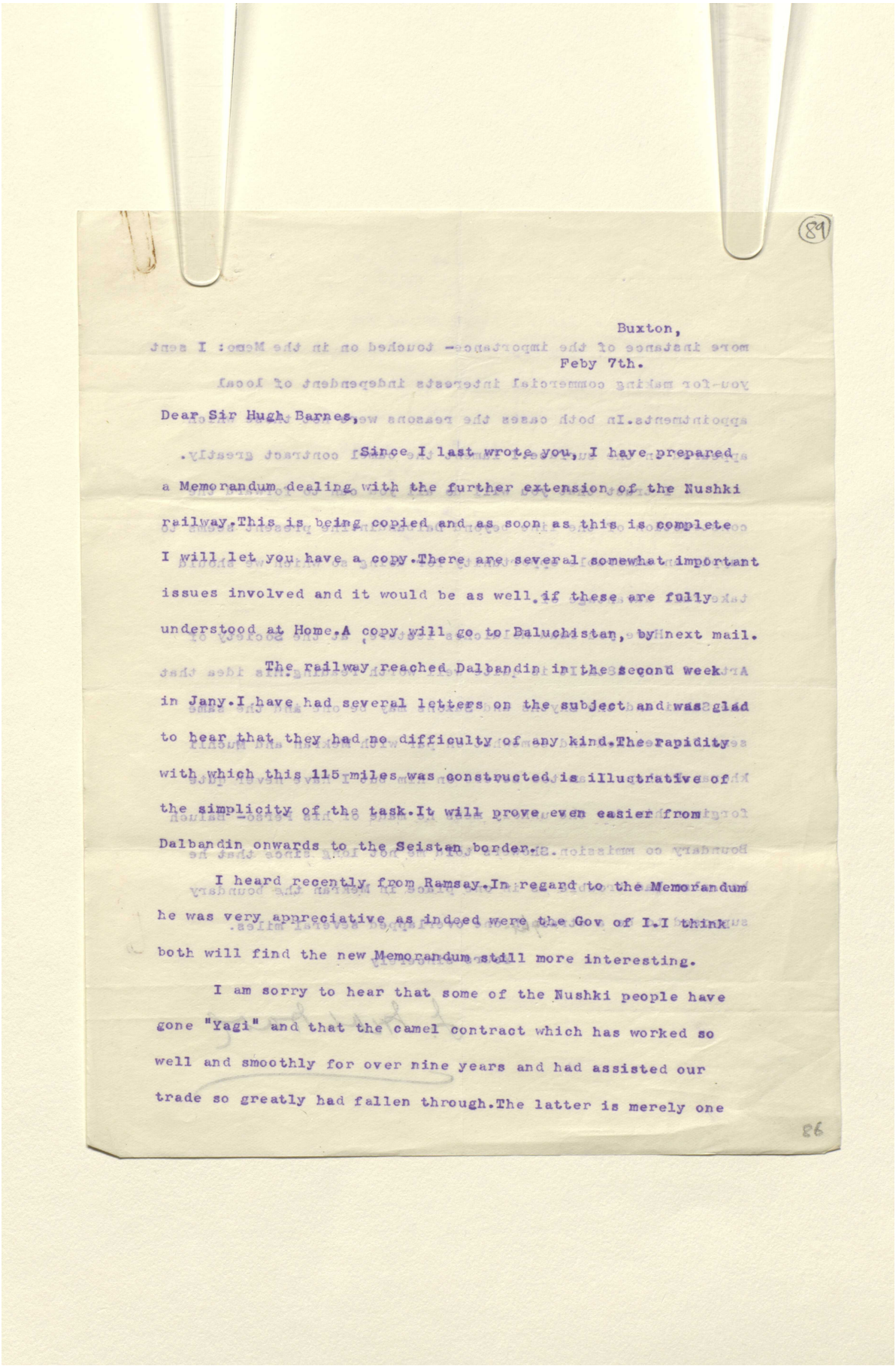

(89)

Buxton,
Feby 7th.

Dear Sir Hugh Barnes,

Since I last wrote you, I have prepared a Memorandum dealing with the further extension of the Nushki railway. This is being copied and as soon as this is complete I will let you have a copy. There are several somewhat important issues involved and it would be as well if these are fully understood at Home. A copy will go to Baluchistan, by next mail.

The railway reached Dalbandin in the second week in Jany. I have had several letters on the subject and was glad to hear that they had no difficulty of any kind. The rapidity with which this 115 miles was constructed is illustrative of the simplicity of the task. It will prove even easier from Dalbandin onwards to the Seistan border.

I heard recently from Ramsay. In regard to the Memorandum he was very appreciative as indeed were the Gov of I. I think both will find the new Memorandum still more interesting.

I am sorry to hear that some of the Nushki people have gone "Yagi" and that the camel contract which has worked so well and smoothly for over nine years and had assisted our trade so greatly had fallen through. The latter is merely one

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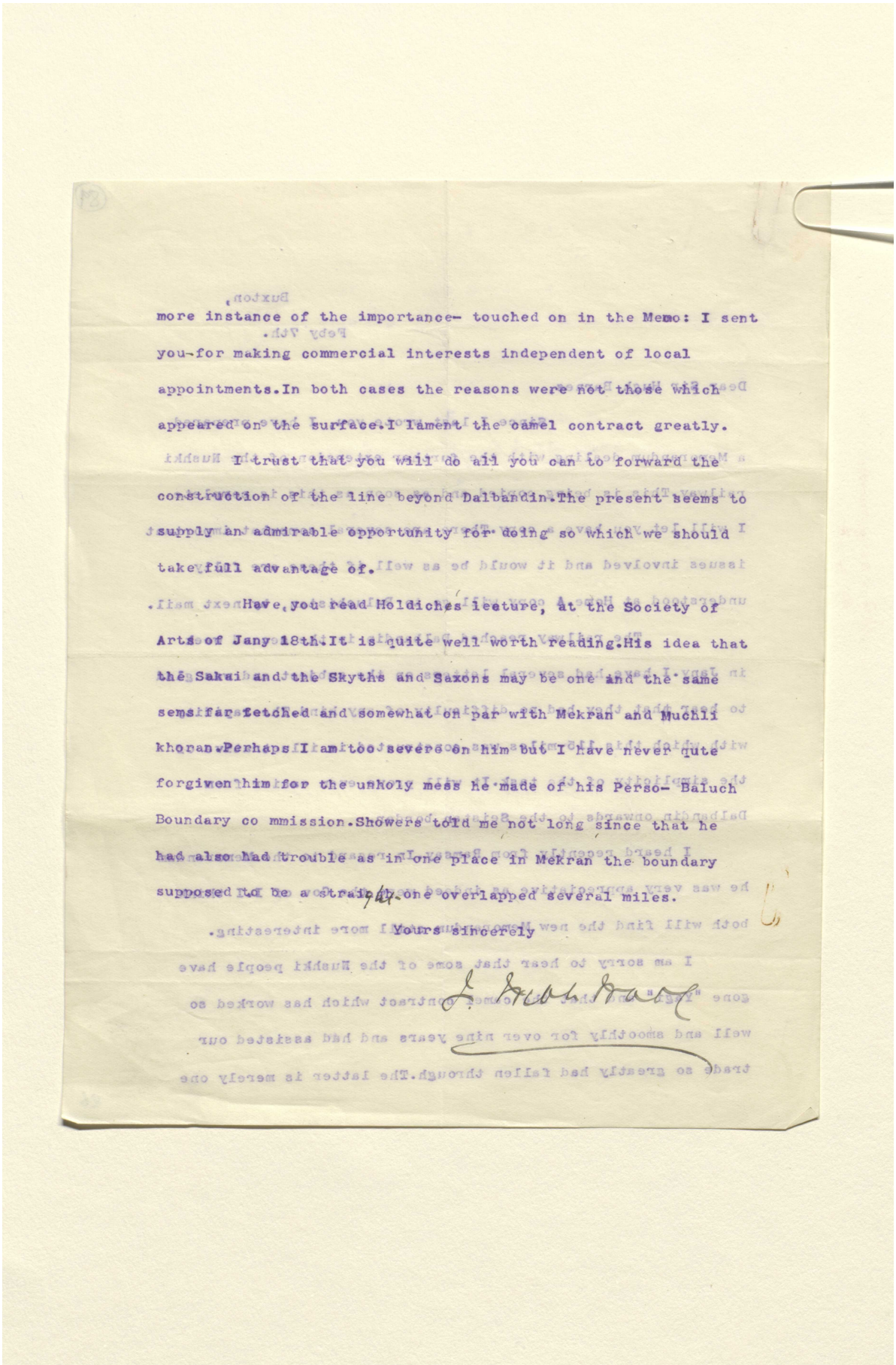

more instance of the importance- touched on in the Memo: I sent you-for making commercial interests independent of local appointments.In both cases the reasons were not those which appeared on the surface.I lament the camel contract greatly.

I trust that you will do all you can to forward the construction of the line beyond Dalbandin.The present seems to supply an admirable opportunity for doing so which we should take full advantage of.

Have you read Holdiches leature, at the Society of Arts of Jany 18th.It is quite well worth reading.His idea that the Sakai and the Skyths and Saxons may be one and the same sems far fetched and somewhat on par with Mekran and Muchli khoran.Perhaps I am too severe on him but I have never qute forgiven him for the unholy mess he made of his Perso- Baluch Boundary co mmission.Showers told me not long since that he had also had trouble as in one place in Mekran the boundary supposed to be a straight one overlapped several miles.

Yours sincerely

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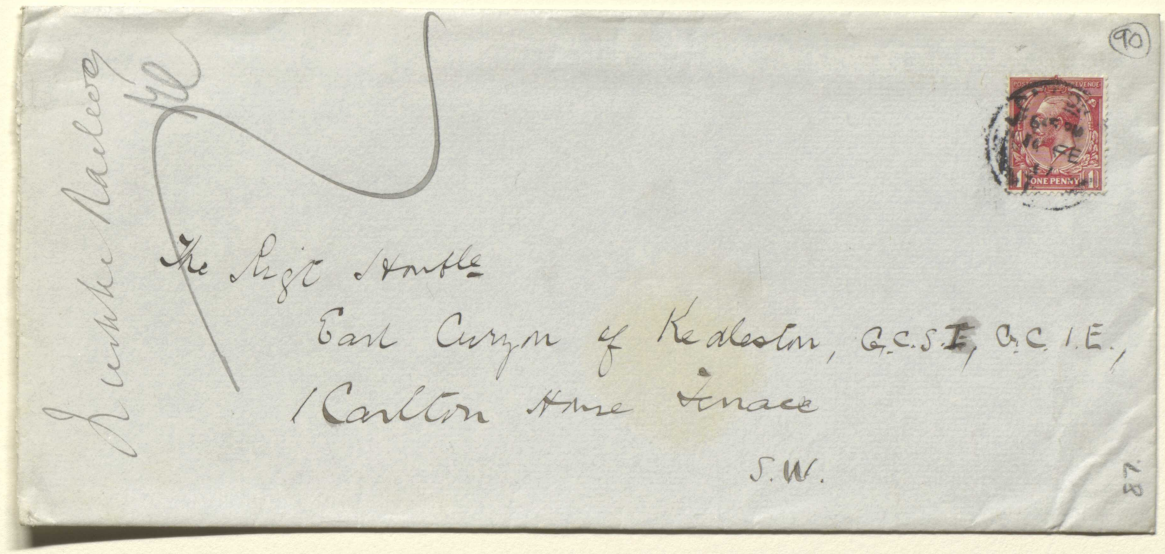
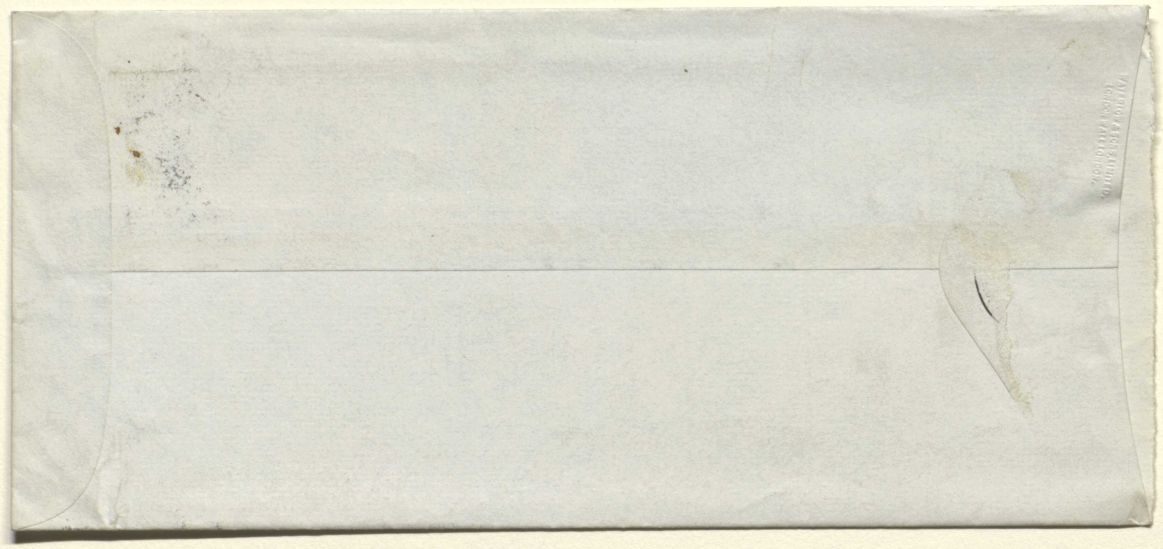

(90)
The Right Honble
Earl Curzon of Kedleston, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
1 Carlton House Terrace
S.W.



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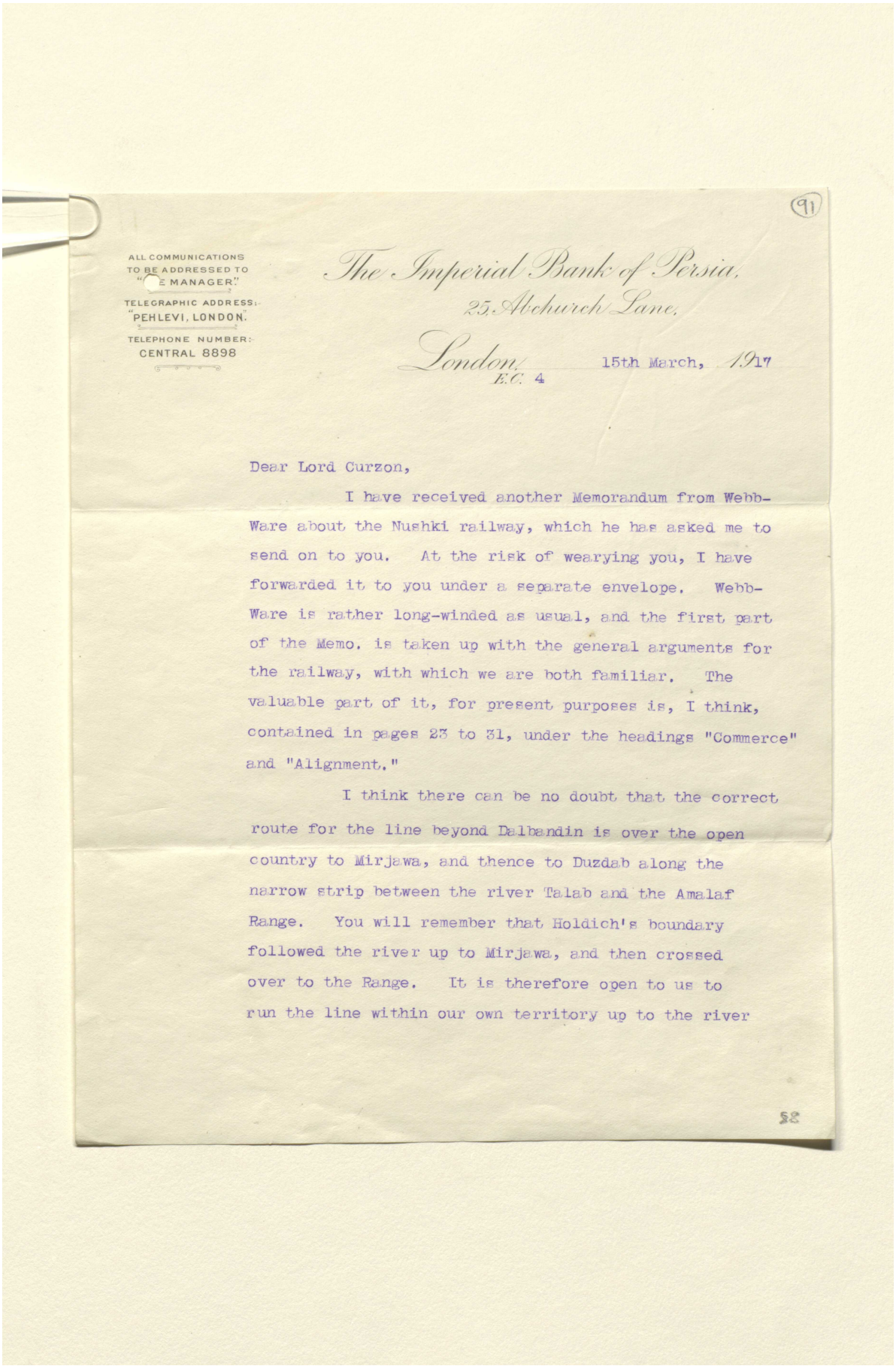

(91)

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO "THE MANAGER."
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "PEHLEVI, LONDON."
TELEPHONE NUMBER: CENTRAL 8898

The Imperial Bank of Persia,
25, Abchurch Lane,
London, E.C. 4
15th March, 1917

Dear Lord Curzon,

I have received another Memorandum from Webb-Ware about the Nushki railway, which he has asked me to send on to you. At the risk of wearying you, I have forwarded it to you under a separate envelope. Webb-Ware is rather long-winded as usual, and the first part of the Memo. is taken up with the general arguments for the railway, with which we are both familiar. The valuable part of it, for present purposes is, I think, contained in pages 23 to 31, under the headings "Commerce" and "Alignment."

I think there can be no doubt that the correct route for the line beyond Dalbandin is over the open country to Mirjawa, and thence to Duzdab along the narrow strip between the river Talab and the Amalaf Range. You will remember that Holdich's boundary followed the river up to Mirjawa, and then crossed over to the Range. It is therefore open to us to run the line within our own territory up to the river

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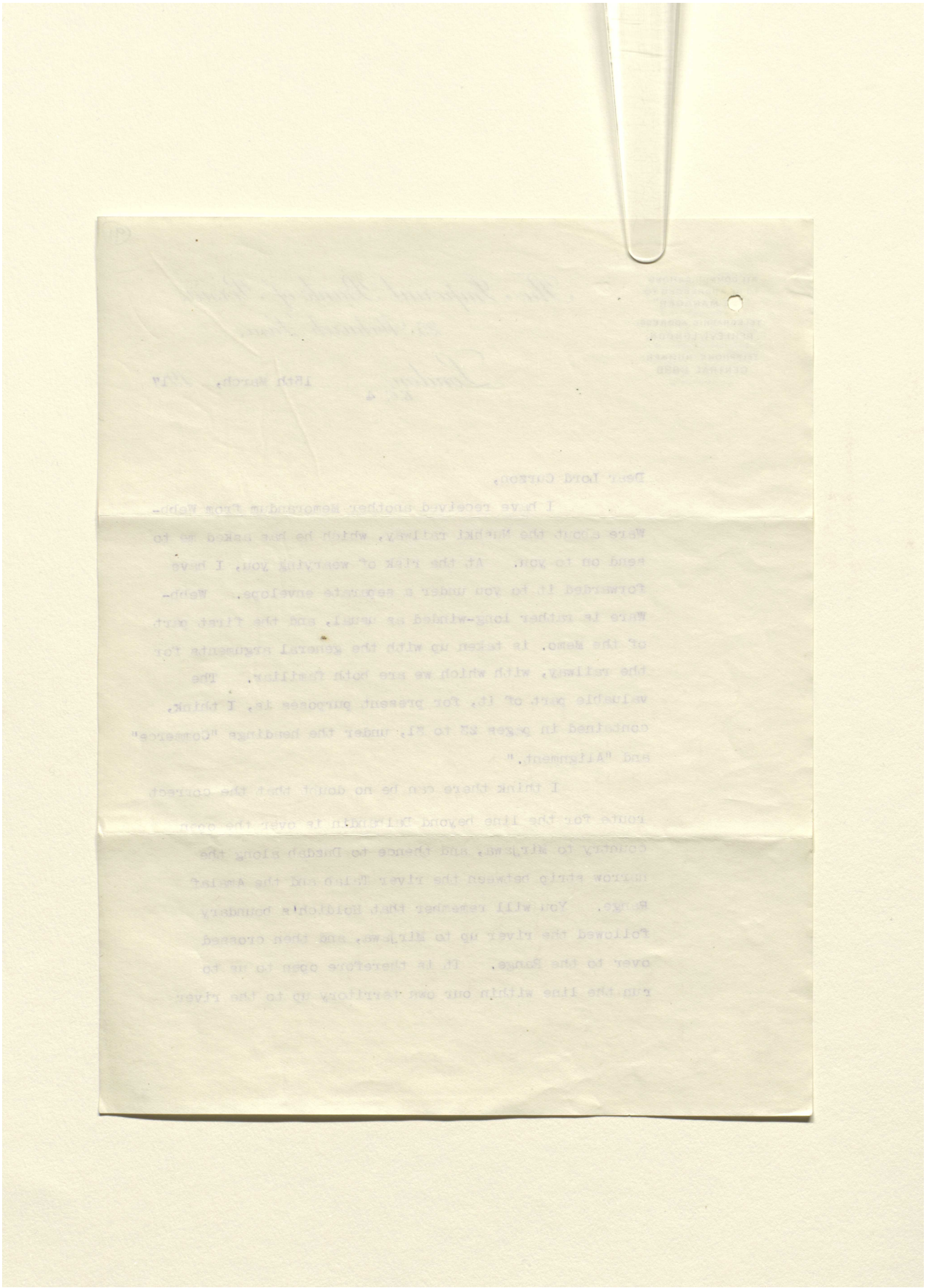

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bank opposite Mirjawa. May I suggest that this is the best course to follow, and that the temporary terminus of the line should be placed for the present at this point? The line will then have bridged the desert and reached the Persian border. It is true that caravans from Seistan, in order to reach the terminus, would have to travel some 60 miles beyond Koh i Malek Siah, but they would do this in open country, with water obtainable from the river.

Taking everything into consideration, it seems to me that for the present the extension to Mirjawa would suffice. The ideal is, of course, to carry it on at least as far as Duzdab. This might be done at some future date, by arrangement with the Persian Government, or we might succeed in persuading Persia to realign this part of the boundary, and to continue it up the river from Mirjawa and thence by Duzdab to Koh i Malek Siah. We are doing a great deal for the Persian Government at present in the way of financing them in their difficulties, and I suggest that if a small additional payment were offered, Sir Charles Marling might be able to have this small readjustment of the boundary carried out.

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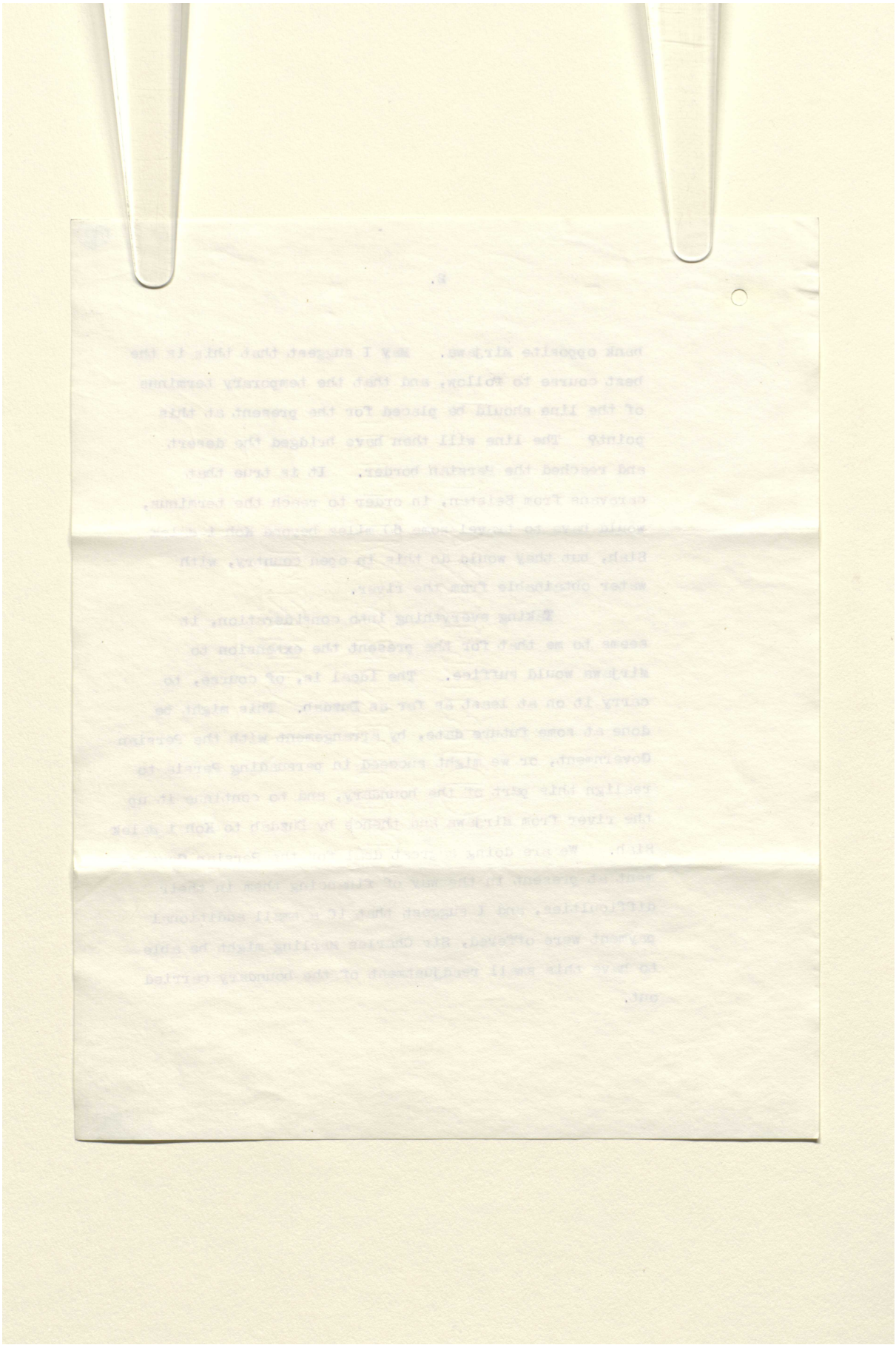

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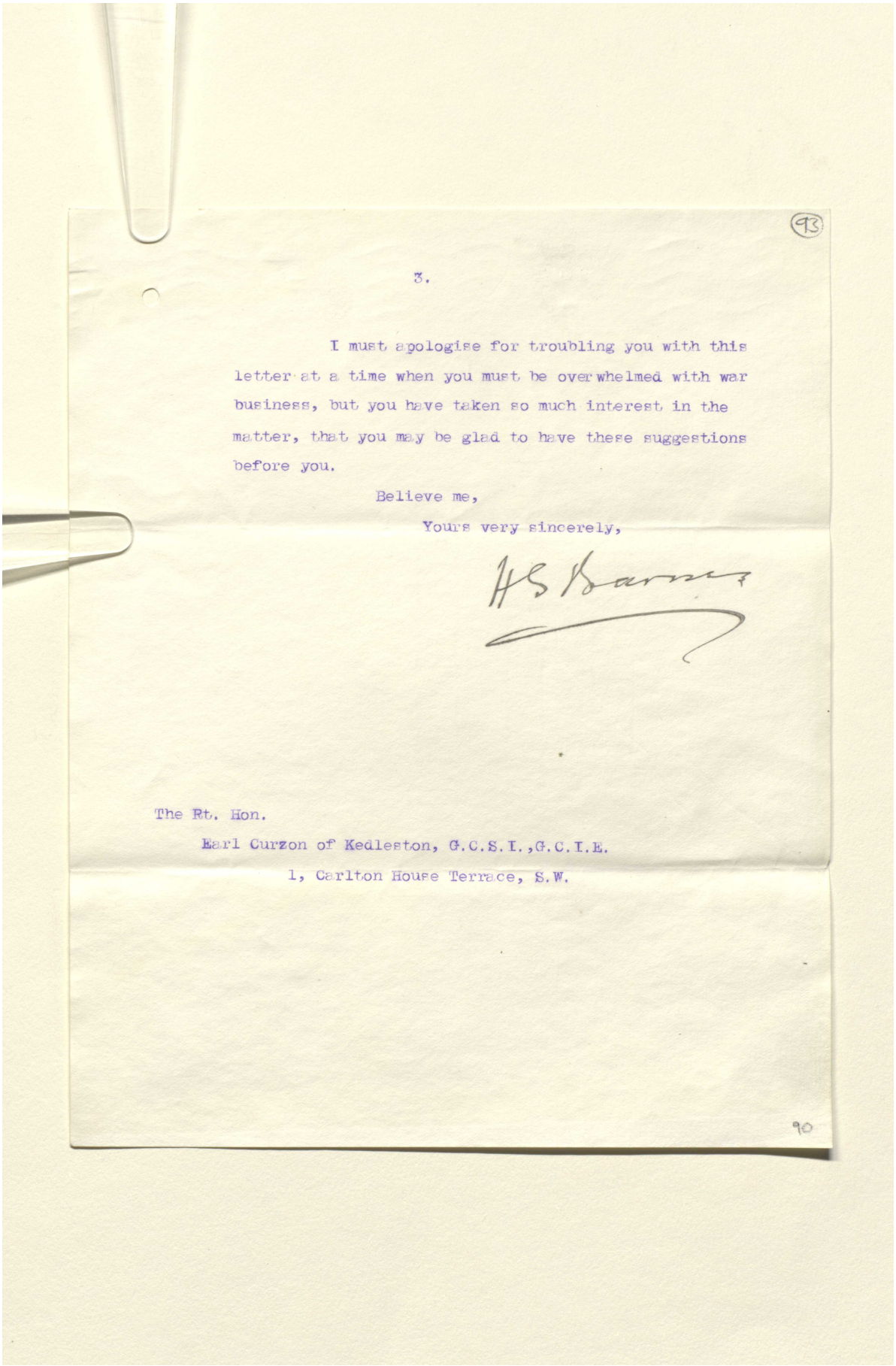

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3.

I must apologise for troubling you with this letter at a time when you must be overwhelmed with war business, but you have taken so much interest in the matter, that you may be glad to have these suggestions before you.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

H S Barnes

The Rt. Hon.

Earl Curzon of Kedleston, G.C.S.I.,G.C.I.E.

1, Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

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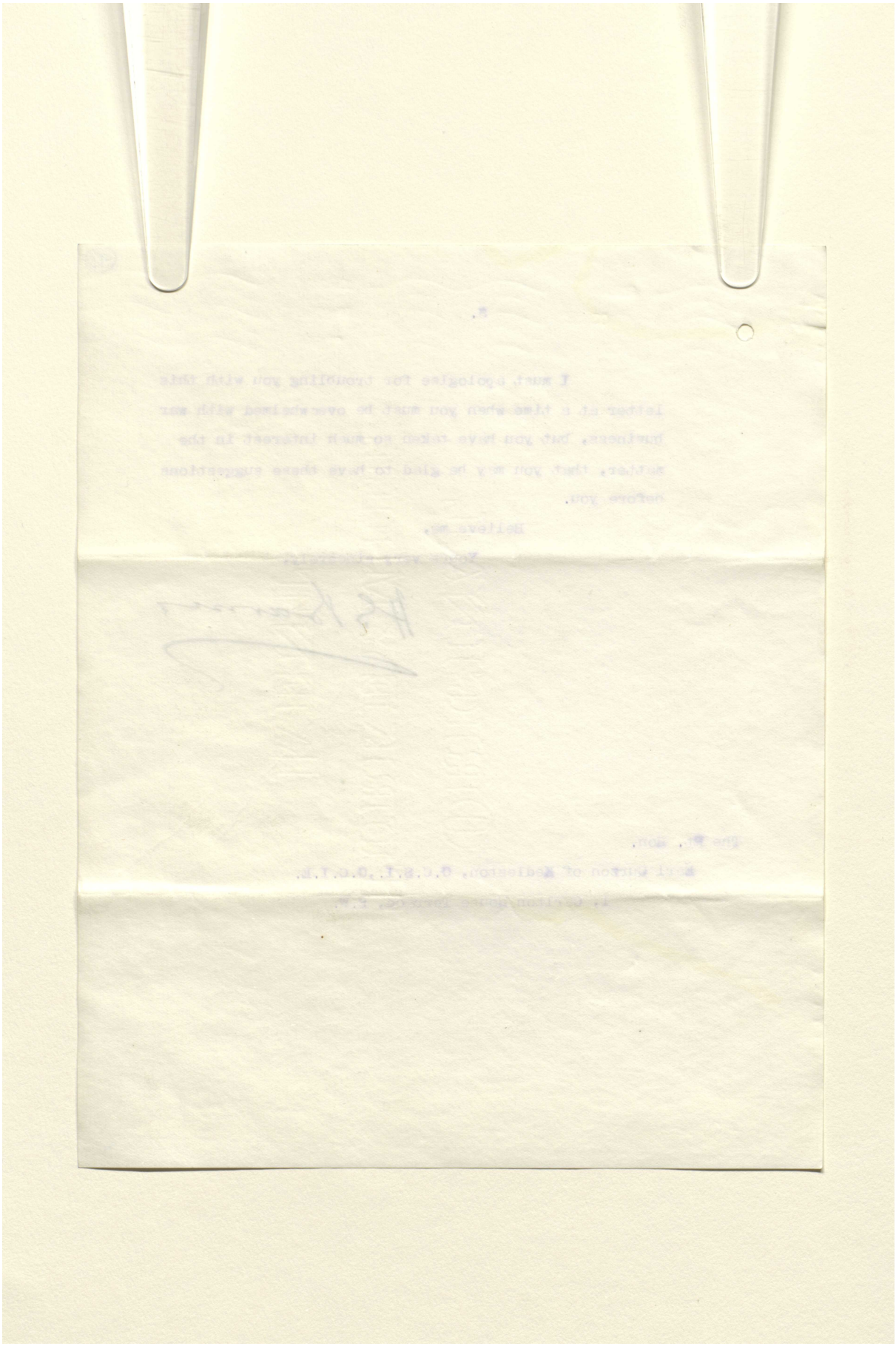

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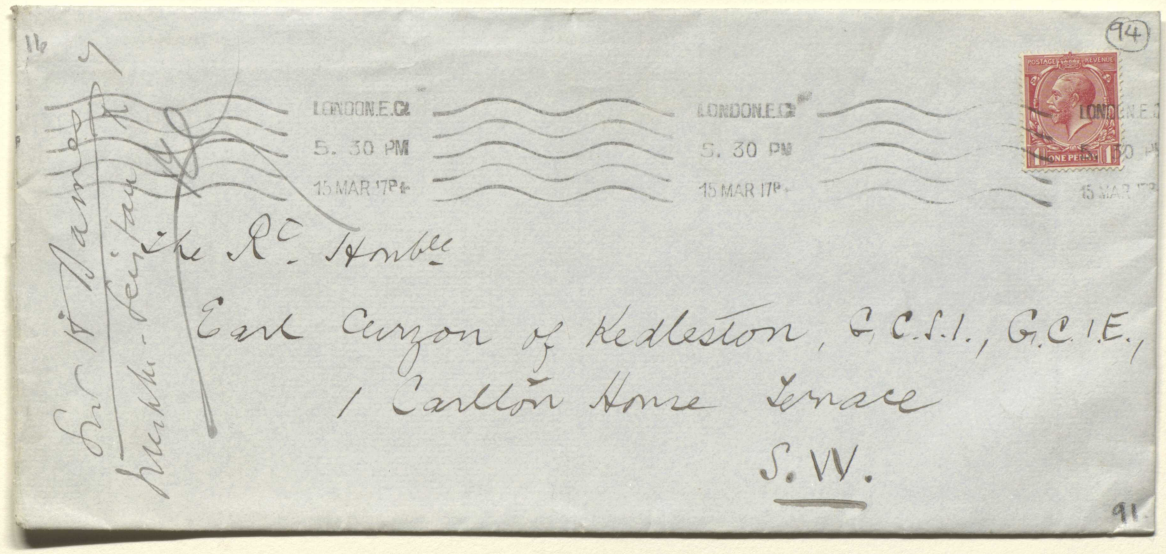

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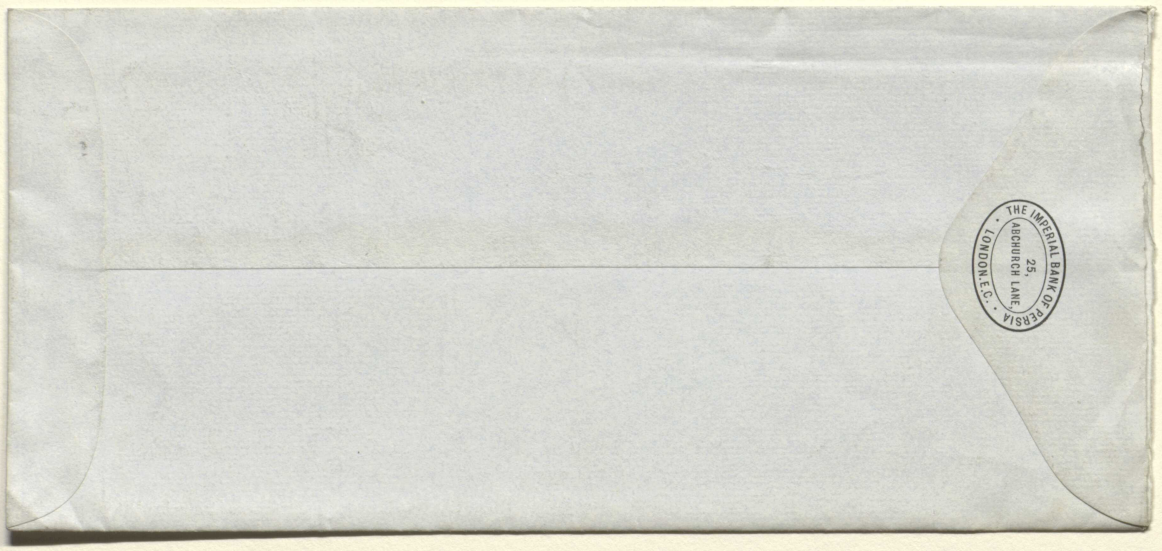

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C O N F I D E N T I A L.

A Memorandum dealing with the extension of the Quetta-Nushki branch Railway line to the Persian Frontier and with such other, of the more important, questions as relate to this matter.

-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

1. There are four separate standpoints from which a proposal to build a Railway connecting ~~Nushki~~ Dalbandin, the present terminus of the Quetta-Nushki branch line, with the Persian Frontier, needs to be studied.

These are the:-

(A) Political.
(B) Military.
(C) Commercial.
(D) Alignment as influenced by engineering and other special local considerations.

No correct appreciation of the various issues, direct or indirect, which relate to each of these four standpoints, can be obtained without a knowledge of the salient geographical features of the country, not only through which the line itself would pass but also of the region which borders it on either side, and of the conditions, climatic and other, which are found there.

For information on these subjects, the only available sources of information, at our disposal, are a series of not very complete records and such maps as we have been able to make, from time to time. It is unfortunate that the maps we possess, of this region, are, with few exceptions - the most noticeable being that of Seistan - not only far from reliable but are wanting in many important details. This country has never had the advantage of a detailed survey and our maps are, consequently, largely based on

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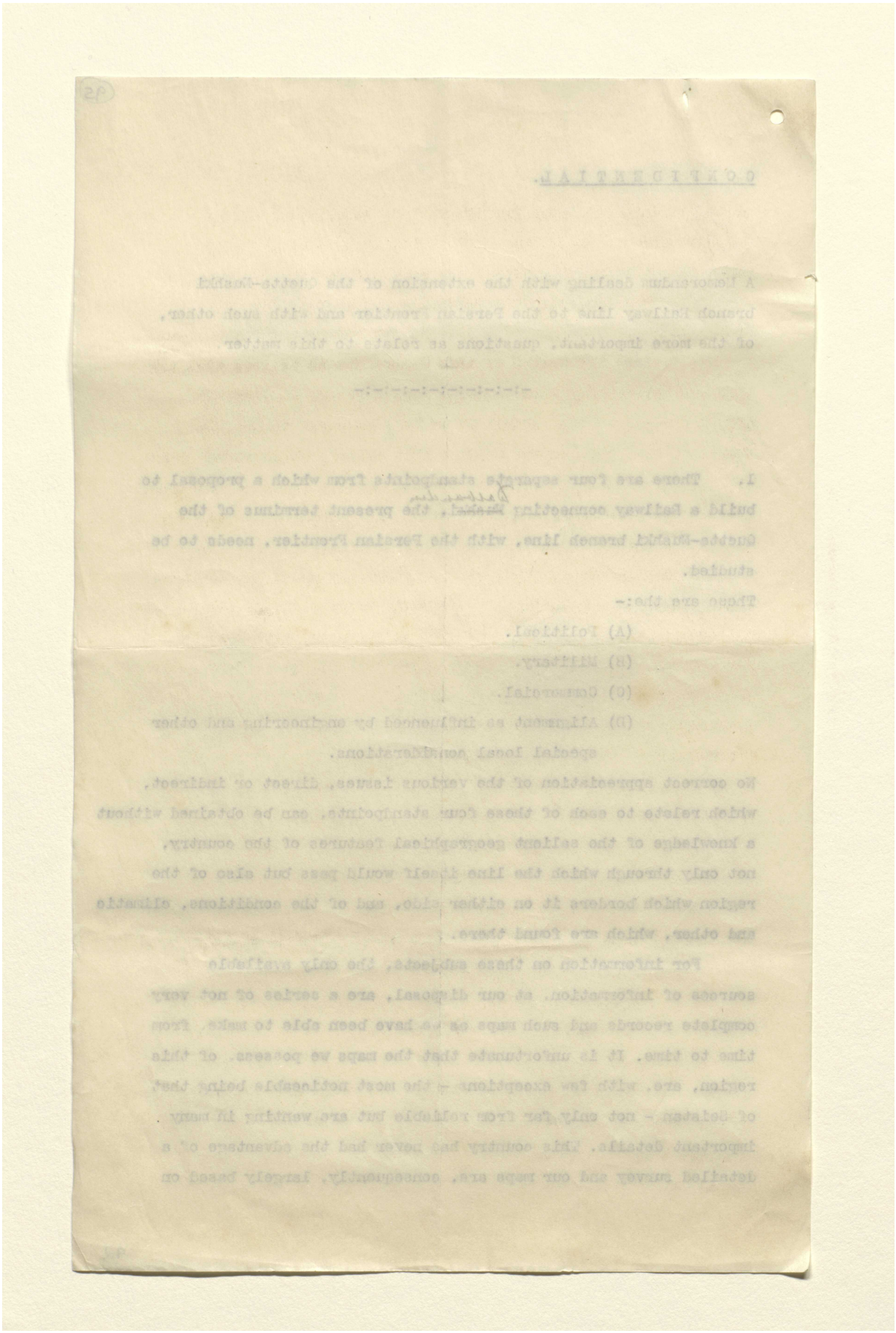

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rapid Boundary and other surveys of a reconnaissance nature. Valuable although such maps are, in the absence of detailed surveys, yet their limitations are real and must be recognised.

The lines on which the Political position in the middle East has been grouping itself, for the past fifteen years, has constrained the writer of this Memorandum to believe that the time was approaching when we would find that our Persian and Afghan interests would compel us to have recourse to Railway extension construction and holding this belief, which recent event have but confirmed, he has been at considerable pains to supplement the map and other data we possess with such information, bearing on these subjects, as he has been able to collect in the course of a close personal association with this country which has extended back, almost unbroken, to the year 1896; lengthy annual tours; and the transfrontier visits he has paid to Shorawak, the Registan, Koh-I-Pusht, the valley of the Helmand, Seistan, and to the Sarhad division of Persian Baluchistan, as well as to the Kharan State. The cordiality of the relations, never ultra apparent but always real and sincere, which have distinguished the dealings between the Chagai Dist: and Afghan authorities of the Helmand (Garmsel) valley has done much to facilitate the collection of this information.

The first point which impresses itself on the mind, which a visit to this country is constantly emphasising, is the trend from East to West, of its main Geographical features. The Helmand, the largest river in Afghanistan, flows, for the most important part of its course, from East to West. This river divides, into two parts, of almost equal area, the desert which forms the S.W. side of Afghanistan and which stretches from East to West. The general slope of this desert is itself from East to West. The huge sand ridges, and the accumulations of sand, which form so remarkable a feature along the Southern Limits of this desert, start from near Kandahar and run West to Palang Koh, in Southern Seistan. The hill range which links the Chagai Sarlat hills to the Sarhad.

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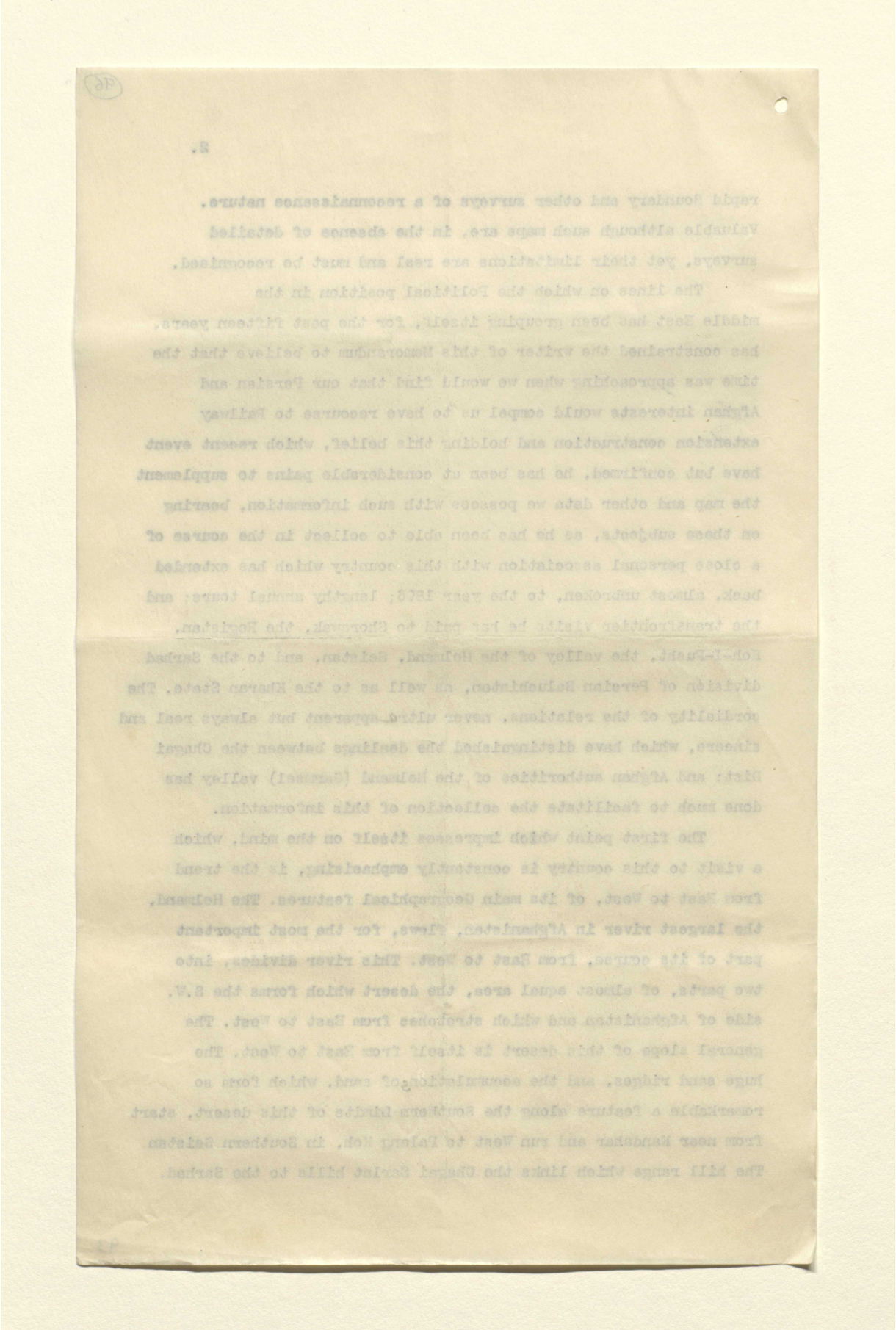

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runs again from East to West. The size of the sand ridges, East of the Chagai Sarlat hills, their general conformation, and certain deductions to be drawn from their underground water supply, all go to show that these hills once extended, for a considerable distance, due East of the Chagai range but have been overwhelmed by drift sand. The drainage of the Quetta hills, after passing through the Shorawak and Nushki dak plains, both plains with a westerly tilt, terminates away to the West, in the Chagai Hamun. All the main sand belts met with in Nushki and Chagai, run West. The lofty mountain barrier which separates the Kharan and Dalbandin plains, runs from East to West and, as both these plains have a marked downward slope Westwards, it follows that their drainage also flows from East to West. This western trend finds its limit when it reaches the foot of the mountain barrier which separates British and Persian Baluchistan from one another and the slope which forms the Eastern glacis of the Khorassan hills. This mountain barrier runs North, from the Persian Gulf littoral, in an almost direct line, until it reaches Koh-I-Malik Siah. Here it swings round to the West, making almost a right angle bend and, becoming thereafter the dividing line between the Khorassan and Kirman Provinces, continues West until it merges in the Khorassan hill system. In the Southern sector, these hills are merely the outlying fringe of the Persian Baluchistan hill region but when they leave this system, which they do not far from Jalk, they assume a widely different character. From this point, they form a rugged clear cut rocky wall with a breadth never great but which narrows, as it advances North, until it fines down into a wall only a few miles wide. This wall - and this is a matter both of considerable Geographical interest as well as of great Political Importance - separates the "Great Persian Desert", whose Eastern extremity goes under the name of the "Great Kirman Desert", from the desert country of British Baluchistan. From this wall denudation slopes project into the desert, on either side. The "Great Persian desert"

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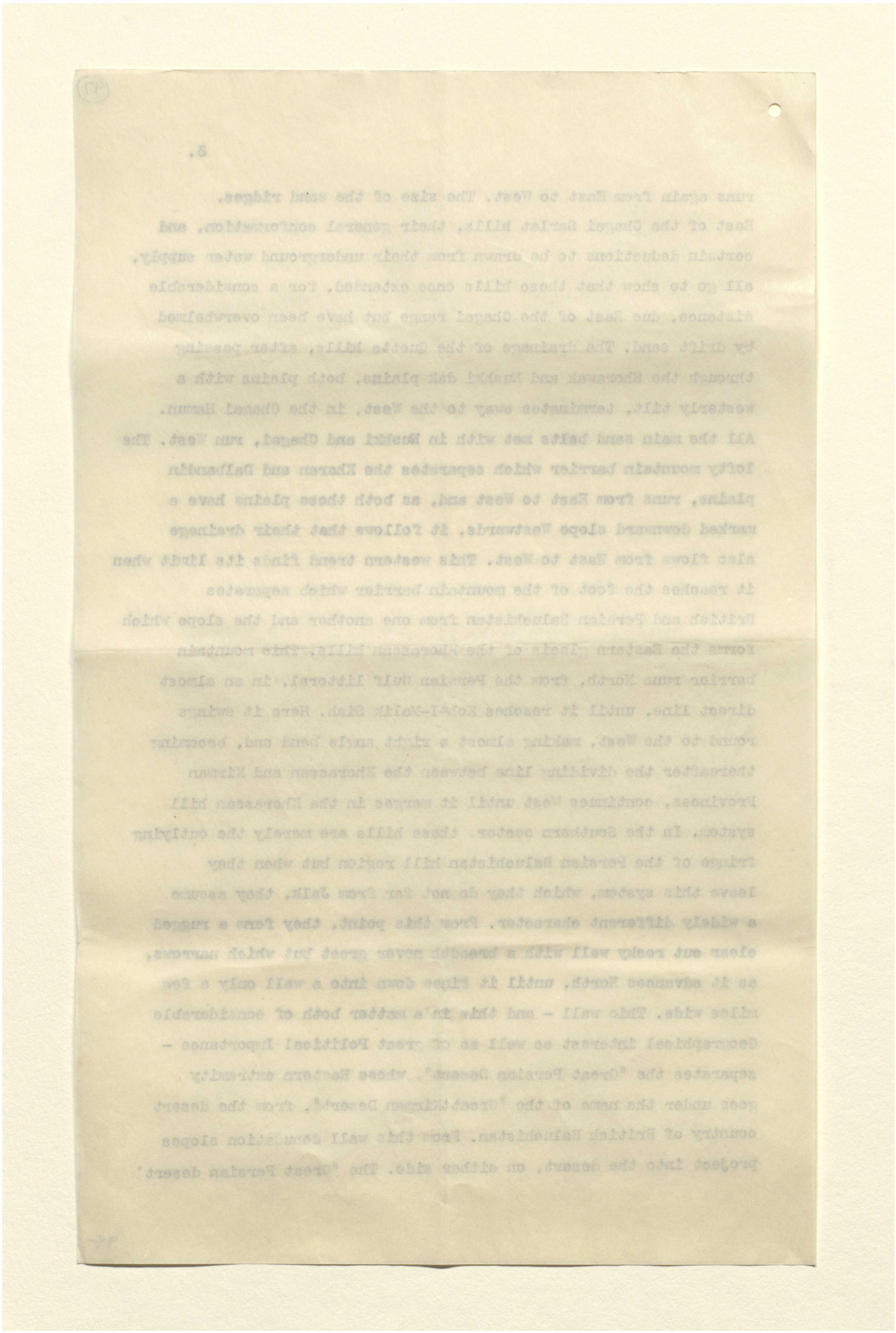

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which bisects Persia is one of the most arid and inhospitable regions in the world. It is uninhabited: possesses neither wood, grass, water nor camel grazing: it cannot be crossed except by dangerous tracks, few in number, all well known, and which are isolated from one another by immense distances. These tracks are quite narrow and form, in military parlance, causeways to leave which often entails considerable danger in consequence of the stretches of mud, concealed under a layer of crusted saltpetre, which skirts their sides in so many places. The climate of this desert alternates from a cold which becomes extreme, in winter, when swept by those icy gales from the North which are so frequent at that season, to a heat, in Summer, so fiery in its intensity as to preclude all travelling by day and frequently to debar passage itself. This region, in short, is one into which the traveller enters with apprehension and leaves with joy.

The drainage of the Chagai and Kharan Districts continue Westwards until they reach the depression, lying East of Jalk, known as the Mashkel Hamun. Into this depression also flows, by way of the Talab river, the eastern denudation slopes drainage of the Sarhad mountain barrier wall, from a point just South of Koh-I-Malik Siah: as well as a considerable amount of the drainage of Persian Baluchistan. The latter enters the Hamun from the South and is brought down by the Mashkel (Mashkid) river and as this river possesses a catchment basin of several thousand square miles in area, the floods which make their way down its channel in winter, which is the rainy season there, are frequently very heavy and overflow the banks, on either side.

The Helmand turn North at Band-I-Kamal Khan and discharges into the Naizar depression. Owing to the heavy percentage of silt its waters carry, it forms constantly changing deltas. The delta now forming shows a distinct tendency to swing Westwards and it was largely due to this that water disputes, between Afghanistan and Persia, arose which culminated in the deputation of the Arbitration Commission which was sent to Seistan, by Lord

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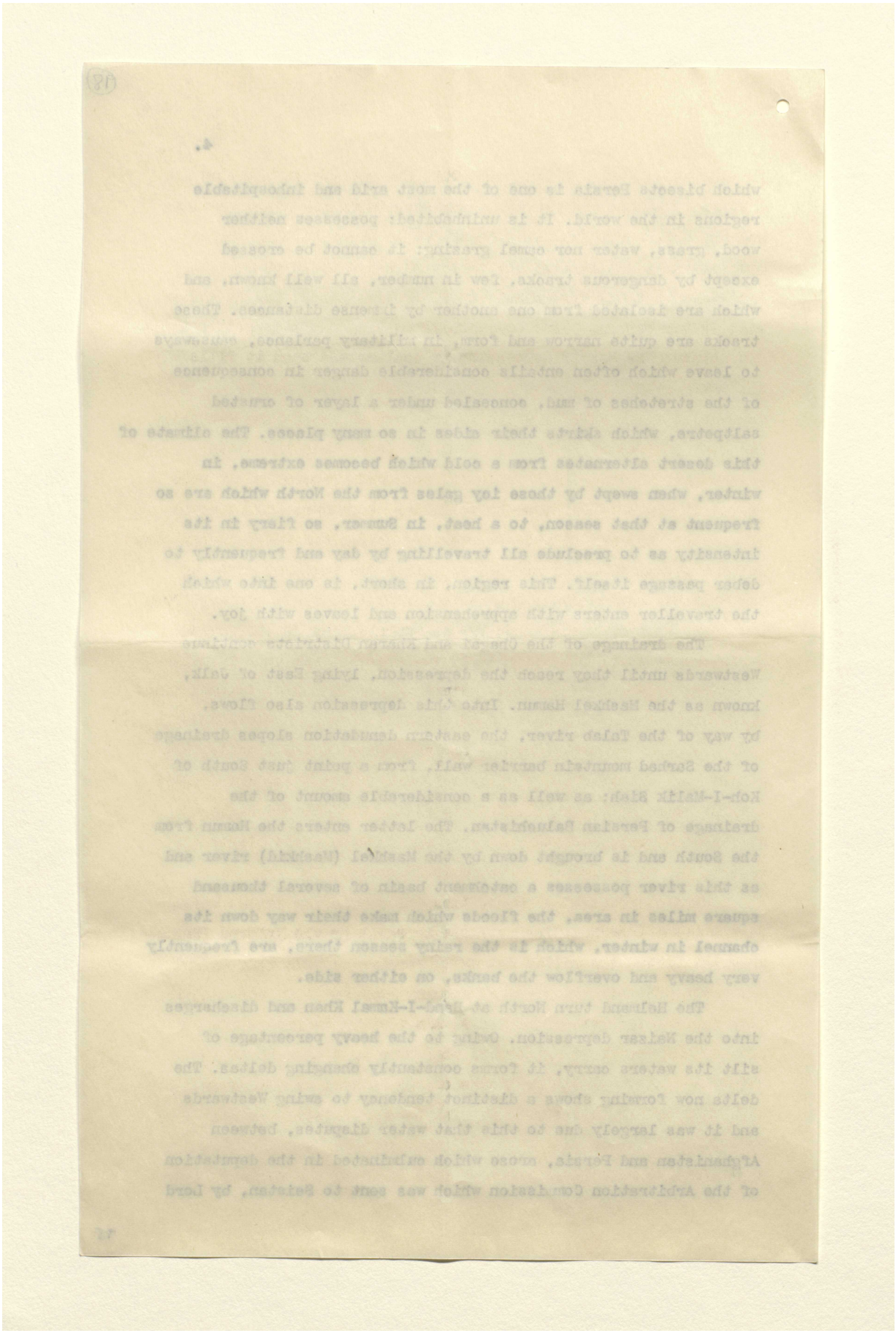

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Curzons Government, in the year 1902. The process of building up a delta is a slow one yet the agencies at work are never ceasing and are a factor which needs always to be borne in mind. For a complete arc of a circle, the centre of which would be near Band-I-Kamal Khan, the country North of that place, and on either side of the present river channel, is nothing but a series of these old deltas. The Naizar depression is shallow and when it fills its water overflows into the Hamun Seistan, a long narrow depression which extends South to the foot of the Palang Koh slope and cuts off access to Seistan from the West. When the Hamun Seistan is, in turn, full which has occurred frequently, of late years, it discharges, through the Shelag, a channel in its south extremity, into yet another depression, called the God-I-Zirreh, the Eastern branch of which reaches to with a few thousand yards of the Helmand, near Rudbar. Into this branch also finds its way, from the East, such drainage, from the Northern slopes of the Chagai Sarlat range as is not absorbed by the desert. From this it will be perceived that the Helmand, between Rudbar and Band-I-Kamal Khan, flows along a viaduct and that if the side of this viaduct were ever breached or pierced by artificial means - a matter which the writer has satisfied himself, by personal examination, would prove a by no means difficult engineering feat - the Helmand would discharge direct into the God-I-Zirreh, Seistan would become a desert, and many complex problems would arise.

North of Central Garmsel, lies the forbidding desert known as the Dasht-I-Margo which prevents approach to the Helmand (Garmsel), from the North. The writer has never penetrated into this desert any great distance but personal enquiry made in 1902, when passing down the Helmand valley, satisfied him that it is impossible to cross this desert in summer and that even in winter it is an enterprise on which the residents of the Helmand valley never willingly embark unless rain has fallen and collected in scattered pools.

For the general purposes we have in view, the country lying

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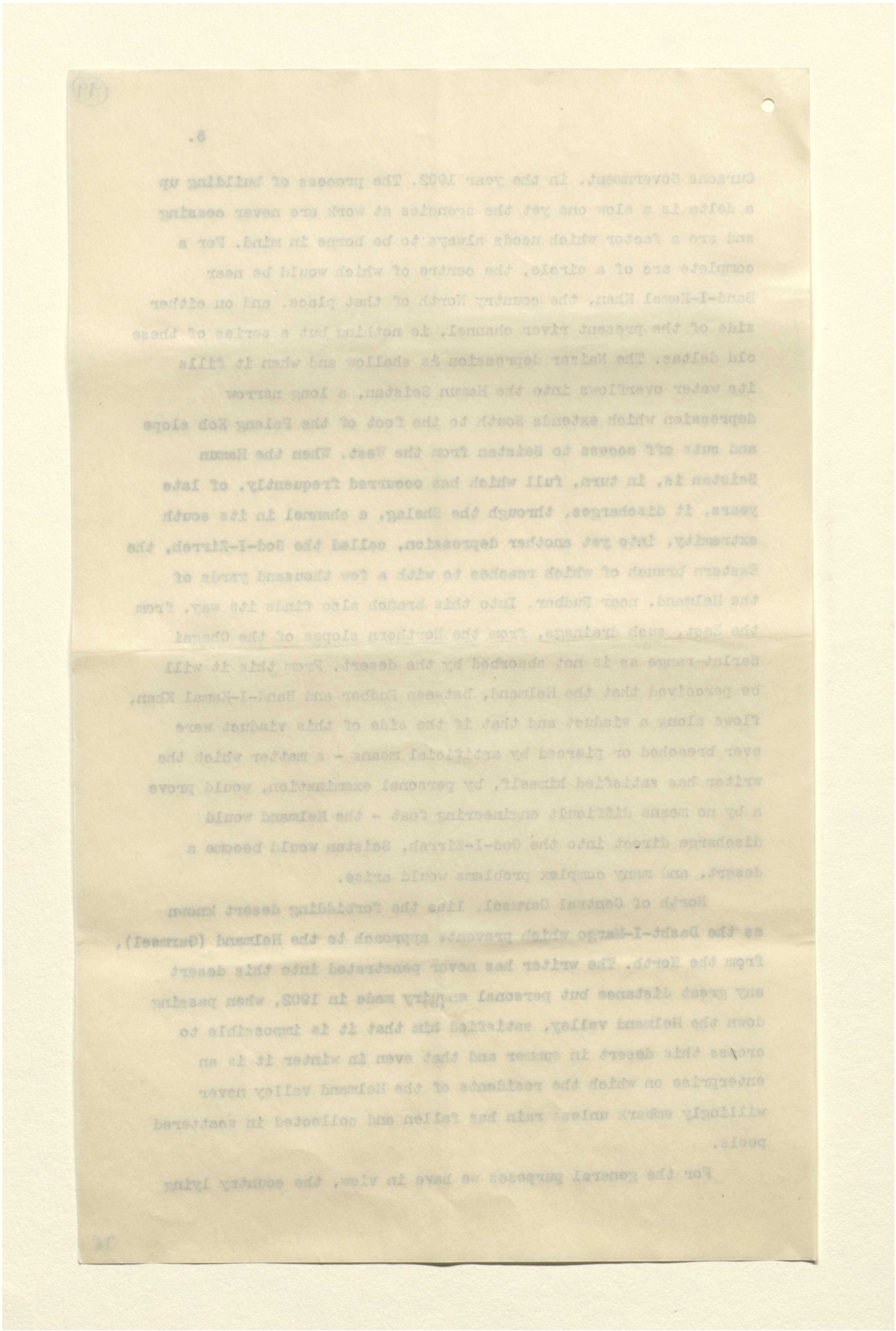

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South of Garmsel and North of the Chagai District, can most conveniently be divided into three sectors, i.e. the Eastern, Central, and Western. While it is customary to regard all three sectors as being desert, in the true sense of the term, this is not strictly speaking the case as the country they relate to is covered with grass in winter and forms grazing grounds, the tribal rights in which are jealously guarded and have been the subject, in the past, of many bitter partisan fights. In summer the heat is so intense that the pastorlists withdraw, with their flocks, to the Helmand and the country, and its wells, are left to look after themselves. The Western sector is desert in the full sense of the word, except along the banks of the Shelag, and the writer who has crossed it by the only two routes which are in at all general use, would gladly forget his experiences. The main routes which run South from the Helmand valley, traverse the central sector and strike the Chagai District at the Sarlat. Dominating as the Barab Chah plateau of the Chagai Sarlat hills does all these routes, as well as central Garmsel itself, Barab Chah occupies a position of the highest military strategical importance. There are a few tracks which lead South from the Helmand to Nushki, through the Eastern sector, but as all these cross the heavy tumbled sand mountains, hills, and belts, which constitute the Registan ("country of sand"), they are of no great importance in themselves.

2. Before proceeding to study the larger issues before us, it would be as well to pause a moment and consider whether any other conditions exist, relating to such matters as (A) Cultivation, (B) Rainfall, (C) Wind, (D) Sand, (E) The main trade routes, (F) Climate, and (G) International boundaries, which are likely to exert any especial influence of their own and if so to what extent.

A. Cultivation.

The cultivated areas, in the region under review, are limited. Of these the most important by far is Seistan whose rich

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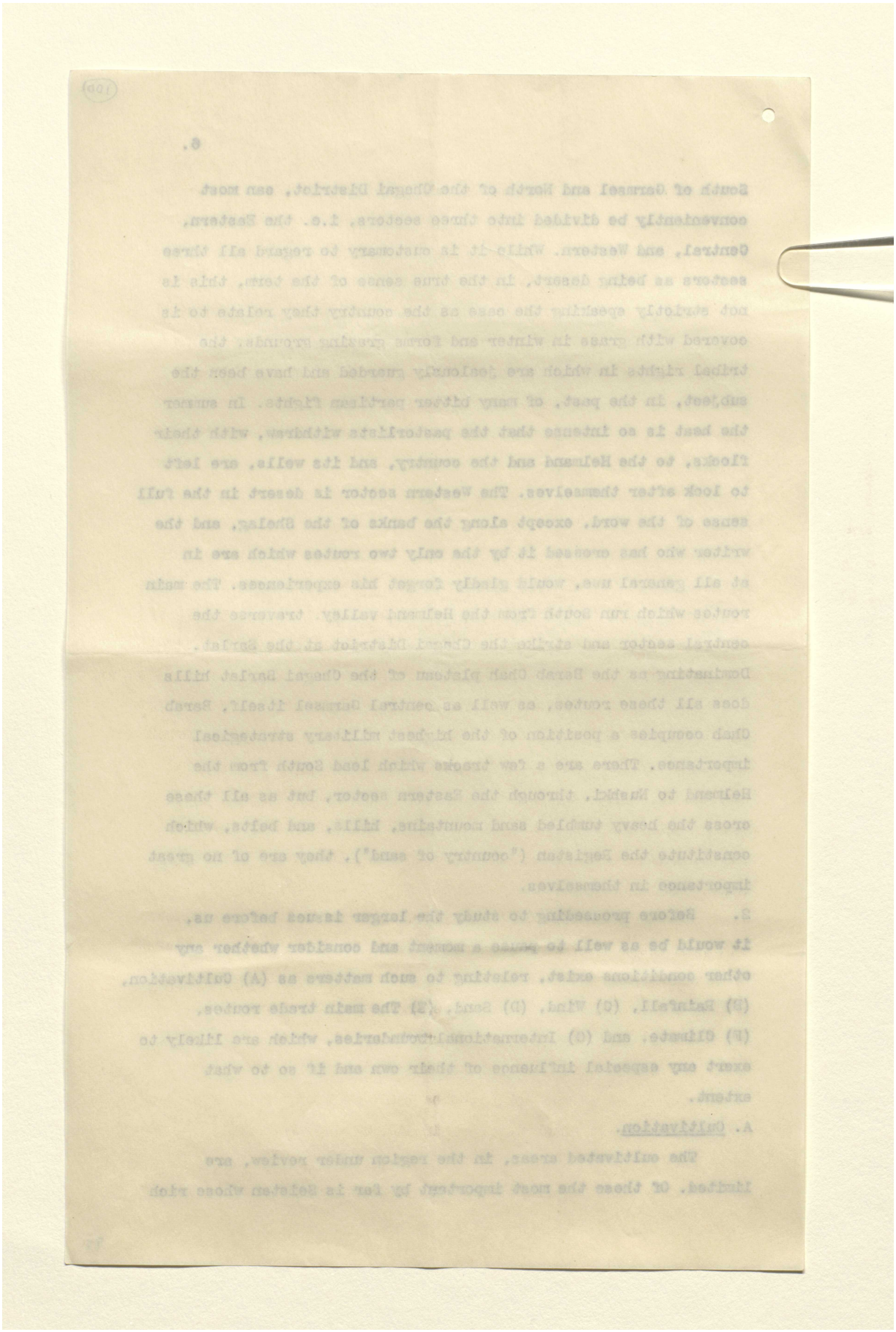

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alluvial soil, fertilised by the silt with which the flood water of the Helmand is so largely charged, produces crops so abundant that a large surplus, over and above the requirements of its inhabitants, is available for export to the neighbouring Persian Districts which do not grow sufficient grain themselves. To hold the control of the Seistan grain supply is largely to hold the control of the tribes in these districts, chief among whom are the Baluch tribes of the Sarhad whose raiding propensities have caused both the Persian authorities and ourselves so much trouble and loss, of late years, and who are the greatest menace to which our trade route is exposed. If an outlet, provided with modern traffic facilities and low carriage rates, were to be provided, it is not too much to expect that the area under cultivation, in Seistan, would be largely augmented and a prosperity would ensue which could not fail to have an important effect on our trade. The export of food stuffs from Seistan is not permitted, by Persian,law, but this is a subject on which we will have something to say, later on.

Next in importance to Seistan, as a grain producing country, is the valley of the Helmand. The word valley is perhaps somewhat of a misnomer as the crops are grown on either side of the river bed, water being raised to ground level by tamarisk weirs which are renewed, every year. Much more grain than is required for local use is raised and the surplus is either purchased by outlying Baluch tribes, or finds its way to the Kandahar market.

Kharan possesses a rich soil but the rainfall is unreliable and good crops only come round about once in three years. A masonry band thrown across the Bulo nullah, near its debouchure from the hills, and a small and inexpensive irrigation situated at the mouth of the Mashkel river, in Mashkel, would do much to rectify this and ensure that peace within the State borders which is of so much importance to us. Both schemes are well worth considering. Any surplus wheat which is grown in Kharan will now find its way into Quetta.

The Mushki cultivation which has been largely developed of

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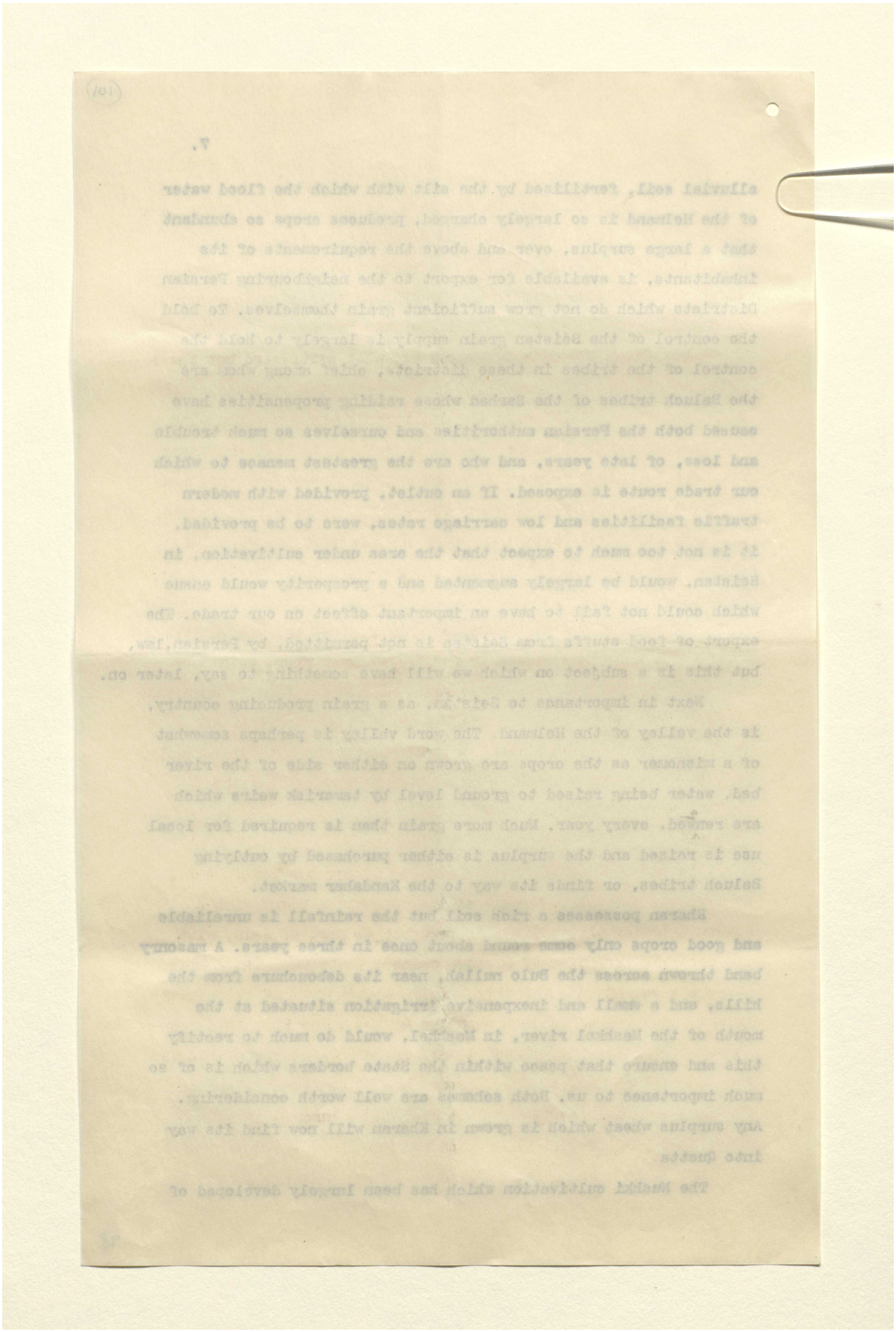

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late years, extends West, in detached patches, as far as Chagai and Dalbandin but from here on to the Persian Frontier, there is none. That the area in Chagai, now under cultivation, will extend, under the influence exerted by the Railway extension sanctioned, is a matter in regard to which the writer has no doubt.

The Dizak and Jalk Districts are well cultivated but their grain output is much restricted by the quarrels, jealousies, and fighting, which distinguish the dealings of their headmen with one another. At both these places, as well as in Mashkel, there are considerable stretches of country covered with valuable and highly productive, date groves. There are a few small cultivated areas in the Sarhad hill country, among the more important of these being those at Mirjawa and Ladis.

B. Rainfall.

Throughout the plain area of this region, the rainfall is meagre and there are places in the desert area where rain does not fall for two and even three years at a time. When it does rain the fall is apt to be heavy and the effects are frequently striking, deep channels being scoured out in the soft loose soil. In the hills, the rainfall is much more pronounced and the nullahs bring down heavy floods.

C. Wind.

No description of this region, no matter how brief, would be complete without reference to the wind which forms such a dominant factor there. There is probably no part of Asia, with the possible exception of Eastern Chinese Turkestan, where wind plays a more important part in shaping the surface of the country. On all sides are to be seen examples of the power that this agency is capable of exerting, under conditions which are favourable to it. In Southern Seistan, wind scours are to be found stretching for miles, as much as twenty feet deep and a hundred yards across, which look like ancient river beds but which owe their origin to the high winds which blow, with scarcely any cessation, from the

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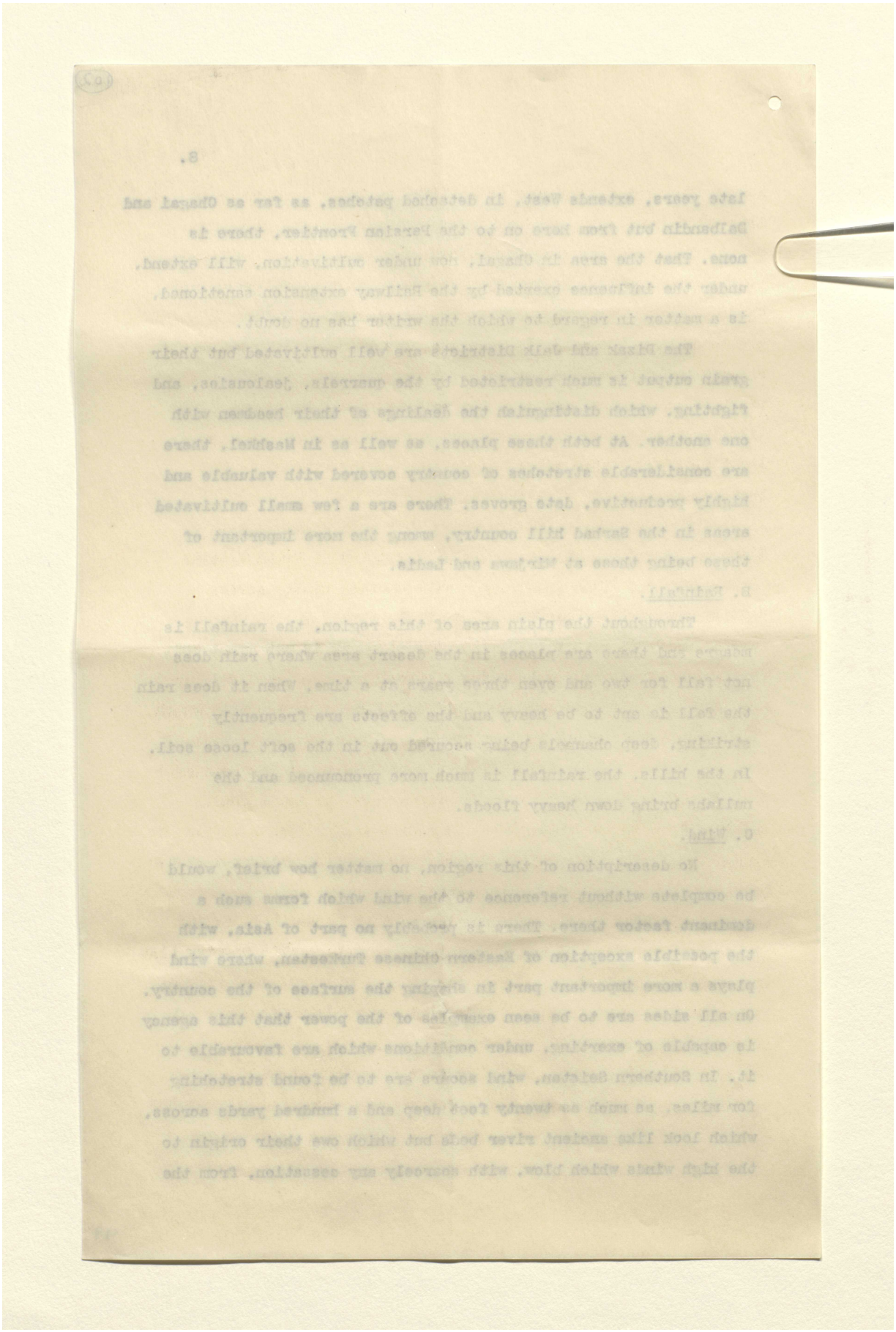

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North. The fantastic shapes into which the hills and bluffs of this country are cut, are due to same agency. Traces are to be found of hills which have long since been swept out of existence by the same destructive agency and, except in a few places,—Mian Kangi being the most noteworthy,—the country except where protected from the wind, is treeless. The viaduct along which the river Helmand flows, before entering Seistan, and which lies at right angles to the centre of the path traversed by the wind, is illustrative both of the consistent opposition to wind action which soil saturation offers as well as of the attraction the latter possesses for dust particles.

The general direction in which this wind blows is from North to South. Its origin is the hill country in North Western Afghanistan and after following a well defined track, across Seistan and British Baluchistan, it blows itself out in the Persian Gulf. At either extremity, the strength is not great but, in the centre section, it attains a velocity which our carefully kept records show is surprising. While the whole region with which we are dealing is swept by periodic gales, from the North, yet what may be described, for want of a better term, as the permanent wind stream is in itself comparatively narrow. It has a summer width of from 50 to 70 miles but is double that distance across, in winter. The writer has, on many occasions, crossed this wind stream in face of what can only be described as a severe gale, to emerge beyond its limits into a calm similar to that he had left behind him on entering it, and has ascertained, by telegraphic enquiry that the wind continued to sweep down its channel with unabated vigour. The precise track followed by this wind stream from its point of origin, in the North, to Lash Juwain, remains to be determined, but from there, on to the Gulf, it is fairly well known. It blows across the centre of Lash Juwain, follows the course of the Helmand up to Band-I-Kamal Khan, where it turns East for a distance of about fifty miles, still conforming to the course of the river.

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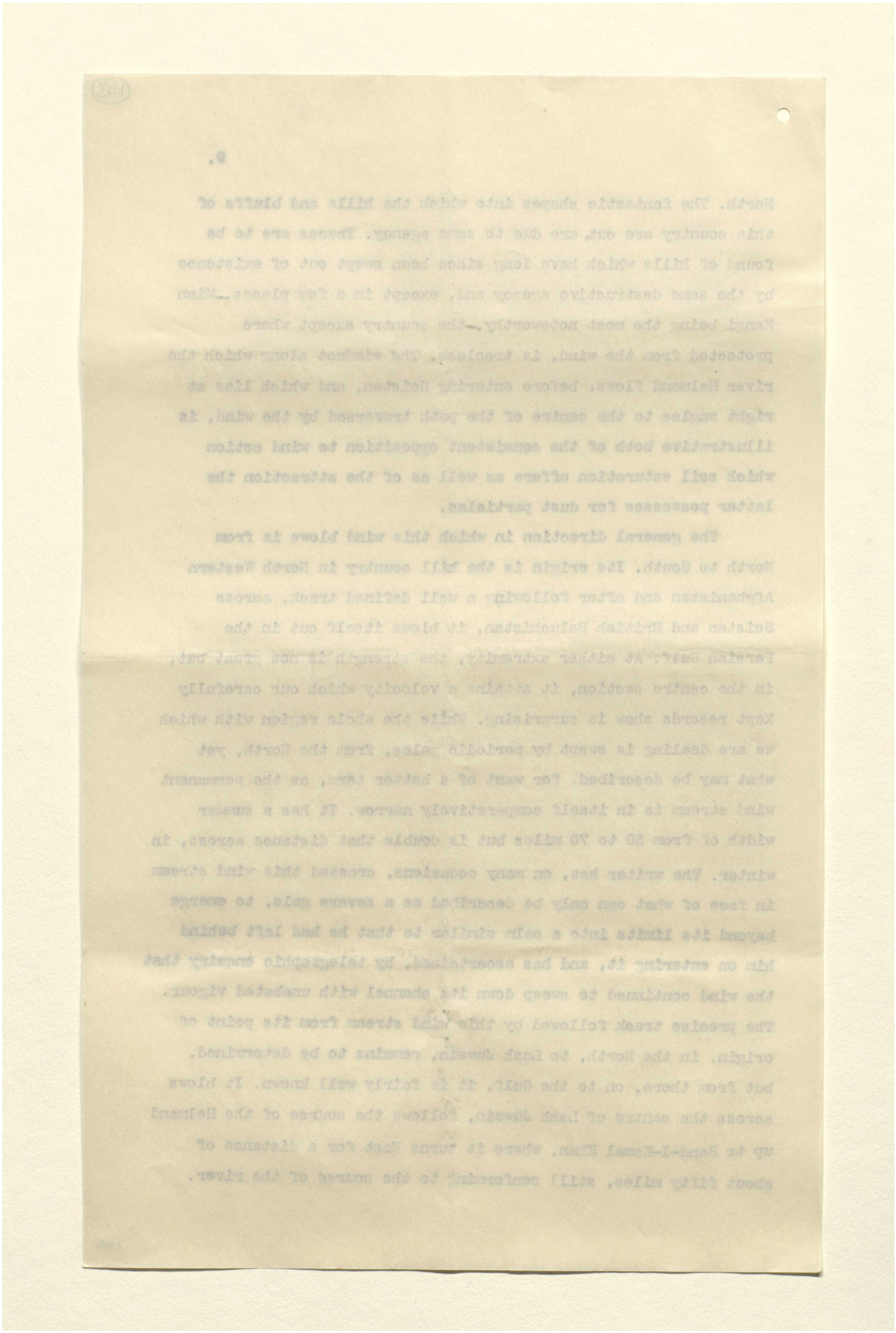

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Here it bends due South, crosses the Koh-I-Sultan range where its destructive effects are to be found, written with no uncertain hand, in the grotesque shapes into which this mountain has been chiselled and in the masses of sand which it has flung, some thousand of feet high, against the Northern slope of that mountain, and proceeding on its course South, across Mashkel and Mekran, finds its end in the Persian Gulf. In Seistan it is known as the "Bad Sud-O-Bist Ruz" (the wind of the one hundred and twenty days), for every morning, in Summer, with almost unfailing regularity it puts in its appearance, attains its maximum rather after the sun has past its zenith, and dies away, in the evening. During the months which immediately precede and follow summer, this wind stream is somewhat intermittent, but in winter, at intervals which may extend to as much as even three weeks although usually much less, it becomes an icy blast which overflows its channel, on either side, long distances and attains a strength and velocity the summer months rarely ever see. The general causes which produce this wind are well known, but, while so, the reasons which operate to confine it to the course it follows and what it is that gives this wind its truly surprising strength, are not and would form a study for the scientist as engrossing as it would prove useful. In her wind, Seistan possesses an economic power of great potential value.

D. Sand.

Sand is generally formed in one of two different ways, v.i.z. either by the pulverisation of rocky debris, brought down by erosion, by water action, or by the disintegration of beds, usually conglomerate, eaten away by the wind. For the latter, the essentials are extremes of heat and cold, great variation between the day and night temperatures, an intensely dry climate, a meagre rainfall, and a surface which permits full play to wind action. These conditions reach, perhaps, the highest collective maximum possible on the great plains areas, in review. As

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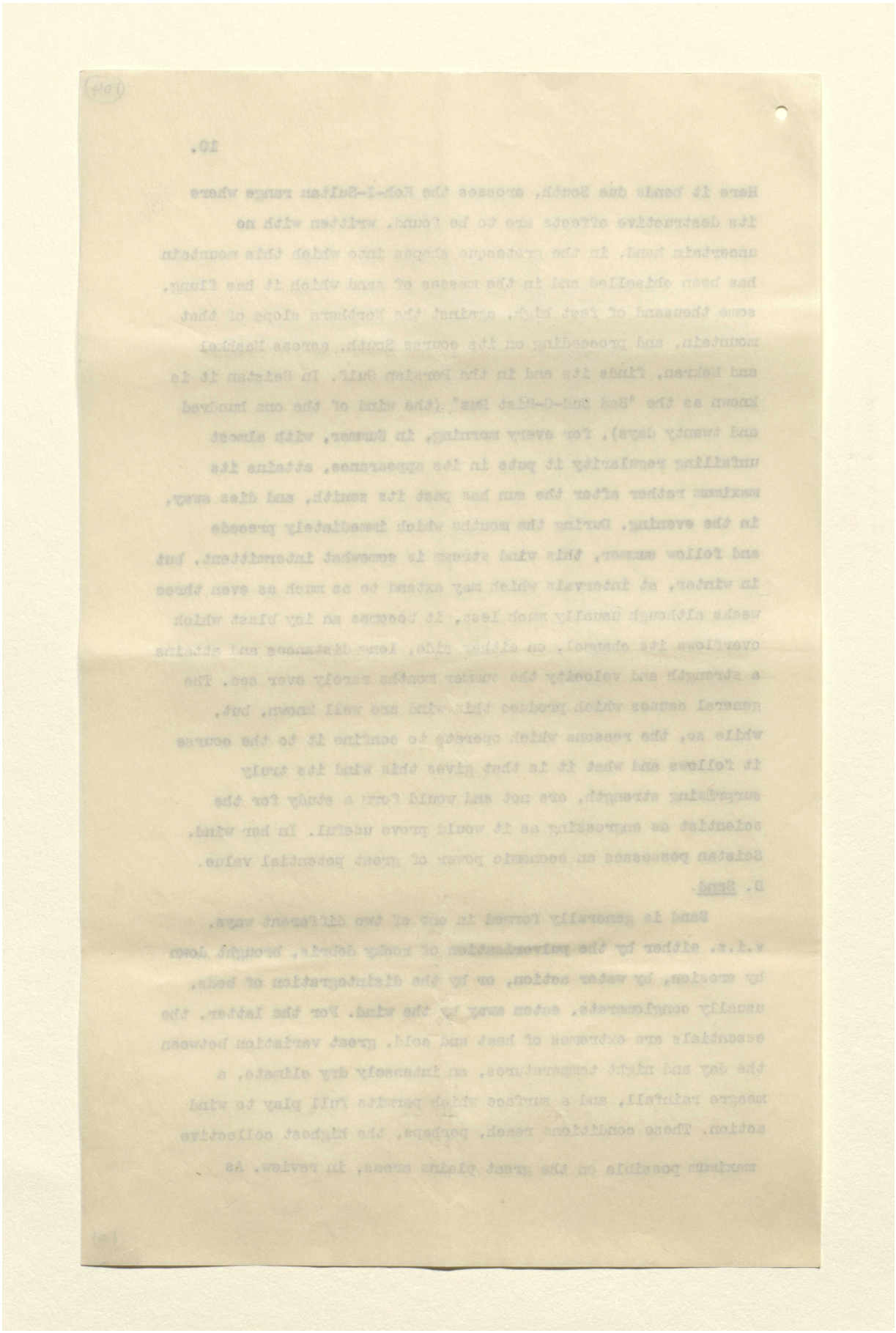

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disintegration proceeds, particles break off which, driven before the wind, cause, by their friction, other particles to break away. This sand, at first inchoate, meets with some small obstacle around which it piles itself. A sand dune forms and this gathering in mass, moves down wind, in that crescent formation known technically as a "barchan". These crescents forge steadily ahead and continue their march until they add their quota to a sand field or break into a spray of sand against a mountain side. The Nushki-Seistan trade route passes through several lines of sand crescents, rather West of Dalbandin, which are speeding South and which form the link which connects the Kharan sand field with that on the Afghan border. As these crescents make a definite number of yards progress, every year, and as they are marching in a direction transverse to any railway extension, from the Nushki side, a few words as to the rules which, it has been found, govern their formation, size, and movements, would not be amiss. Their crescent shape, with horns projecting down wind, is due to the fact that sand grains move up the relatively steep incline of the main dune mass at a lower rate of speed than up the low wings, on either side. Near ground surface the sand particles are in more active motion and travel with greater rapidity than those which constitute the main body. The onward movement of these particles terminates when they come under the lee of the wind and it is this which gives to the dune its projecting arms, the length of which will, therefore, depend on the height of the dune which will in turn, depend on the strength of the wind and the level of the ground. The distances between the horns of barchans vary, as does the distance at which they follow behind one another, but for the former fifty to eighty, and, in some exceptional cases, as much as one hundred yards, are usual, and in the latter from two hundred to four hundred yards. The distances at which barchans succeed one another would seem to depend on the wind conditions which prevailed when they were either formed or broken off from the parent mass.

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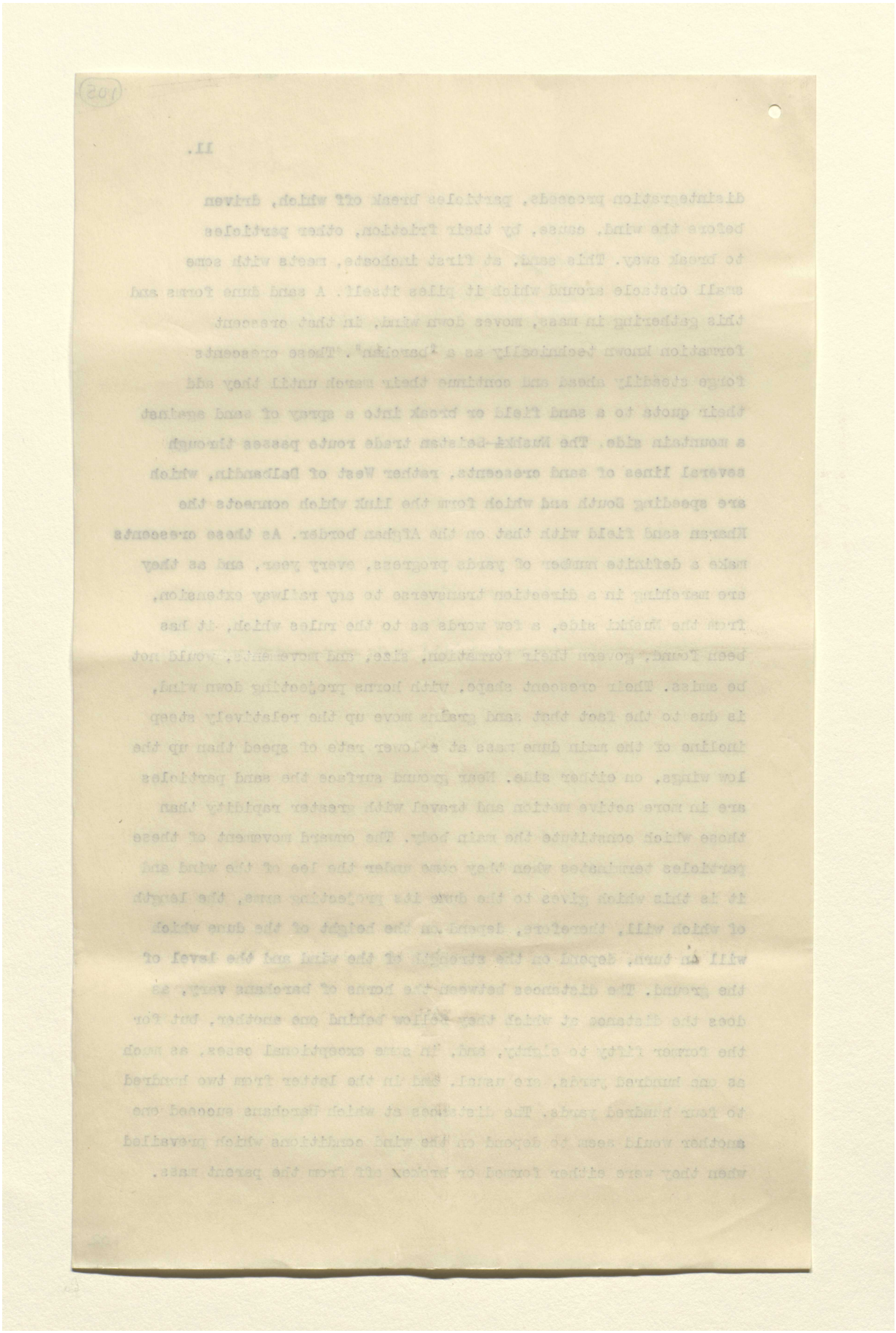

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To stay the advance of a sand dune is quite feasible. The simplest method is to scatter stones, soil, gravel, or grit over the exposed back. Each dune is covered with sand ripples which are essential to the barchan's existence and if their formation is interfered with, in this way, the dune's advance is arrested, it disintegrates, quickly falls into ruin and then dissipates.

E. Main trade roads.

We are only actively concerned with five main roads. These are the road which runs from Lash Juwain to Eastern Afghanistan, North and parallel to the Dasht-I-Margo, cutting the Kandahar-Grishk-Herat road at Grishk. The high road which connects Seistan, by way of the Helmand valley, with Kandahar. The Nushki-Seistan trade road, of which no description is necessary. The road which merchants use when travelling from Meshed to Seistan, and which passes through Birjand. And the old trade route which connected the ancient Ormuz, on the Persian Gulf, with India by way of Seistan and Afghanistan. This old time trade route, if we are to judge it by the remains which mark its various "dasht" stages. must, at one time, have enjoyed a high measure of prosperity. These remains consist of caravanserais, fortified posts, storehouses, wells, cisterns, and watch towers, on the summit of which there are still to be found traces of the beacons which were kept burning, at night. There is no reason to doubt that this old trade route formed the main trade artery along which European merchandise passed to India, prior to the Portugese discovery of the all sea route, and that it competed, on favourable terms, with the sea borne trade between the West of India and Gulf ports, handicapped as the latter was by the monsoon conditions which prevailed for so many months, during the year, and by the long distances to which goods had to be forwarded up country after being discharged from ship. This route skirted round the Eastern extremity of the impassable "Great Kirman Desert" and kept between it and the rocky barrier wall which extends North, from Jalk, through Sarhad,

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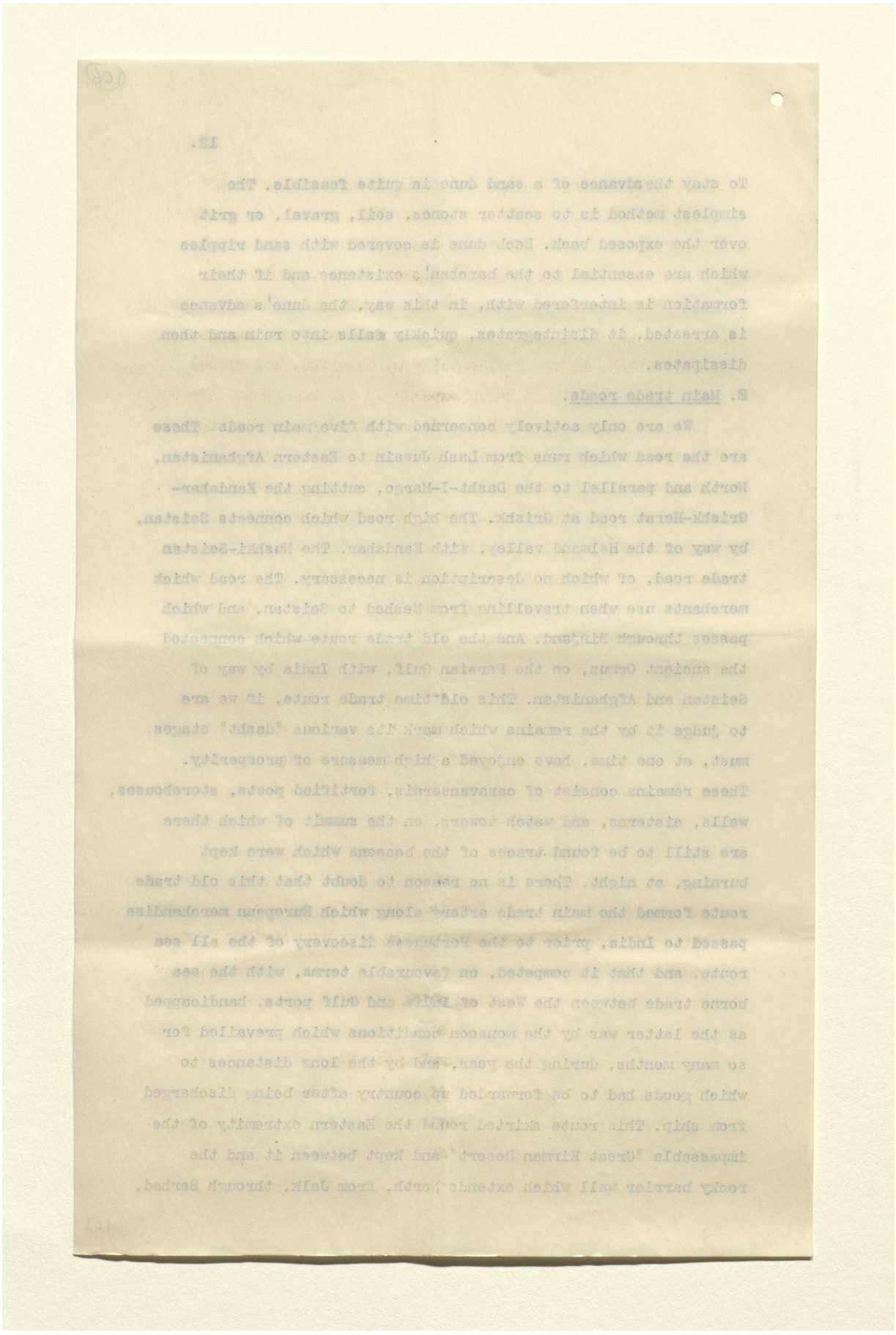

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to Koh-I-Malik Siah. It was, and still remains, the only route by which an approach to Seistan and India, from either the Gulf or Kirman sides, is possible. It was by this route that the arms and ammunition that have reached Afghanistan, of late years, in such large quantities, and have armed the tribesmen of that country and the N.W. Frontier, in such numbers, were imported, a traffic which, it may incidentally be observed, has caused grave anxiety as well as heavy expense to the Government of India; has led to the loosing of the bonds of the Amir's authority which it is both our policy and friendly desire to see strengthened and maintained; has contributed, more than anything else, to the revolt of Persian Baluchistan, from the Kirman provincial Government; and is the underlying cause of the unrest which has existed, for so many years, not only among the Baluch tribes of our and the Persian border but also among the Pathan tribes of the N.W.F. Provinces.

F. Climate.

On this subject there is little to say. Despite the heat, in summer, the climate is extremely healthy. The nights are always cool and such sickness as prevails is almost wholly due to scorbutic causes arising from the want of vegetables, accentuated by saline water.

G. Boundaries.

Koh-I-Malik Siah is the converging point of three separate boundaries, v.i.z. the Indo-Persian, the Indo-Afghanistan, and the Perso-Afghanistan. The Indo-Persian boundary strikes West from the Quetta hill system and, after taking in that small, but important strip of the Registan which the Kandahar authorities have always shewn themselves so eager to possess, as it is used by the local pastorlists as a simple, but very effective means, of regulating the extortions of Afghan tax collectors, makes for the Chagai Sarlat hills. Leaving a section of these hills on the Afghan side of the frontier, it strikes West to

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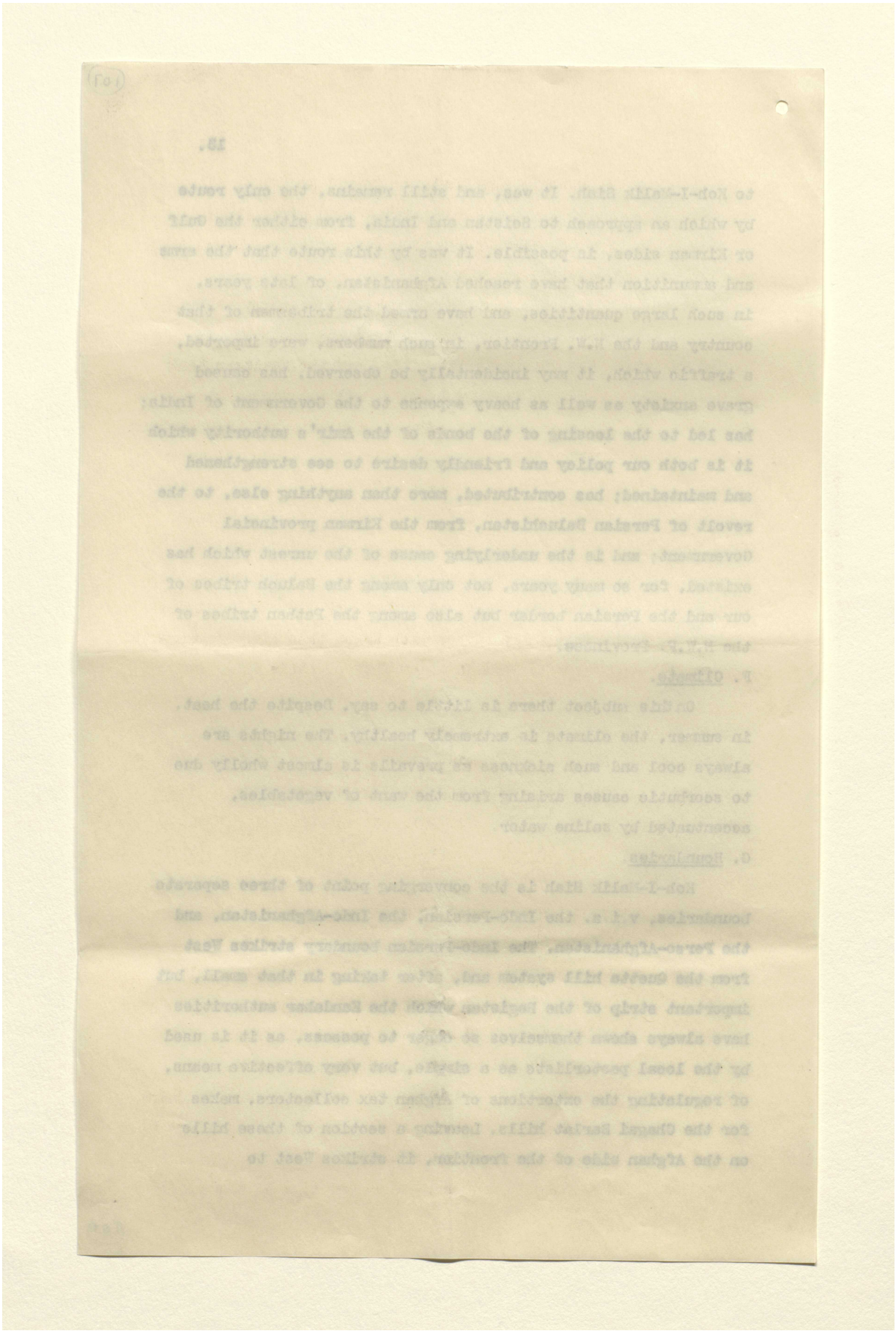

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Koh-I-Malik Siah, skirting the Northern limits of the Koh-I-Sultan mountains and the foot of the long steep slope which springs from the base of the wedge shaped hills, known as the Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range.

At the close of the last Afghan war, the boundary which separated Baluchistan from Afghanistan left the whole of the Nushki Registan, the Chagai Sarlat hills, and the Southern bank of the river Helmand, in Western Garmsel, without Afghanistan. This boundary, although tribally correct, was somewhat indeterminate as the influence which the Brahui Khans of Kalat possessed in Nushki and over its outlying pastoral tribes was subject to considerable fluctuations and was not infrequently disregarded. The Kharan Sardar, a Baluch Chieftain, would never accept Kalat authority and such attempts as had, from time to time, been made by the Khan to enforce it had failed. Although the sympathies of the Chagai and Western Garmsel Sardars lay rather with Kalat than with Afghanistan, yet cut off as they were from Kalat by Kharan, their intercourse had always lain with the heads of their tribes in Seistan, rather than with Kalat. In short, like Kharan, they claimed to be Baluchistan Sardars, under British protection. The late Amir of Afghanistan, with the sagacity and prescience which were always characteristic of that remarkable man, was not slow to grasp the great military importance of the position Chagai fort and the Chagai hills occupied, in relation to the Helmand valley and Southern Afghanistan. By recourse to force of arms, he took possession of Western Garmsel and, using this as a base, he manipulated matters in such a way that on the first favourable opportunity offering, he seized Chagai Fort. While the Baluch-Afghan delimitation commission of 1896 resulted in his withdrawal from Chagai fort, yet he retained possession of Western Garmsel, as well as of an important foothold in the Chagai Sarlat hills. There were, at the time, obvious difficulties in pressing the Afghans back to their traditional frontier line, yet in view of the clearness of our case, the protest we had entered at the time of the wholly

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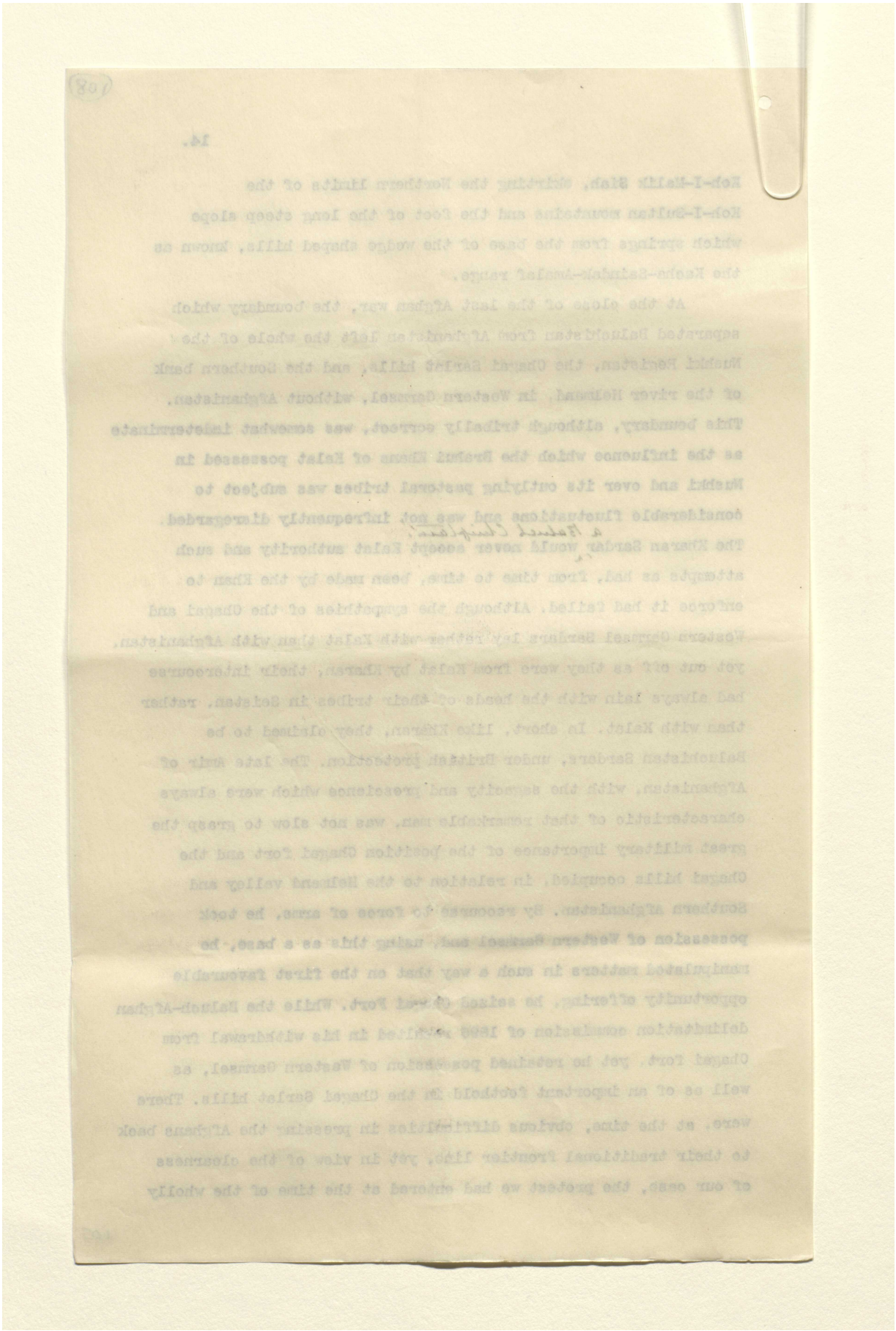

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unjustified occupation of Chagai, and the important nature of the issues involved, the writer would venture, but with some little diffidence, to express the view that our higher interests would have been consulted had we insisted on the boundary line being drawn through the Baluch desert country slightly South, and parallel to, the Helmand valley and the evacuation of the Chagai Sarlat and the Chagai Dist: in its entirety.

The Baluchistan-Persian frontier takes off from the Gulf littoral and, running North as far as Jalk, follows the Eastern fringe of the Persian Baluchistan hill country. Here it turns N.E. to the Talab river, the dry bed of which it follows up as far as Mirjawa and leaving this valley, and its cultivation, on the Persian side, strikes off again N.E. to join the Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range which it follows up to Koh-I-Malik Siah. In its Southern sector, this boundary fulfills the general requirements of an international boundary line, but this is not so in the case of the Northern. Had the British Commissioner visited and mapped this section, the boundary which would have commended itself to him would, probably, have differed materially from that he decided on. The best alignment would have been that supplied by the rocky mountain wall which extends as far as Koh-I-Malik Siah. There would seem to have been no difficulty in arranging this: indeed the Persian Commissioner opposed the inclusion of Duzdab within Persian territorial limits, and took it in bad part when this reasonable request was refused. A boundary drawn West of Duzdab would have left Mirjawa with its cultivation, good water, and, more important still, its easy straight run in, to the Seistan border, on our side of the Frontier. The boundary between Jalk and the Koh-I-Malik Siah is not shown on our maps, as the British and Persian Commissioners did not proceed further North than Jalk and a difficulty, which cannot easily be overcome, has been experienced in reconciling the boundary given on the agreement with that on the Boundary Commission map, and either of these with that marked on the ground by the Indian subordinate to whom this duty was entrusted.

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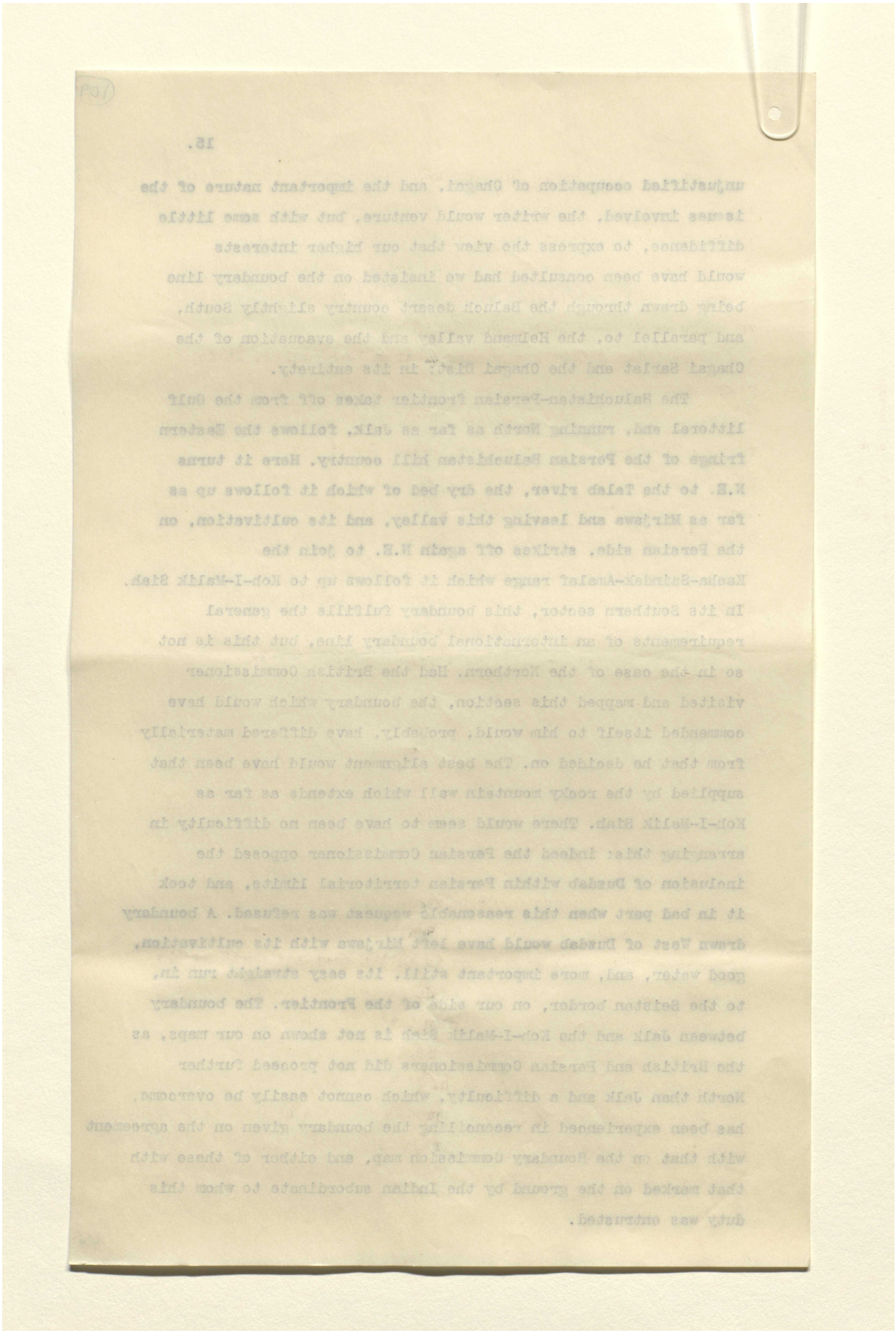

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As the Koh-I-Malik Siah-Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range will be found to play a prominent part in any scheme, that may be considered, of Railway construction to the Seistan Border, it is of considerable importance that the position of this range and its characteristics be thoroughly understood. This range takes off from Koh-I-Malik Siah at an angle of 75° and is an isolated ridge which projects into the Baluchistan desert a distance of from 70-80 miles. It is wedge shaped and from its base the ground slopes, in a sharp downward gradient, to the Afghan frontier which lies at a distance varying from 5-6 miles to double that distance away. Where the hill base and this slope meet, the ground is corrugated and undulating and is much cut up by drainage from the hills for each drainage channel splays out into innumerable small nullahs, as soon as it starts descending this slope. In one place, where the Trade route passes, there are as many as fifty of these nullahs to the mile, their depth being from a few feet to eight or ten.

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3. With the data now before us, we will experience no difficulty in arriving at definite conclusions on the four main standpoints v.i.z. "the Political", "the Military", "the Commercial", and "the alignment as it will be influenced by engineering or other special local considerations", with which this Memorandum deals.

(A) Political.

The key to India is Afghanistan. This point history has made quite clear - and the key to Southern and Western Afghanistan is Seistan. Protected as Seistan is on the East and North by the Helmand river, on the West by its Hamun inundated area, and on the South West by the "Great Kirman Lut", its nodal point is, in turn, to be found in the small mountain region somewhere in the neighbourhood of Koh-I-Malik Siah. If this were to be held effectively, not only could no approach from the Kirman and Persian Gulf sides, be possible but the projection of any influence, propaganda, or other, from either of these quarters, hostile to the

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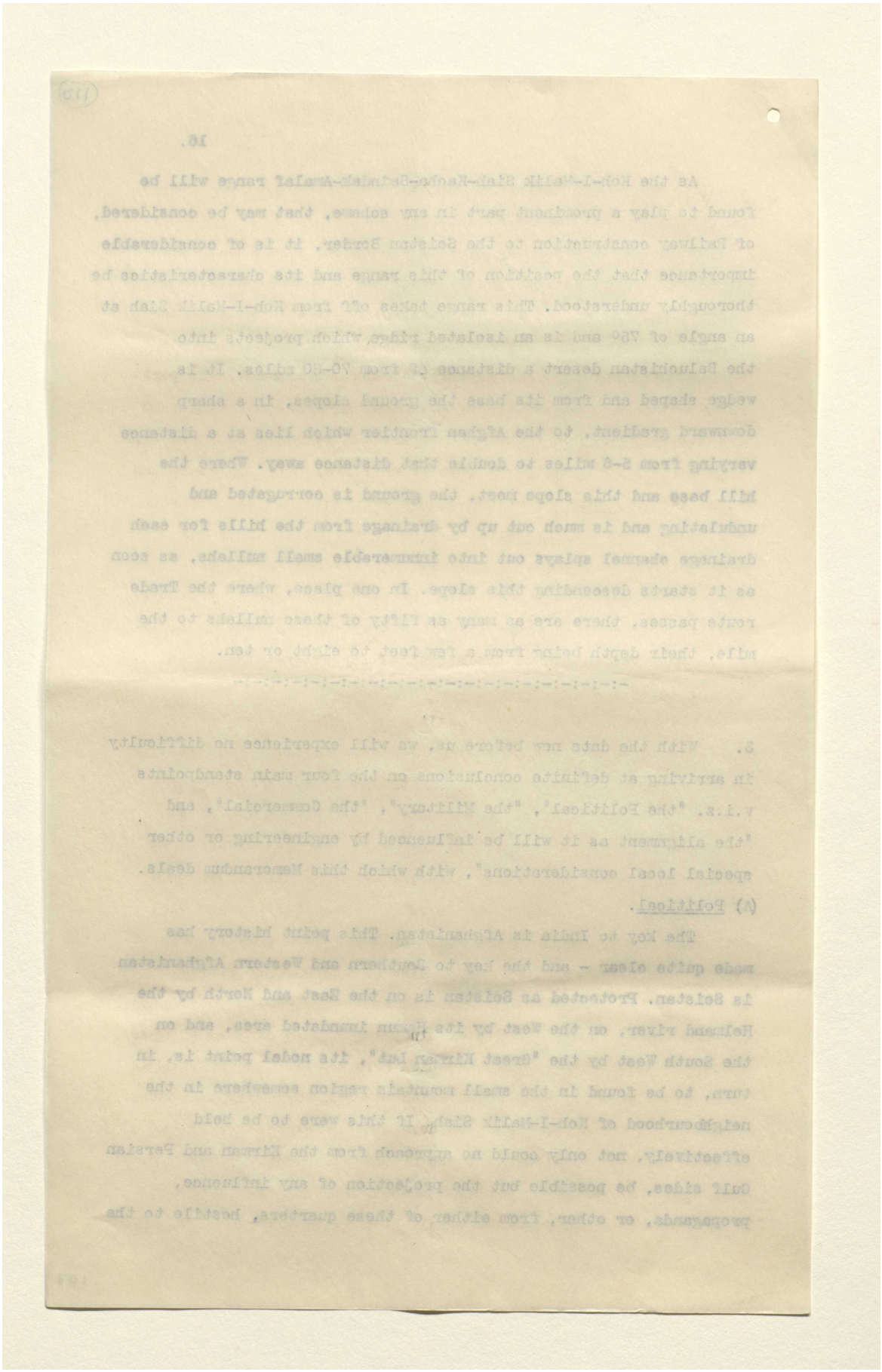

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great interests we possess in Afghanistan, would be prevented. This point is one for grave consideration.

Whatever the war may have in store, two points now seem clear. The first is that the Constantinople-Baghdad Railway will remain; and the second is that Constantinople will pass to the control of a European power. If the control of these continue German, with all the rude morality of that Government, the peril which threatens India will, we now know, be grave and will need the most careful foresight and preparation to guard against. The arms traffic with the large numbers of rifles, machine guns, and other warlike material which will be available, at the close of the war, is merely one of many such dangers. But if, as now seems fairly assured, this control falls to Russia, we have then to consider the vast augmentation in strength, wealth, prestige, and power which will ensue to that State, and the bearing which, it is only reasonable to assume, these may be expected to exert, sooner or later.

In Persia, the present position is that not only is the Northern, or Russian sphere of influence, entirely under Russian active control, but that Russia, with the co-operation of her banking institutions, had pushed her influence, in the years prior to the war, well into the Central or Neutral zone. There was once a hope that Persia, with the renewed vitality which it was trusted the constitutional movement would inspire and with Western educational methods, would have obtained a renewed lease of life but this hope, as indeed also in the case of Turkey, has now been dissipated. We must, it is to be feared, accept, as a basic fact, that the Oriental mind, wanting in a sense of true patriotism, in the high ideals which form the guiding principles of Western religion and civilization - one nation excepted - and the moral fibre which education develops but cannot confer and without which education has shown itself to be not only useless but baneful causing as it does a mental fermentation the first reaction of which, in the Oriental, is usually sedition, is quite

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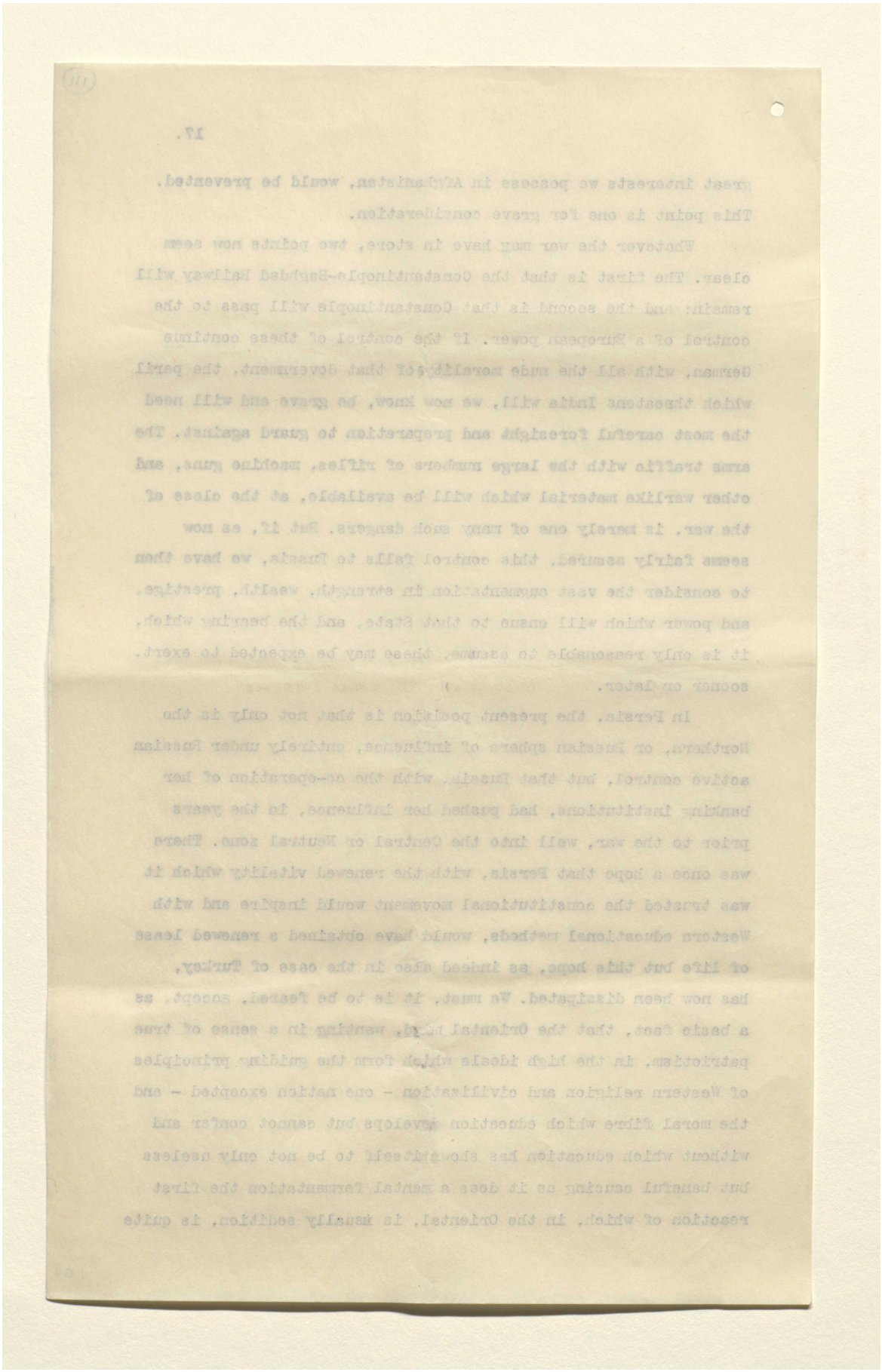

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incapable of benefitting by democratic institutions and that if these are conferred, the powers so obtained will be used by those holding them to exploit other to the benefit of themselves. The only type of Government, suited to the Oriental character with its peculiar springs, is an autocracy, but in Persia the dry rot has penetrated so deep into all her members that the time has past, with due regard to such other conditions as exist, when this form of Government holds out any hope of salvation. Were Russia to obtain the predominant position in Persia, we would then be faced with two likely contingencies. A Railway connecting Russian Central Asia with the head of the Persian Gulf, and Russian control of two sides of Afghanistan. It may be urged that all such speculations are, at present, idle but these contingencies are real and whether they ever materialise is likely to depend, in a large measure, on the main factors as they are grouped at the close of the war, of which a Railway extention to the Persian frontier would prove, by no means, the least important.

Afghanistan is a British protected State in the enjoyment, within its boundaries, of independent self Government. In the late Amir Abdur Rahman, one of the great personalities of the 19th Century, we were fortunate in possessing a ruler of exceptional parts, gifted with great prescience, extraordinary administrative and military capacity and a judgment which was as mature as his mind was active. Despite the frontier pin pricks in which he took a malicious delight in indulging at our expense, he was fully cognisant to the fact that the safety of his throne depended on his maintaining friendly relations with the Indian Government. His lifetime saw Afghanistan converted from a congery of petty tribes and jealousies into a powerful state well organised and equipped with a strong army trained on the Indian principle and well provided with arms, ammunition, and a powerful artillery, for which particular branch of the service the Afghan evinces a great natural bent. He was followed, at his death, by his son, Habibulla Khan, the present Amir. The latter, although just as well disposed

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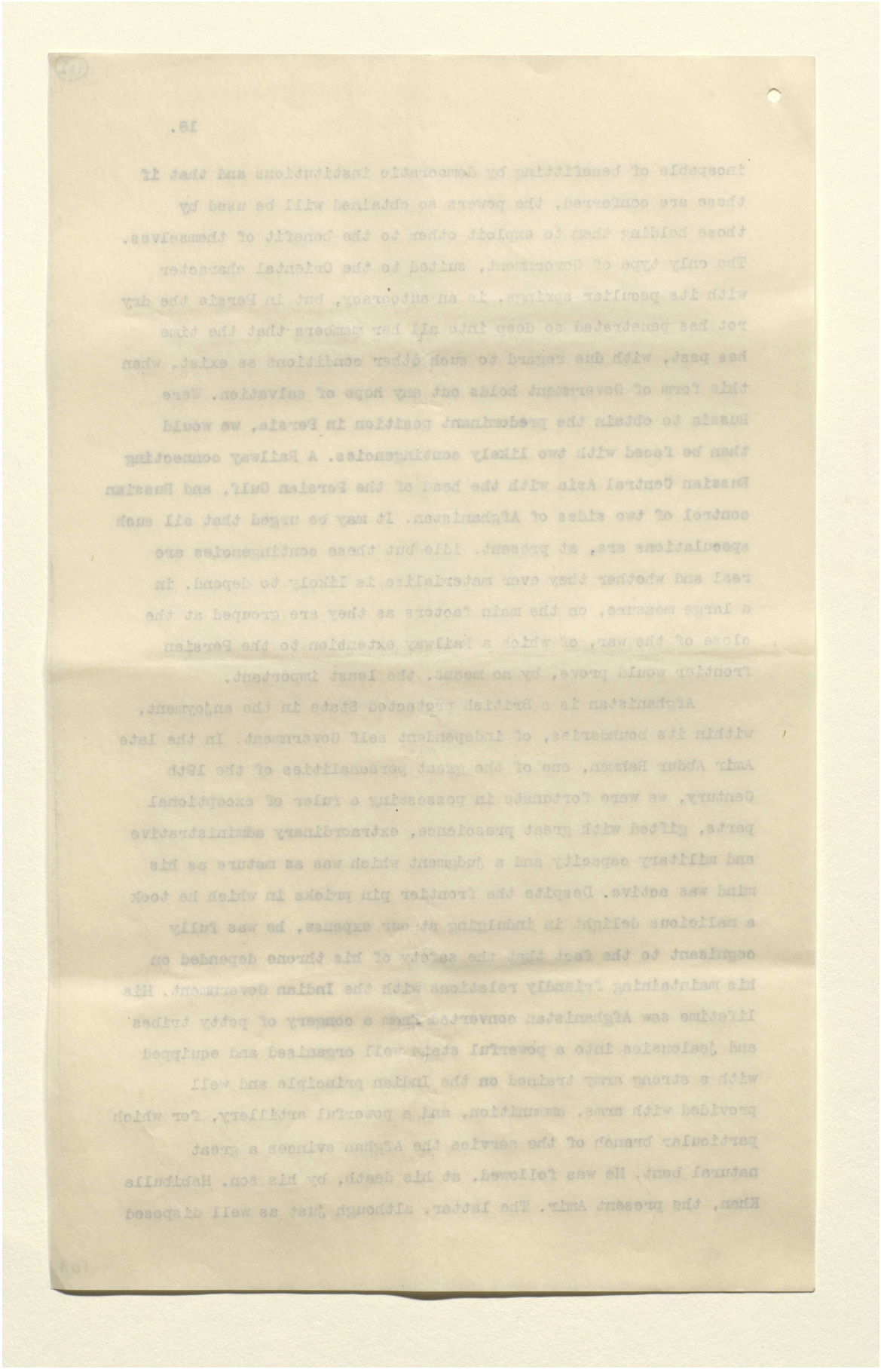

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towards us, no doubt the result of his Father's training, possesses neither the personality, energy, ability, nor mental activity of his sire. In disposition, he is somewhat lethargic and is prone to entrust, to others, State interests which his Father never failed to keep within his own graps. Late years, have, therefore, seen the formation of various factions, at Kabul, which pull in opposite directions. Hatred of his fellow Afghan is the one overpowering obsession in the Afghan mind and, as has been pointed out in a separate Memorandum, this will submerge all other feelings, not even excluding that patriotism which in the Afghan is so acutely developed and will exert a driving force, of which only those who have had long frontier experience, are aware. There is no real stability or reliance to be placed on an Oriental Government and while our policy should always be to prevent all outside interference, no matter how trivial, in Afghan affairs and allow Afghanistan full latitude to work out her own salvation, on her own lines, yet to much such preparations, within our Frontier lines, as will in themselves, exert a powerful and consistently steadying effect on her councils. Once the Kabul Durbar grasps the fact that strongly although the Indian Government is disinclined to interfere, in Afghan affairs, yet the repudiation, in act or spirit, of the engagements into which she has entered with India will be followed, almost certainly, by active military action, taken from three separate quarters and for which all preparations have been fully concerted, the squabbles and partisan struggles which the future will see take place at Kabul will be confined within certain well defined and very desirable limits. It is to be remembered, in this connection, that between the N.W. Frontier of India and Afghanistan intervenes that strip of country termed "Independent territory" and that the well armed tribesmen who hold it, to whom war and fighting are pastimes, are likely to throw in their lot with their Afghan co-religionists, in case of any serious trouble ever breaking out between India and Afghanistan

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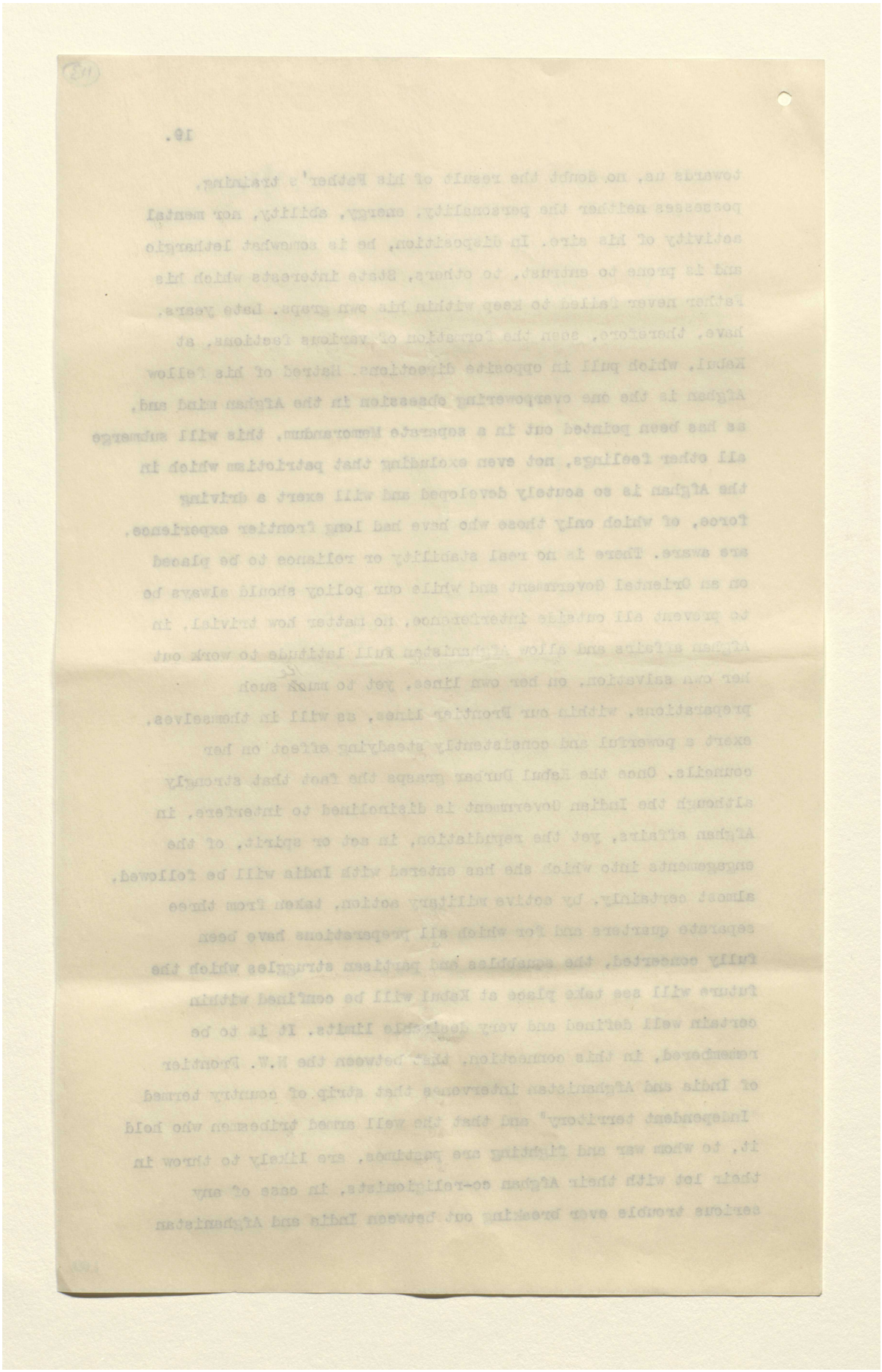

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and that a few well placed machine guns would render the isolated passages which exist, through the tangled mass of mountains, of which Neutral territory is composed, difficult for troop movements. The late Amir who was fully alive to this was always assiduous in cultivating friendly relations with these tribesmen by payments and in other ways, and the present Amir has continued the same policy, with the same end in view.

(B) Military.

The military lessons taught by the war are many but chief among these is the highly important part which Railways now play in offensive and defensive military operations. No defensive system can now be regarded as perfect unless based on a system of lateral Railway communications, running immediately behind important frontier lines and it, therefore, follows that nothing is more likely, in future, to ensure peace within our territories than the knowledge that such a system exists and is available for use. It seems fairly certain that Railways will be built, in the early future, connecting Baluchistan, through Zhob, with the Panjab as well as a Railway traced along the N.W. Frontier border.

With an European Military power established at Constantinople, connected by Railway with a base on, or near, the Persian Gulf, the pre-war military position, in the Middle East must become subject to complete alteration and India would find it necessary to embark, at a capital and recurring expenditure of several millions of pounds stirling, on special Naval and Military preparations for the protection of her coast, trade, and frontiers. The scale which would govern these preparations would depend on the nature of this base and its situation i.e. whether placed at a deep sea port, on the Gulf, or somewhat withdrawn from the Gulf littoral, but in either case it would prove exceedingly burdensome. A Railway connecting European Russia, through Persia, with the head of the Gulf would have much the same results and

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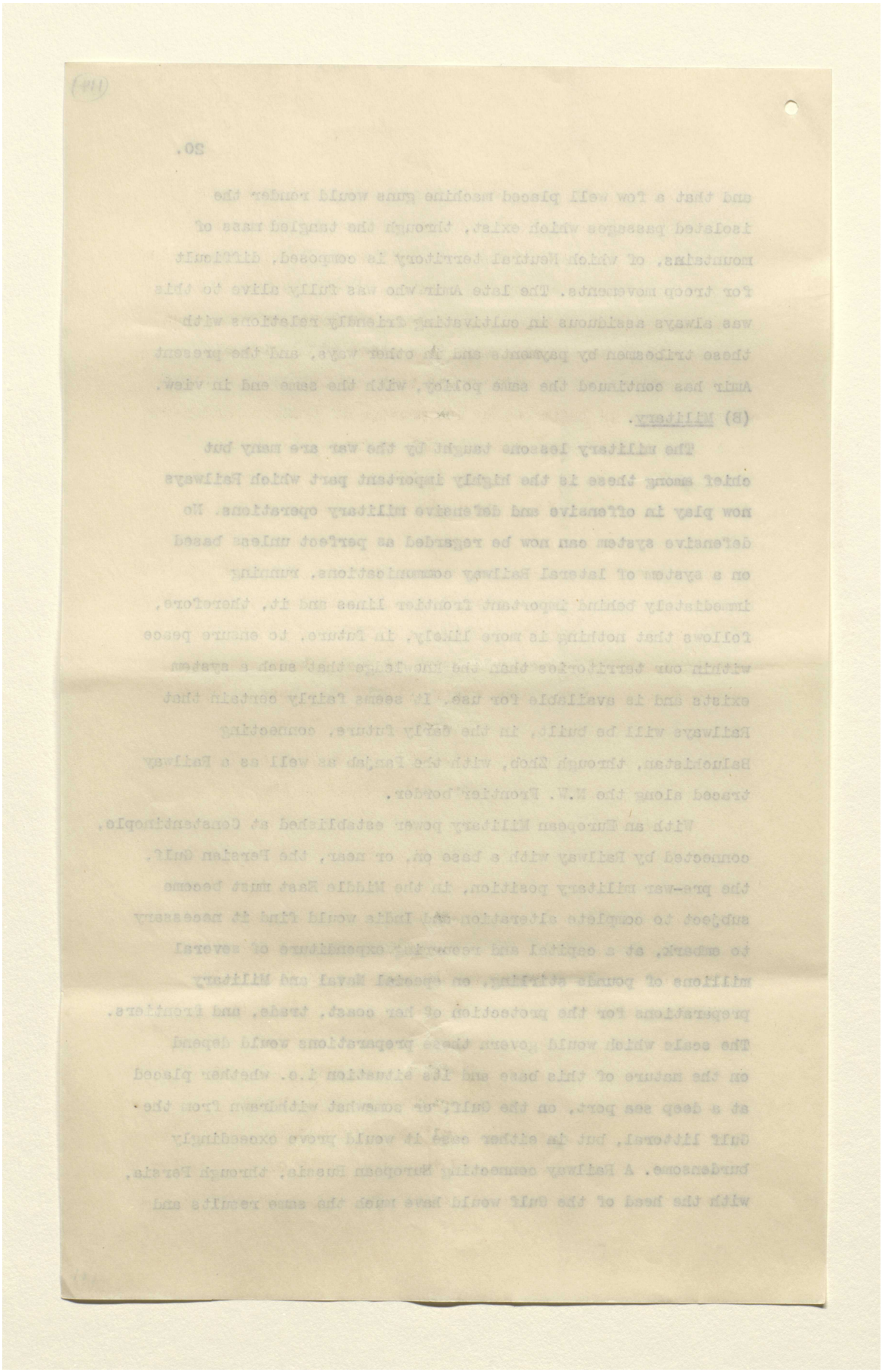

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that such a line will, eventually, be built, should Persia be allowed to pass under the control of Russia, seems fairly well assured. At present, the very existence of both the British and Russian Empires render their mutual interests one, but it seems too much to hope, although such a happy consummation is ardently to be desired, that this state of affairs will always continue. It is unfortunate that our interests conflict with Russian, as indicated by the passage of events, during the past thirty five years, and although we trust that these, modified by the changes the war is likely to bring about, may not prove irreconcilible, yet their adjustment will need a delicacy in handling and a mutual confidence which it is by no means certain will be forthcoming. However, the aspect of the matter with which we are, more directly, concerned is the effects which we may reasonably anticipate will follow, on our land frontiers, should the establishment of such a base connected with Europe by Railway take place. Should this base be held by a power antagonistic to ourselves, and it is fairly certain that the economic interests which will arise thereafter will clash with ours and advance beyond the stage of friendly rivalry, the institution of a propaganda of a Military nature, inimical to our Frontier, Afghan, and Indian interests, with all that will follow in its train, will ensue. To short circuit any such a move, we must have control of the narrow pipe through which this stream will be directed. This can only be done by effectively holding the Northern sector of the narrow rock wall which separates the "Great Kirman desert" from the Baluchistan desert area.

The Northern borders of Afghanistan and Russia are conjoint. To passively permit Russia to obtain the ascendency on the Perso-Afghan frontier would result in her obtaining a definite military advantage, prejudicial to the security of Afghanistan and India. The Afghans could never resist an attack, made on Western

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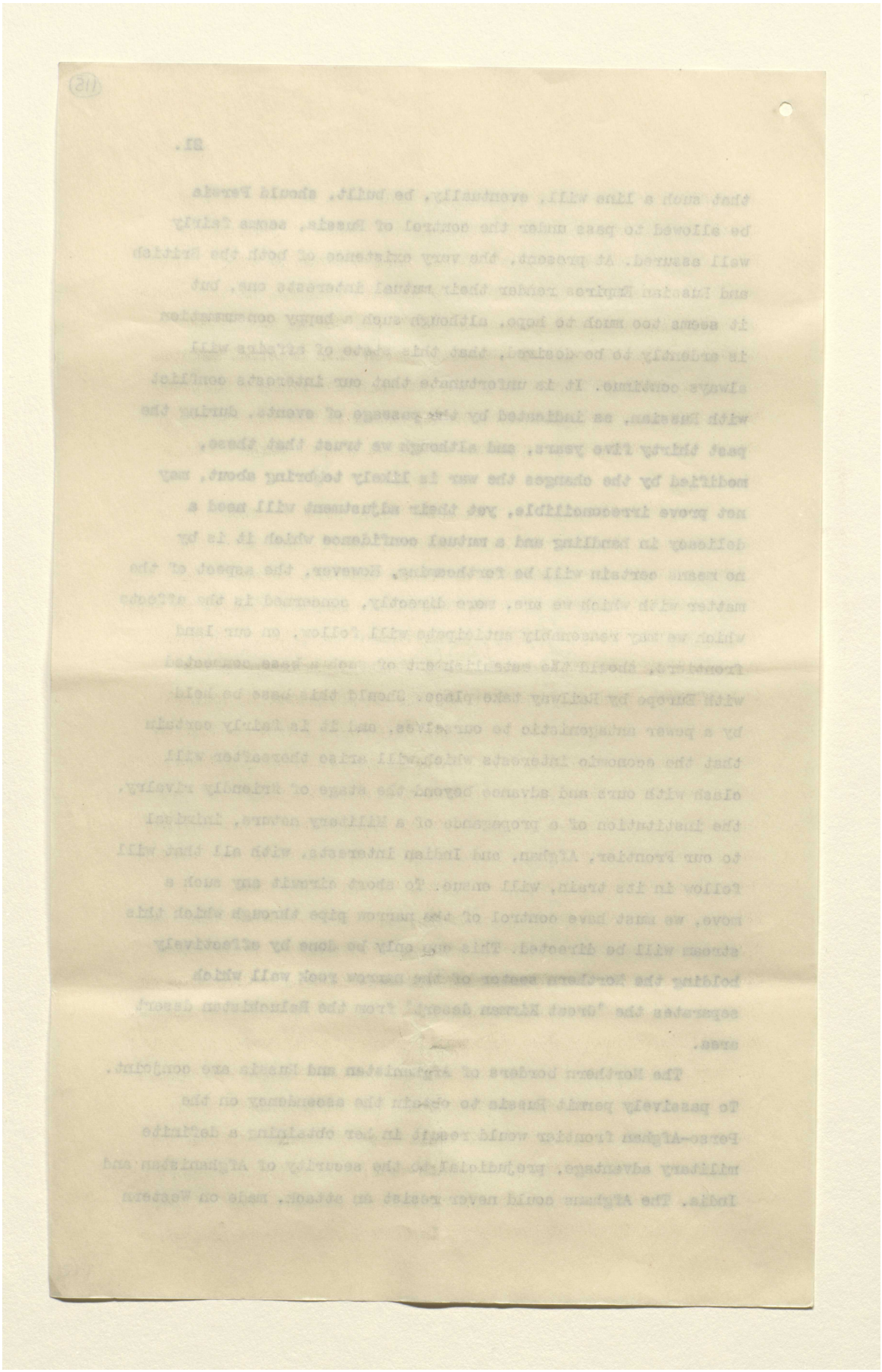

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Afghanistan, from two sides, unless they were assured of Indian Military support. Now it is unlikely that such an ascendency could ever be obtained if we either held Seistan or were in a position to place a Military force in that country, in the course of a few days, but we cannot do either the one or the other unless a Military Railway connects Quetta with Seistan. Seistan with its great resources in grain and supplies forms a Military base, for an attack on India, or its defence, the importance of which the writer, would venture to think, should never be lost sight of.

While these are the general Military considerations which are dependent on the Political policy we adopt, yet there are other military considerations of a more intimate nature. The possession of Seistan, by a hostile force, carries with it an easy entry, up the Helmand valley, to Kandahar. The fall of Kandahar, and all that this would mean, would shake Afghanistan to its foundations, have repercussive effects in India and in Neutral territory it would be unwise to underestimate, render a blow at our Baluchistan communications, with India, a military possibility, endanger our Quetta line of defence and not only place, at the hostile forces disposal large material resources, but enable the selection of the point, or points, at which a blow at India could most effectively and deftly be aimed. On the other hand, were Seistan to be held by us in strength, no force could advance, on central Afghanistan and Kabul, without exposing itself to flank attack from Seistan, directed through Lash Juwain. Before such an advance could, therefore, be made it would be necessary to dispose of this flank menace, but this would prove no easy task, protected as such a force would be by the inundations which encircle that country. Resting, as such a force would be, on a Railway base secure from attack, its retreat would also be secure, should the exigencies of the military situation ever require this, either along its railway or up the Helmand valley. Provided this desert Railway is never allowed - a very important matter - to connect

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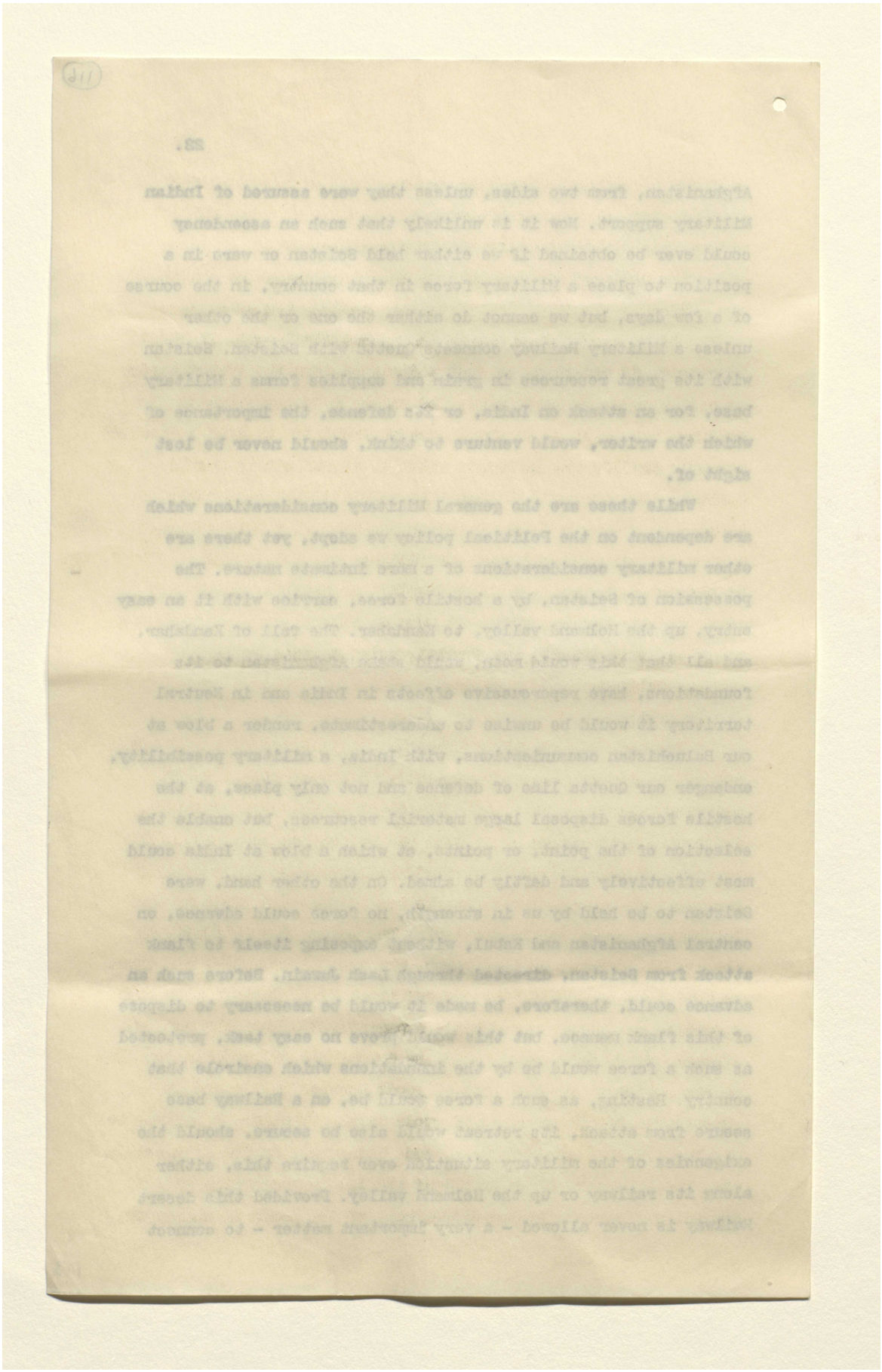

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with any transfrontier railway system, the withdrawal of its rolling stock and the destruction of the permanent way would prevent its use for hostile military requirements.

The Military requirements we should endeavour to obtain, when aligning a railway to the Seistan border, are as follows. It should be secure from attack throughout its length. It should be placed, if possible, at such a distance from the Afghan border as will ensure, in peace time, its safety from any sporadic raiding, but while so it should not be withdrawn to such a distance as would nullify the influence which it is our aim it should exert in that country. It should be provided with good water. Lastly, it should have its frontier terminus at a healthy place with a cool climate and open surroundings and this terminus should be connected, by road, with the capital of Seistan, the Shelag river and the various deep, but narrow, irrigation cuts which are met with, just outside the capital, being spanned by light masonry bridges.

(C) Commercial.

The writer holds the opinion that, apart from the Political and other considerations which would, in themselves, justify the construction of this line, the total to which our pre-war trade with Afghanistan and Persia had arisen and which amounted to a sum of some £350,000, claimed the assistance which Railway construction can alone provide. We had reached the limit of the Baluchistan camel supply available. The price of camels had, as the result, doubled of late years. The cost of transport has shown an unmistakable upward tendency and these three factors were each operating to check further trade expansion. Provided the same liberal policy which influenced the Government of India in deciding on the rates for the carriage of goods between Quetta and Nushki, be extended to the carriage of goods to the frontier, a Railway to the Persian Frontier - English goods being held in the high esteem they are - would attract to itself the larger proportion of Central and Western Afghan trade, most of the trade of Khorassan,

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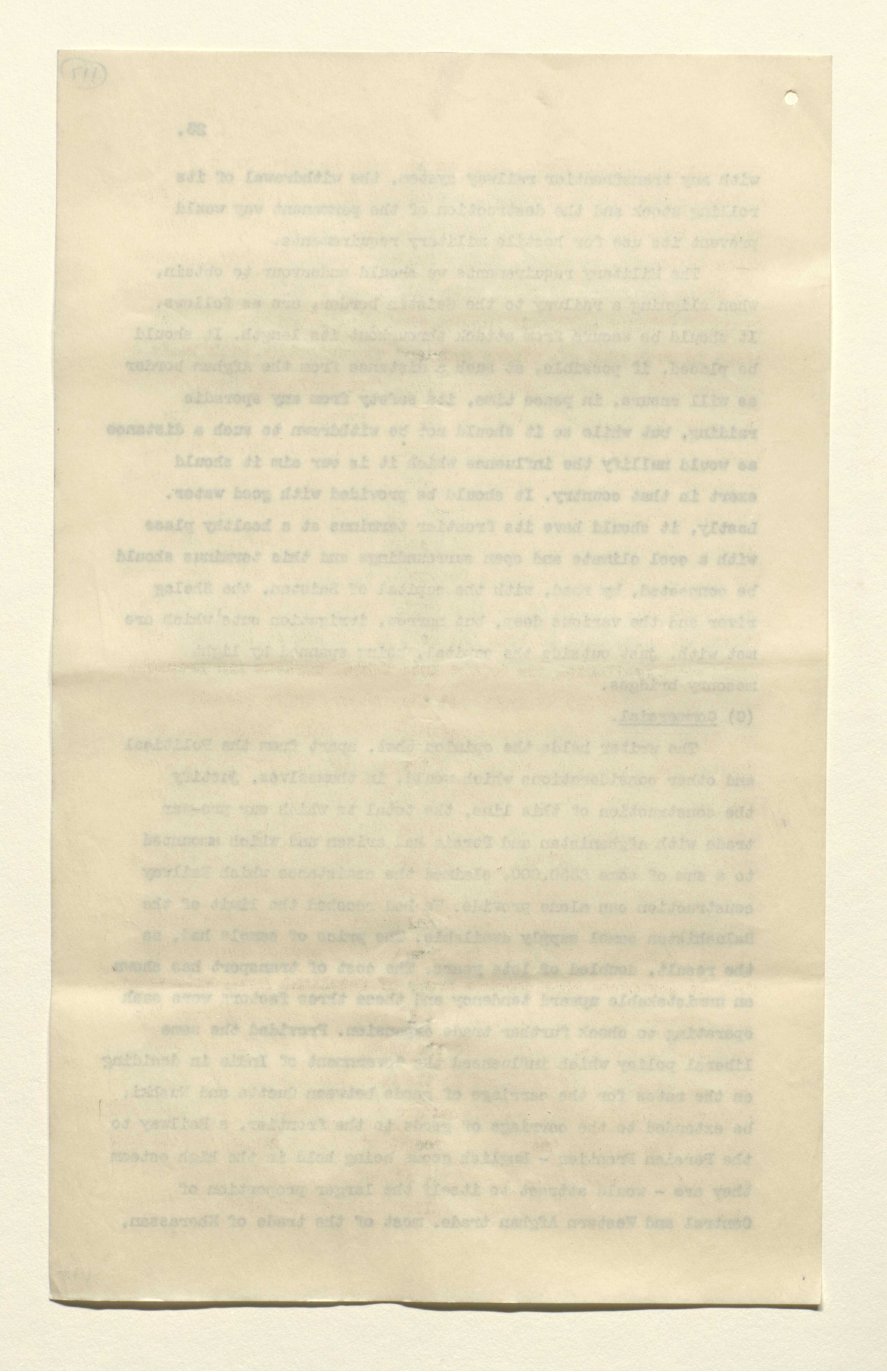

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all Jalk and Sarhad trade, and, in addition to this, no small moiety of the Kirman province, provided a small branch connection between the main line and Sehtagan, on the Jalk frontier, 60-70 miles in length, be added. Such a Railway would, further, provide the Shiah community of India with pilgrimage facilities, to Meshed, it would welcome and would supply, what Persia and the Persians stand in such need of, direct overland communication with India - and here, it may incidentally be noted that while the Persian nourishes an inherent dislike to any sea voyage, no matter how brief, yet he will face, with equanimity the hardships of a long overland journey. Furthermore, it would open up a country in which various minerals and other products, of considerable economic value, are known to exist: would remove from our present trade one of its most objectionable features, v.i.z. the necessity which, so frequently, arises of sending empty camels to India for goods which, on sale, have to bear the cost of the double journey: and would make available, for import into India, various raw products whose bulk and value is such that they offer, under present conditions, no inducement for movement. The rates which rule in Seistan for grain are generally extremely low and although, under existing Persian law, the export of food stuffs is not permitted, yet this is a matter which the future may see modified. That grain will flow in freely from the valley of the Helmand, despite similar restrictions, is certain. Lastly, such a railway will develop, by attracting new blood and money to Chagai, the cultivation of that District. Chagai is far from being a barren country: in fact it possesses considerable areas of excellent land, with water lying close to the surface, and it is only the supineness of its inhabitants and its vicinity to the cheap wheat of Garmsel that has, up to the present, stood in the way. The date groves of Kharan, Mashkel, Jalk, and Dizzak are a traffic asset of considerable potential value and there is no reason why these groves should not be largely extended and developed, as should also follow in the case of those rich stretches of alluvial land, in Southern Mashkel

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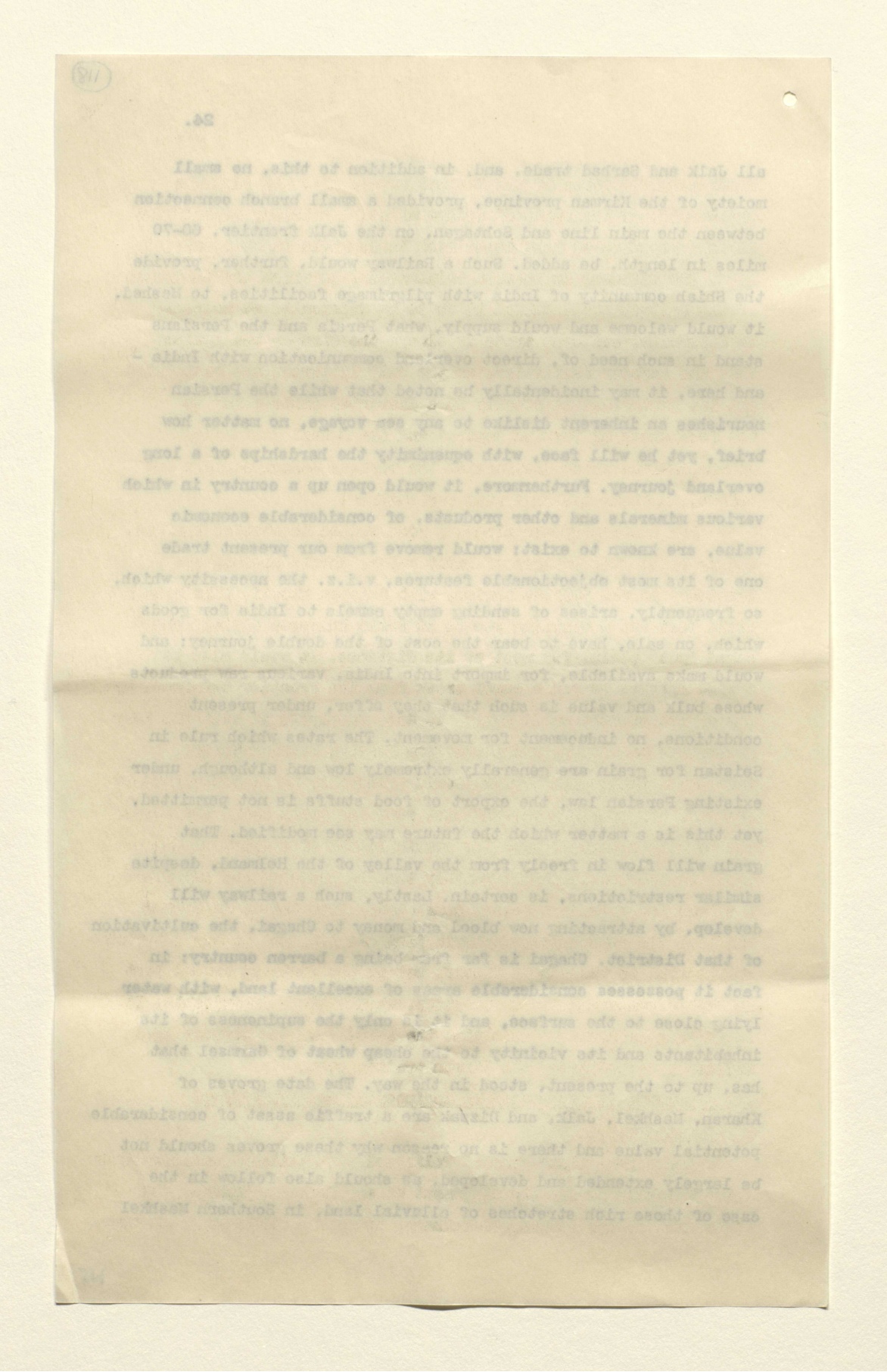

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which mark the delta of the Mashkel river, with its drainage system of some thousands of square miles. A trifling expenditure is only required to make these rich lands yield in abundance.

The distance in Persian Baluchistan, to which the influence of the Railway would extend it would be difficult, at present, to determine. Seaborne trade is always the cheaper but against this the harbour facilities, on the Gulf littoral, are restricted and its hinterland is usually in a disturbed state owing to the feebleness of Persian control and the mutual jealousies and recriminations which distinguish the various Baluch Sardars and chiefs, in their dealings with one another.

For trade purposes alone, a road suited to wheeled traffic, and provided with bridges of burnt brick, should connect the terminus, on the Seistan border, with Seistan itself. This road would cost but a trifling sum as it would traverse a flat, sun baked "put" plain, for most of its distance. It would also be a wise measure to run a camel track from the Frontier terminus, by way of the ancient trade route, to Bam, supplying it with the levy protection necessary, recruited from Persian Baluch sources. Waterborne trade with Kirman should generally be in a position to overcome any overland rivalry but, some few years back, the writer was so much impressed with the possibilities of attracting Kirman trade to the Quetta-Nushki Railway that he prepared and submitted a scheme for running a feeder camel track from Sarhad to Kirman and that the scheme never materialised was due, not to any inherent shortcoming in the scheme itself, but to the state of tribal rest in Sarhad rendering its institution, at the time, inadvisable. It is of some interest to note that the scheme had the support of an influential section of the Kirman trading community.

(D) <u>Alignment as influenced by engineering and other local Considerations</u>.

Apart from those general Political and Military considerations which directly govern the alignment of any Frontier Railway and which must always remain predominant, there are other considerations,

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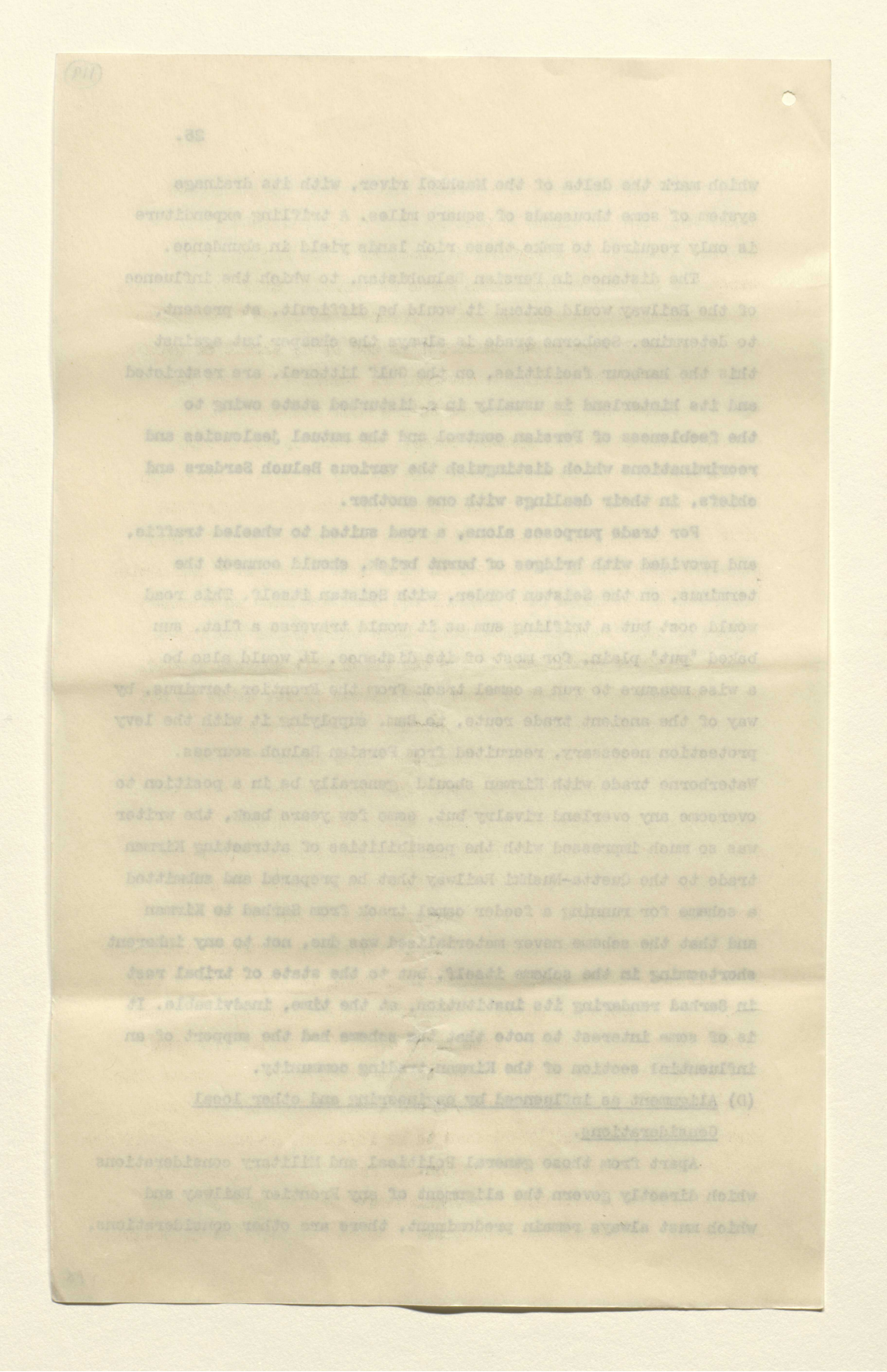

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of a more intimate nature, to which the Railway should conform. These are; the gradients should be as flat as possible so as to keep the open line working expenses at a low figure. Such expensive capital construction works as tunnels, bridges, cuttings, embankments, should only be had to recourse to where unavoidable. The line, both when under construction and open, should be secure from transfrontier raiding and attack. It should link such part of the country and its resources as are most susceptible to development. It should possess water, suitable to locomotive requirements, at convenient distances apart. It should avoid any country where the climatic conditions are such as to interfere with day running. And lastly, it should be supplied for Railway purposes alone, with a terminus in some open place, in a cultivated area, which should be both healthy and cool and have an abundant supply of pure water. An alignment which conforms to the major number of these conditions is the one which will commend itself.

To take the latter of these conditions first. Robat is not suitable for the purposes of a terminus, as it is unhealthy - the mortality which occurred among the first Robat Military detachments and which, yearly, sees its counterpart in the death roll among the neighbouring Afghan detachment, indicates this clearly. Being situated in a nullah bed, it is very constricted. Its water supply is poor and the water itself cannot be used for either locomotive or other purposes unless distilled. The climate is trying and added to this its use as a terminus postulates some miles of heavy uphill engineering, owing to the slope of the country, the unstable nature of the ground met with, and the heavy floods the neighbouring nullahs bring down, in winter. The same remark applies, with equal force, to the Persian post at Dewan Chah, except that, in this case, several additional miles of similarly heavy engineering work would have to be included. At neither Robat nor Dewan Chah is there any cultivation: in fact the only place, on this border, which fulfils the requirements we are in search of, is Duzdab. Unfortunately, this place - as was stated when discussing

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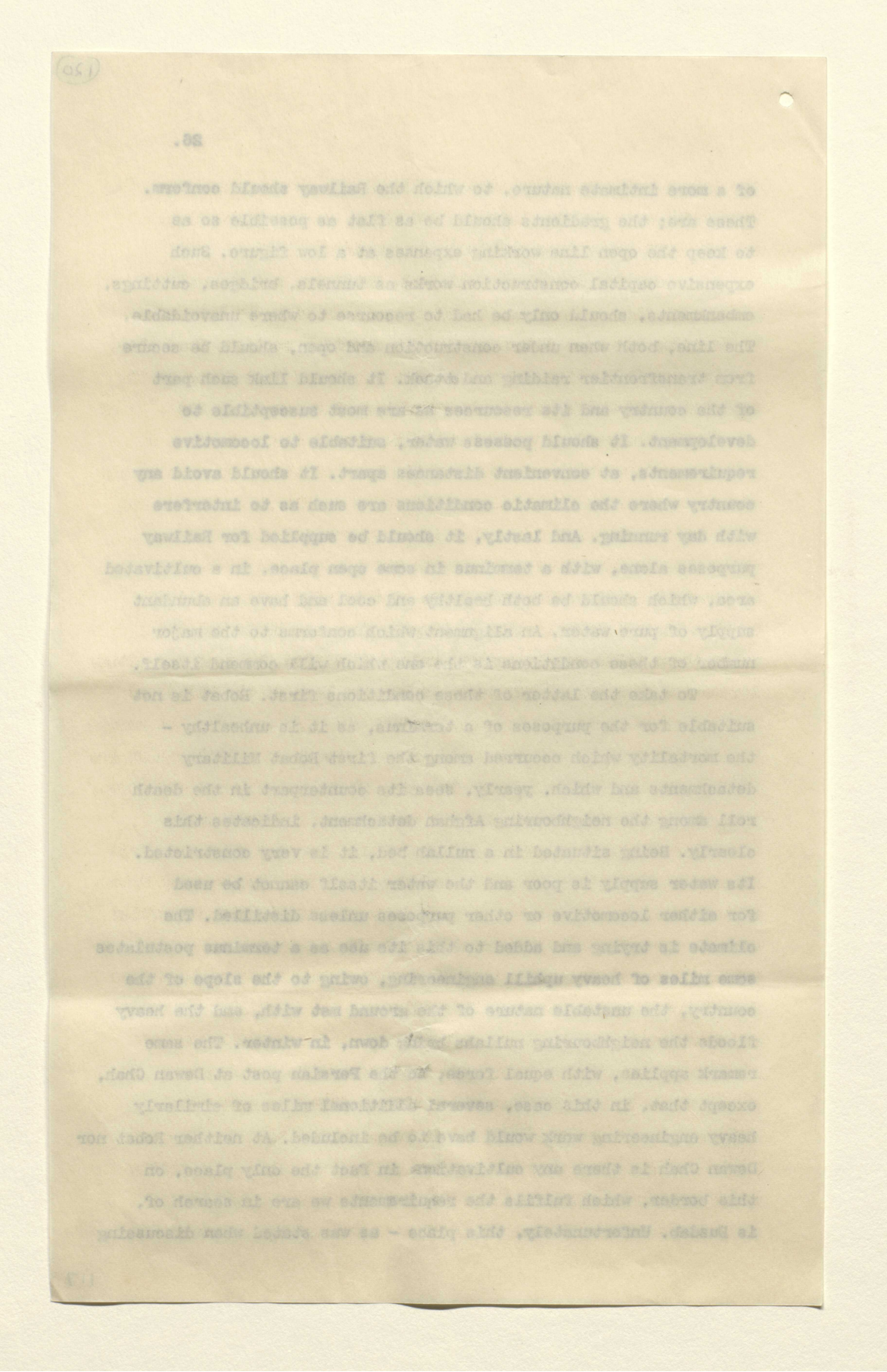

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the neighbouring Boundary line - falls within the Persian frontier. This difficulty is not, however, one which, in the light of recent events, will prove insuperable in overcoming.

Keeping the important Political, Military, and economic, aims which this railway has to serve, well in view, we have next to consider the best alignment for its frontier section. Here there are two possible alignment v.i.z. that North and that South of the isolated Koh-I-Malik Siah-Kacha-Saindak-Amalaf range. In the case of the first, the railway would have to be traced along the foot of the steep slope which extends from the base of the range down to the Afghan frontier but this alignment is open to the objections - and very serious they are too - that it is unprovided with water, and would pass in immediate proximity to the border, and so be open to constant raiding. The only means of obtaining water would be by pipe lines, several miles in length, from the hills but the water these hills supply cannot, unless distilled, be used for either locomotive or drinking purposes. To hug the base of the hills, as distinct from their glacis, would entail the line crossing, at heavy engineering outlay, the corrugations and network of nullahs which are peculiar to it. This alignment is open, to the yet further objection, that it both traverses and has its terminus in a desert area.

The southern alignment differs widely from the northern. From Mirjawa on there is a straight, and easy, run into Duzdab with water, suited to locomotive needs, at easy distances apart. The cultivated area is entered at Mirjawa which offers the additional advantage - a Political one it is true - that it controls such roads as lead from Sarhad into Western Garmsel. This alignment could neither be raided nor attacked, from the North or South, while it is sufficiently near to Afghanistan to fulfil our trade and other requirements. In short, it is by far the best which offers. There is only one objection to it and this is that it keeps just within the Persian border, after entry into the Mirjawa valley, but this is a difficulty which can, and should, be overcome, for unless it is the control which the future will show it is of such paramount importance for

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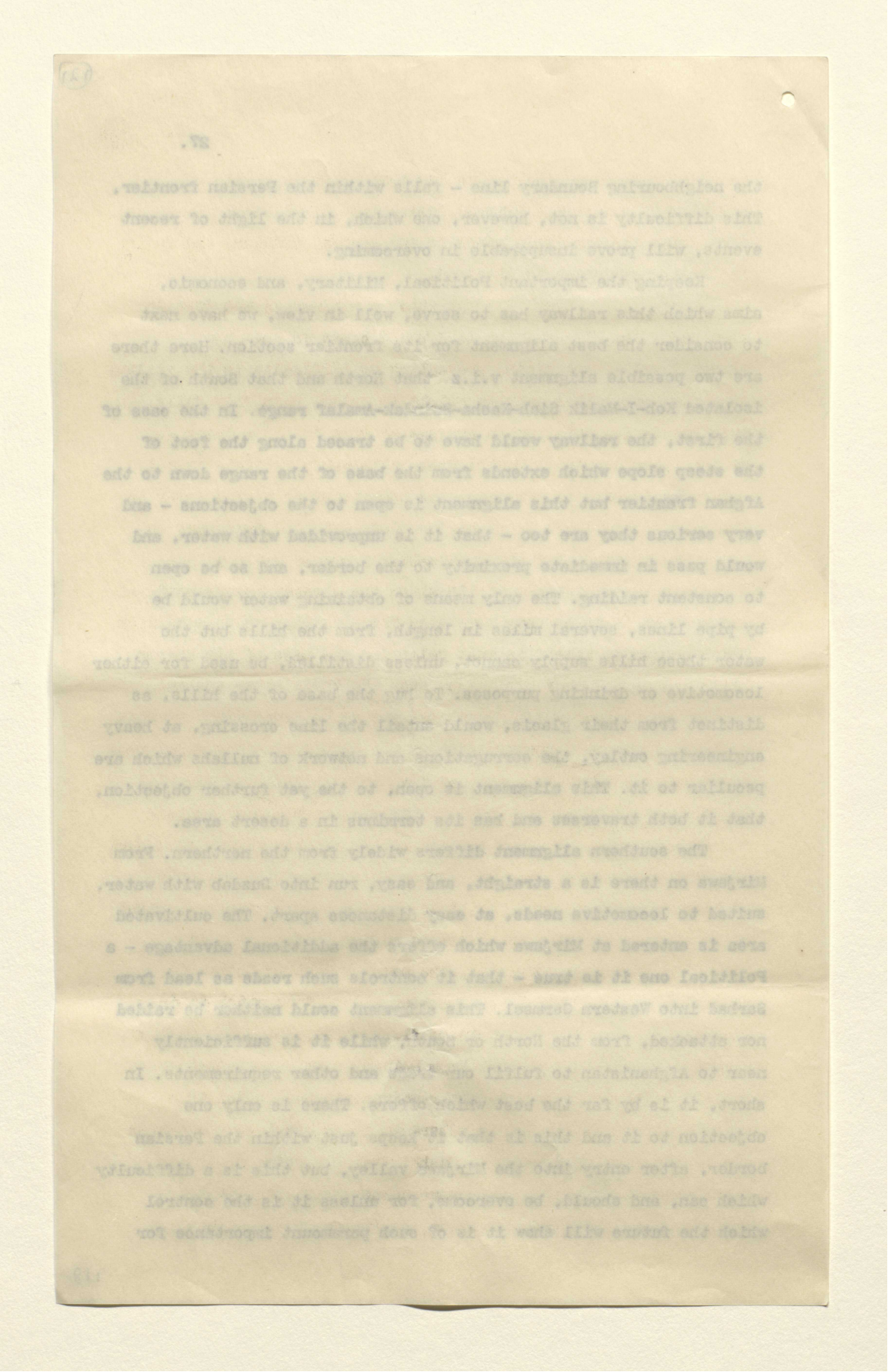

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us to possess, over the narrow key neck which separates the practically impassable Persian desert from the Baluchistan desert area, with all that this means to our Afghan, Seistan, and Indian interests, can never be obtained.

From Mushki Chah, through which a railway to the frontier will pass, the Mirjawa, the line would cross an open and almost level desert plain, presenting no difficulty to the railway engineer, other than such as relate to water. Rain only falls, in this particular area, on an average of once in three years and as the water supply at Mushki Chah, although plentiful, is not suited to locomotive purposes, the importance of having entry to the good supply there is at Mirjawa does not need enlarging on.

The extension of the Quetta-Mushki branch railway line to Dalbandin, a distance of 115 miles has already been sanctioned and work on it is already complete. The alignment on this section which commended itself is that following the base of the Kharan hills and offers many advantages over the three other possible routes. No engineering difficulties are to be found with, on this section, other than the crossing of the high sand ridge which runs close under the Northern foot of the Kharan hills, and parallel to it. This ridge is kept tied to its present position by back currents of air from the hills and should we, therefore, find that the recurring expenditure of keeping the line, for its couple of hundred yards of crossing, free of sand is burdensome it might be as well to consider the question of tunnelling below it.

In general conformation, the country West of Dalbandin, resembles a basin, the lowest part of which, into which it is that all the surrounding drainage flows, being the Hamun Mashkel, situated at the S.W. Corner. From Dalbandin to Mushki Chah, the railway, with due regard to the requirements with which this memorandum has dealt, should adhere to the highest contour which can be obtained. The water at Mushki Chah not being up to locomotive standards, it may prove necessary for the line, on emerging from the Dalbandin plain, to strike direct either for

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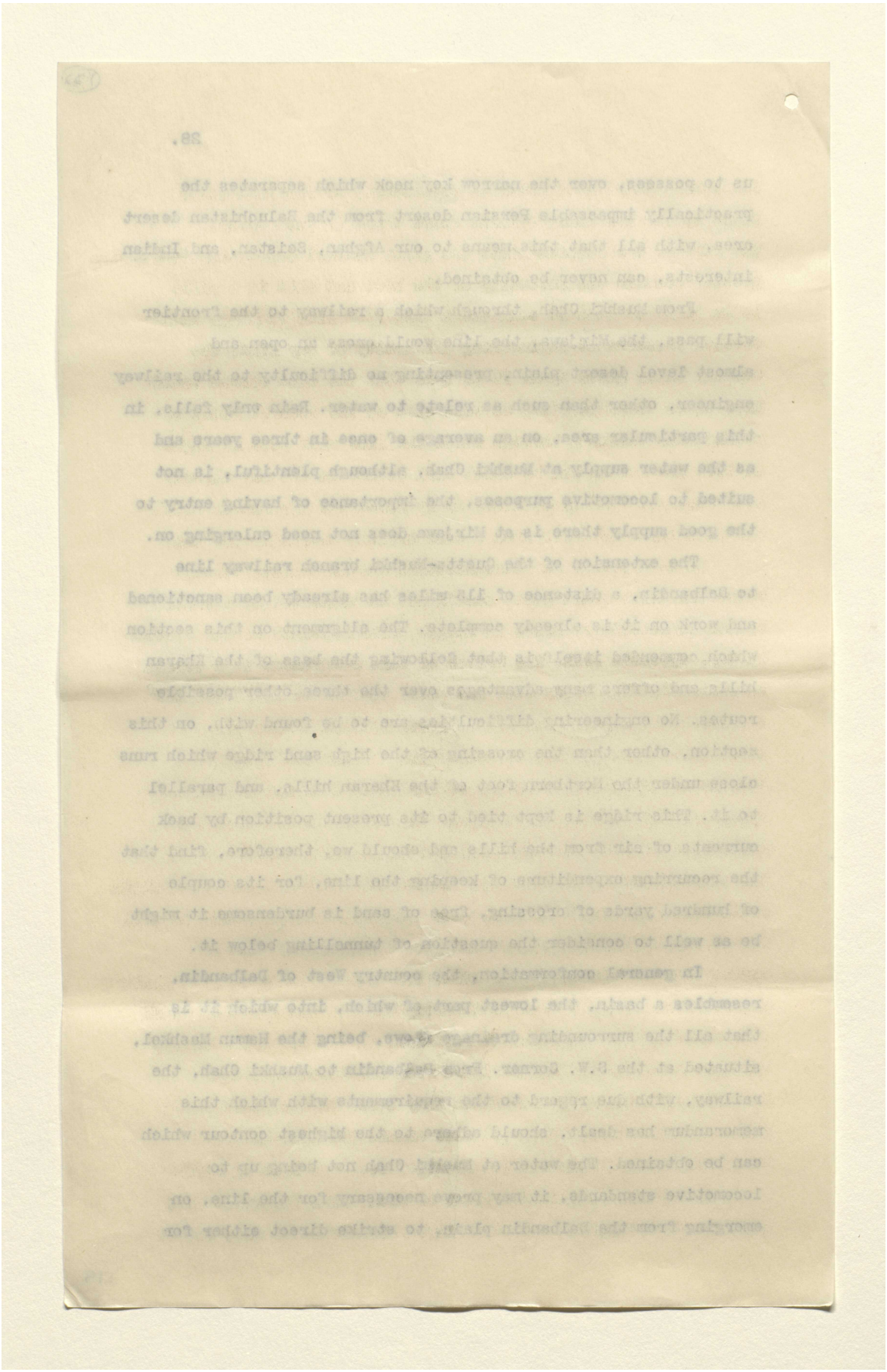

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Isa Tahir, where good water is obtainable, or for some other place up the Isa Tahir nullah, where there is good water. The further one descends into the great Mashkel depression, the greater becomes the intensity of the heat and this is a point to be borne in mind in connection with open line running. This section presents no engineering difficulty of any kind, the country being quite open. It is true that the wind stream would have to be reckoned with, as well also as the several lines of moving sand barchans through which the line will pass at right angles. The latter can be dealt with either in the way already described, in this memorandum, or by permanent diversions which can be brought into use when a dune settled astraddle the line.

It is a matter for consideration whether Kundi, through which the lines would pass, should not be connected by a small branch line, some 70 miles in length, with Sehtagan on the Mashkel border, opposite Jalk. The writer of this memorandum is a strong advocate for this being done and would venture to represent its extreme importance. Added to the great Political benefits this small line would confer, it would bring within its sphere commercial interests, relating to the Eastern Kirman Provinces, of great and far reaching importance. The matter is to which the writer has devoted lengthy study and he is fully assured as to the correctness of the views he has formed. Such a branch connection could best follow the Indo-European telegraph line #: would be laid on the surface of the ground: has good water midway: has no engineering difficulty of any kind, the country being an open plain; and would be secure from attack throughout its length. The branch line would further possess the Political advantage of precluding the Kharan Sardar and his advisers from indulging in those transfrontier intrigues for which they have, in the past, shewn such a predeliction, and would also ensure the Indo-European telegraph line, throughout its frontier section, from interruption.

It may not be considered out of place if a few words were added on the subject of the buildings which would be most suited

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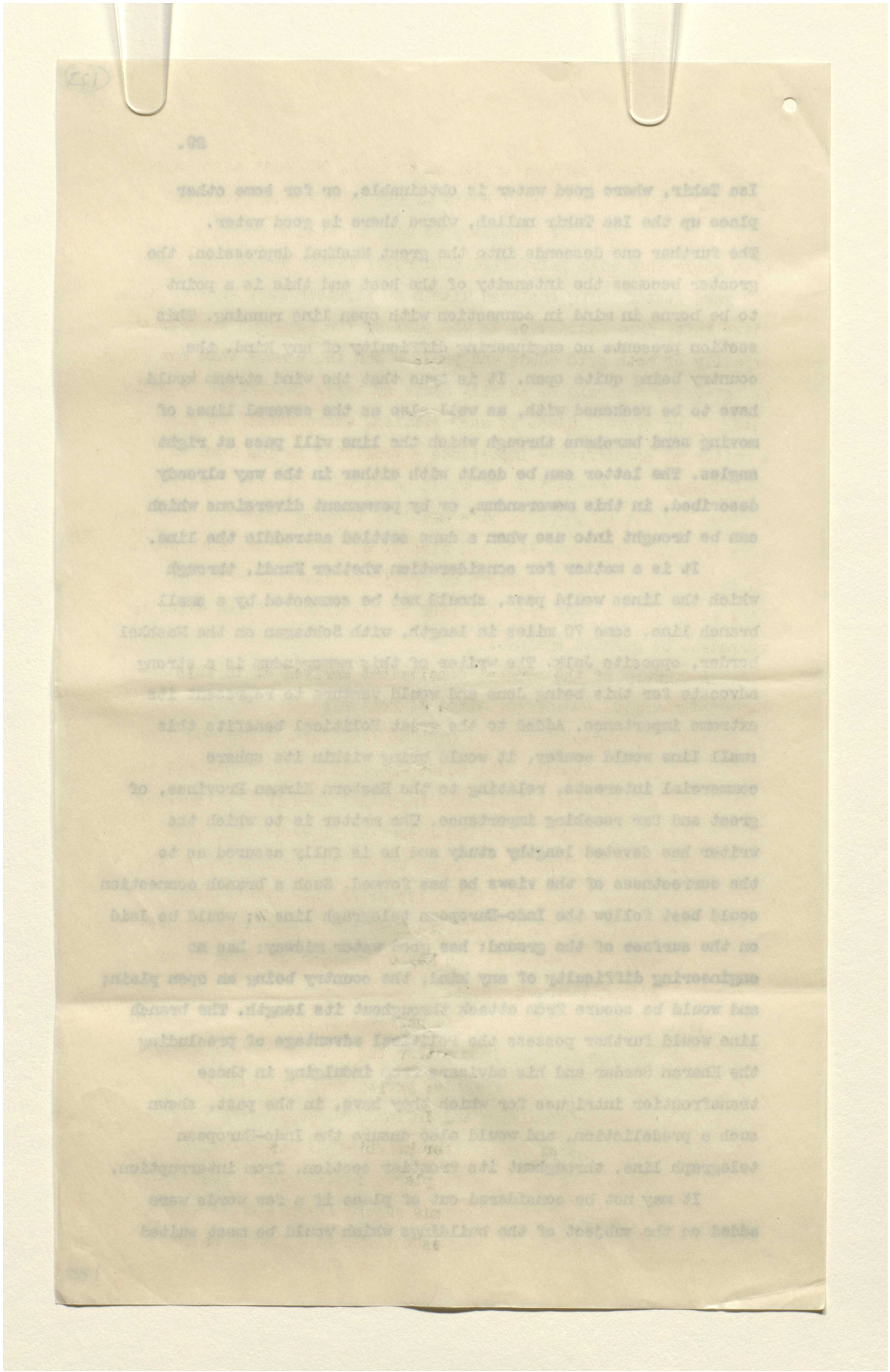

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to the needs they would be called on to meet. The most advantageous pattern, for station blocks, would be the Baluchistan fortified pattern but it would be necessary to add, to each station, a roomy open goods shed with galvanized iron roof, within a spacious yard, the yard itself being enclosed within an eighteen foot wall ~~of~~ or high, close knit, iron pallisade. In the case of the terminus station the capacity of both good sheds and yards - and there more than one would be necessary - should be as will admit of large quantities of bulky goods being stored. Close to each station, there should be built - a matter of considerable importance - something in the form of caravanserai accommodation. It would be as well if each fortified station were to be provided with means of storing twelve to fourteen days drinking water and it would also be as well if the weak point which marks the present pattern of fortified station, which is that entry can be made from the roof of the ticket office exterior verandah, be guarded against.

A summary of the general conclusions arrived at in this Memorandum would, therefore, stand as follows:-

(a). Any extension of the Quetta-Nushki branch Railway line from Dalbandin, the point where it has now reached, to, or towards, the Persian frontier, should be planned so as to secure us in the important interests involved.

(b). First in importance among these, is the control of the narrow rocky neck which separates the, practically, impassible Persian desert from the Baluchistan desert area, and which is the key of Seistan and with it of Afghanistan and India.

(c). To hold control of this narrow neck would be to prevent the projection, from either the Kirman or Persian Gulf sides, of any influence, propaganda, or trade antagonistic to our Afghanistan and Indian interests.

(d). This control can neither be obtained nor exercised unless the terminus be placed in a suitable position. The site of this terminus should also be selected with due regard to certain essentials in climate, water,

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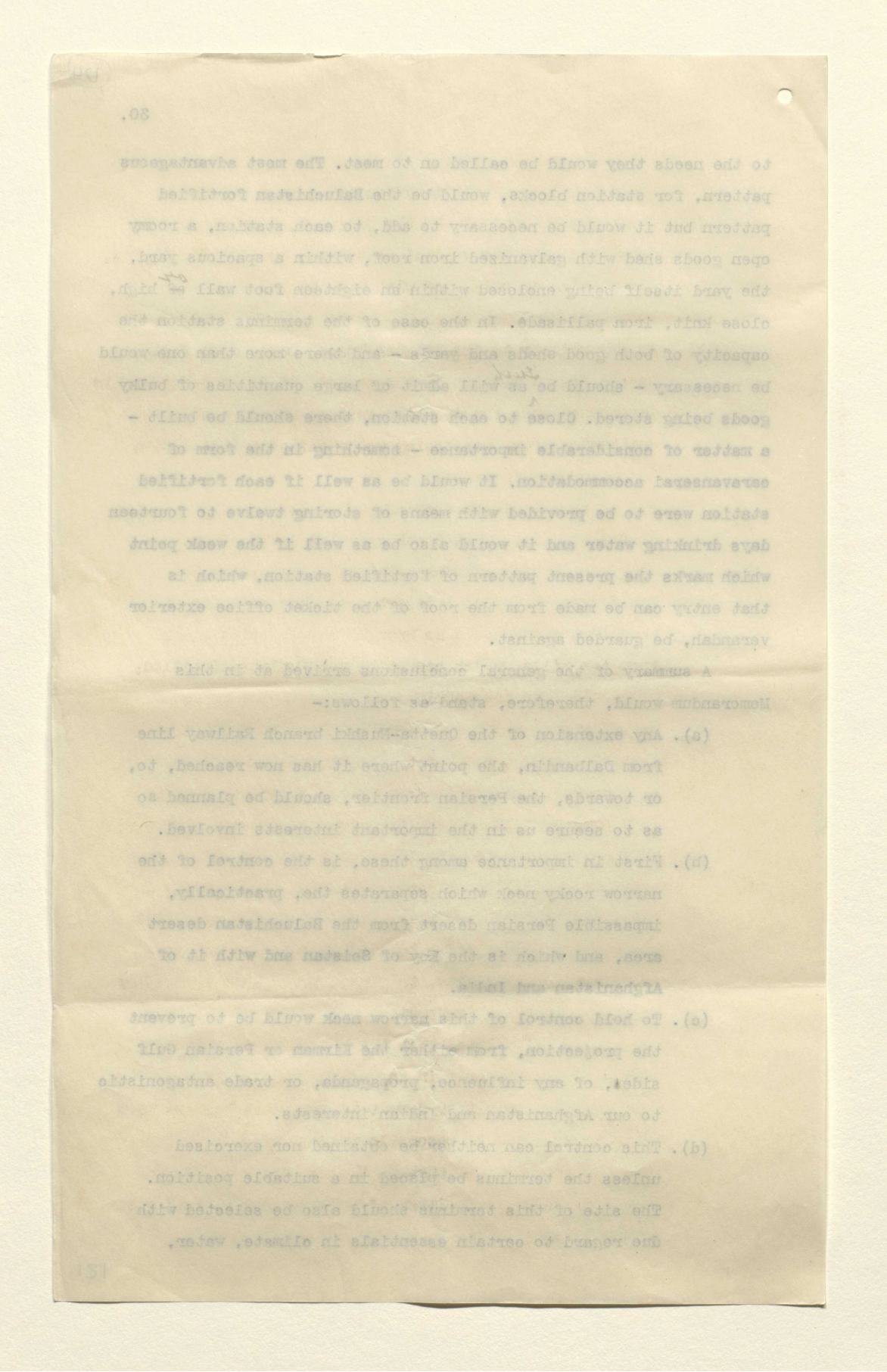

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surroundings, and military requirements.

(g). The Railway terminus, on the Seistan border, should be connected with the capital of Seistan by a road suitable, for wheeled traffic, and with Bam, in the Kirman Province, by camel track.

(h). As any railway to the Seistan border must, ipso facto, have a desert stretch in the centre, it is of considerable importance that the Frontier section should rest on a cultivated area, possessing water suited to locomotive and other requirements.

(i). Two alignments offer themselves for the Frontier section to follow v.i.z. that North and that South of the Koh-I-Malik Siah - Kacha - Saindak - Amalaf range. The former traverses a desert area, has no water other than that which could be brought down by pipe lines from the hills, which cannot be used unless distilled, and would have its terminus at either Nobat or Dewan Chah, both of which are equally unsuited. While the latter alignment does meet all the requirements we have in view, yet it is open to the objection that it infringes on Persian territory. This objection, however, is one which can and should be adjusted. In this latter connection it is to be noted that when the boundary in this neighbourhood was being drawn up in the year 1896, the Persian delimitation Commissioner could only be induced with difficulty, to permit this strip of country being included within Persian territorial limits, and it is also to be noted that the boundary, in this vicinity, is not shewn in any of our maps as it was never visited by either Commissioner and it has not been found practicable to reconcile the boundary described in the agreement with that on the map which was drawn up, at the time, and either of these with that laid out on the ground.

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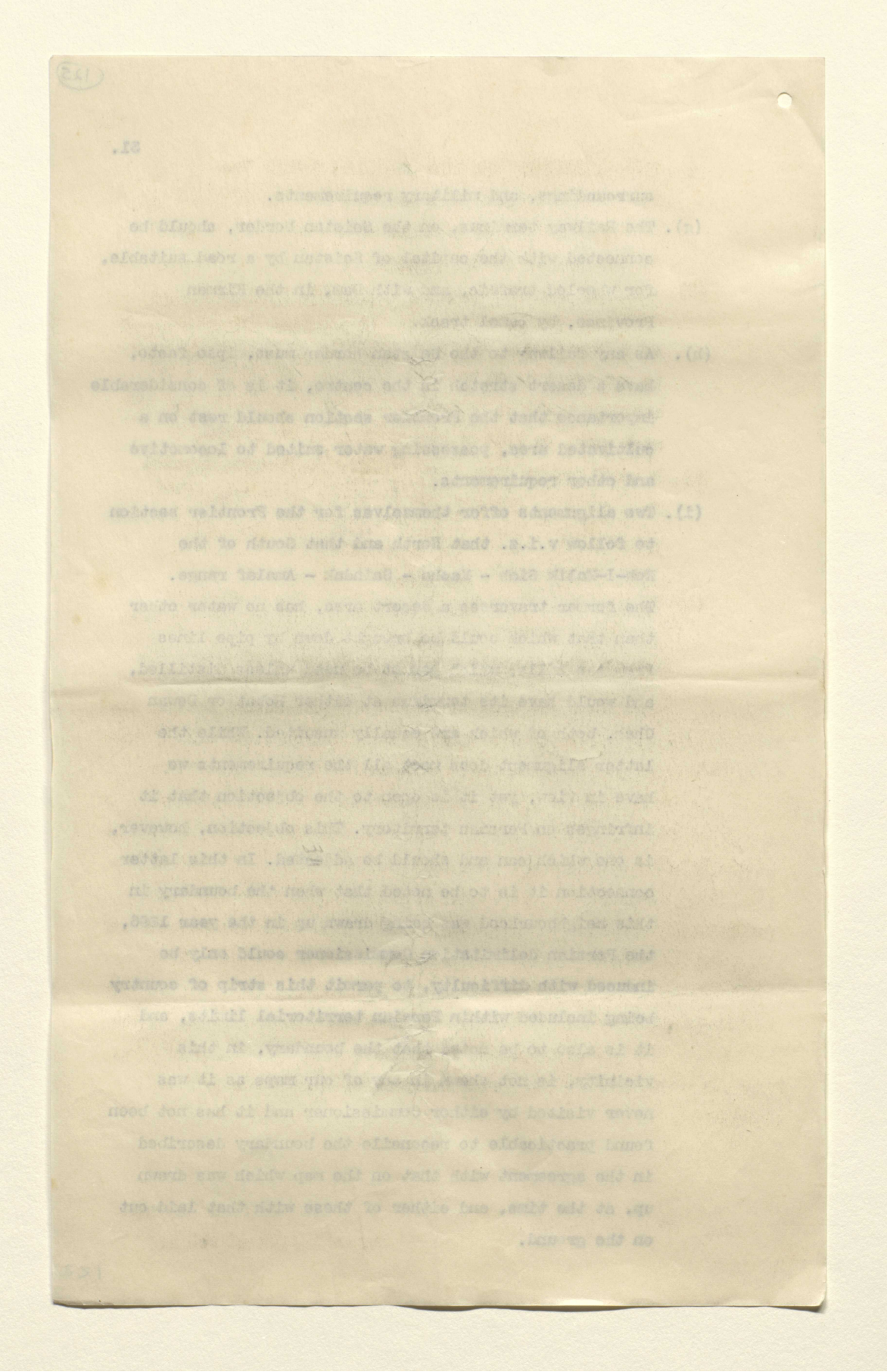

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(i). From Dalbandin, the line should be traced West along the highest contour that can be obtained, with due regard to the provision of suitable water, as close as possible to the central desert section.

(j). Provided the materials are available, this extension could be carried through to the Frontier within a period of twelve months. The line would be an inexpensive one to construct as no bridges, tunnels, embankments, or cuttings would be necessary and the line would, for the most part, be laid on the surface of the ground.

(k). A small branch line, some 70 miles in length, carried from Kundi to Sehtagan, would secure us in Political and economic advantages far outweighing the additional cost of this small addition.

(l). Station buildings should conform to the Baluchistan fortified pattern and provision should be made, at each stage, for adequate accommodation for travellers, and camel men, as well as for the storage of goods.

The grounds on which the extension of the Quetta-Nushki Railway line to the Seistan frontier is recommended are as follows:-

Existing commercial considerations call for it and without it the limitations to which our trade route is now subject cannot be removed. Current military needs press insistently for it and future military requirements will render it essential. Present Political circumstances make its construction a wise precautionary measure and the future outlook, in the nearer middle East, in Persia, and in Afghanistan will separately demand it. But while this is the case it is to be emphasised that the several benefits this line will confer will be seriously compromised, if not destroyed, should a junction, on the Frontier, with any other European railway system ever be permitted.

F. Bob Bart Lieut Colonel.

Buxton, February 6th, 1917. ~~Indian Political~~ Depart.

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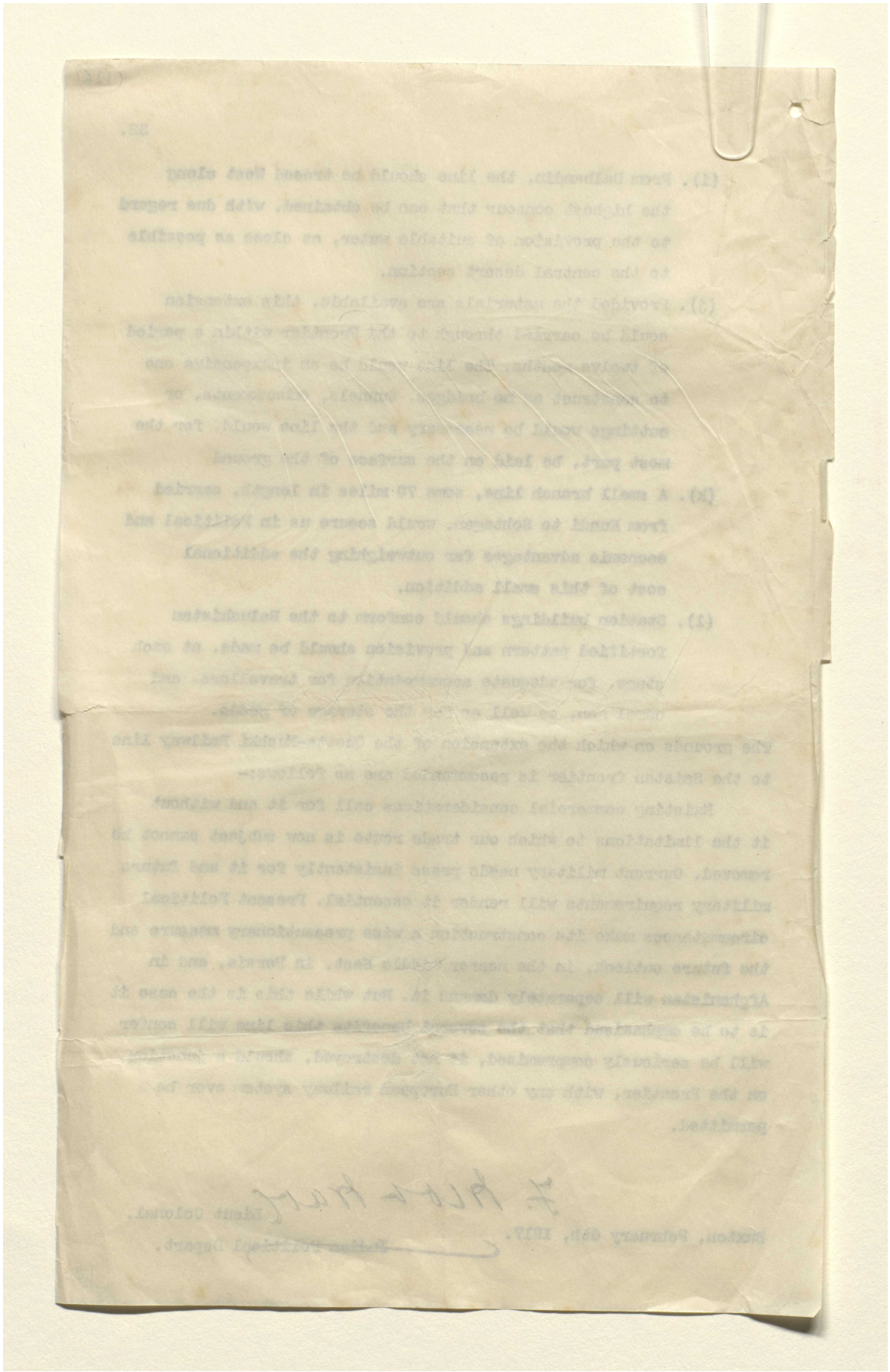

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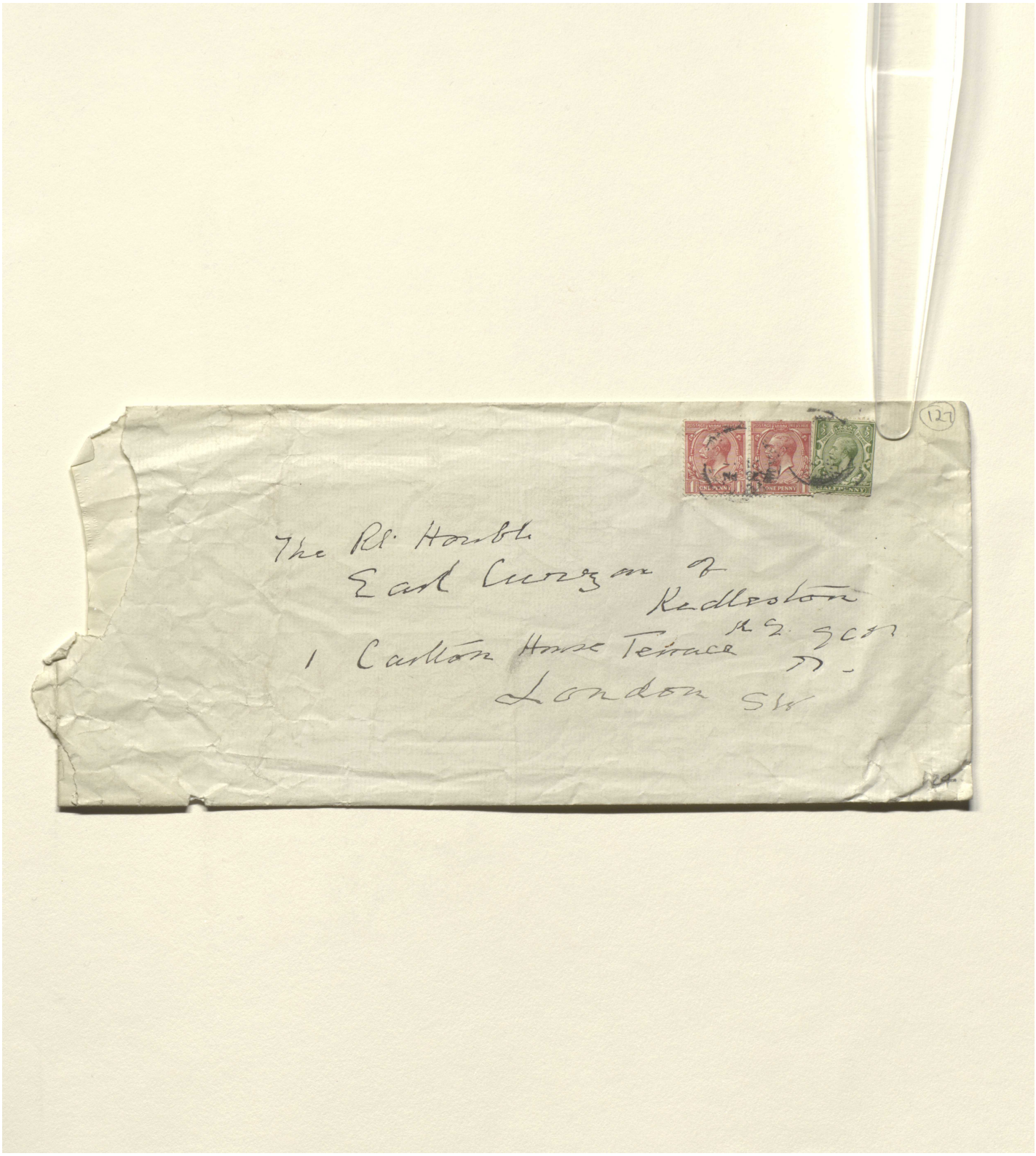

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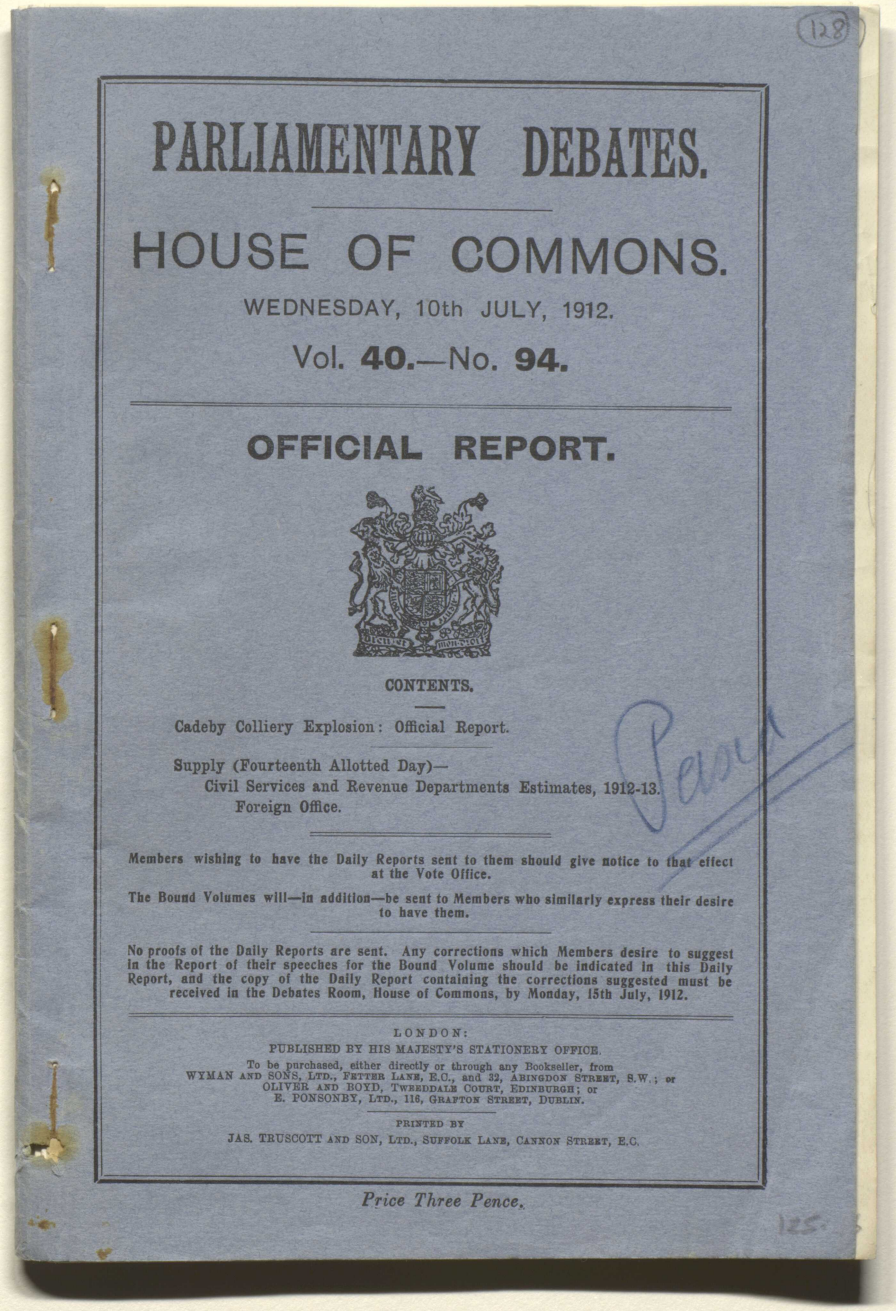

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, 10th JULY, 1912.

Vol. **40.**—No. **94.**

OFFICIAL REPORT.

CONTENTS.

Cadeby Colliery Explosion: Official Report.

Supply (Fourteenth Allotted Day)—
Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1912-13.
Foreign Office.

Members wishing to have the Daily Reports sent to them should give notice to that effect at the Vote Office.

The Bound Volumes will—in addition—be sent to Members who similarly express their desire to have them.

No proofs of the Daily Reports are sent. Any corrections which Members desire to suggest in the Report of their speeches for the Bound Volume should be indicated in this Daily Report, and the copy of the Daily Report containing the corrections suggested must be received in the Debates Room, House of Commons, by Monday, 15th July, 1912.

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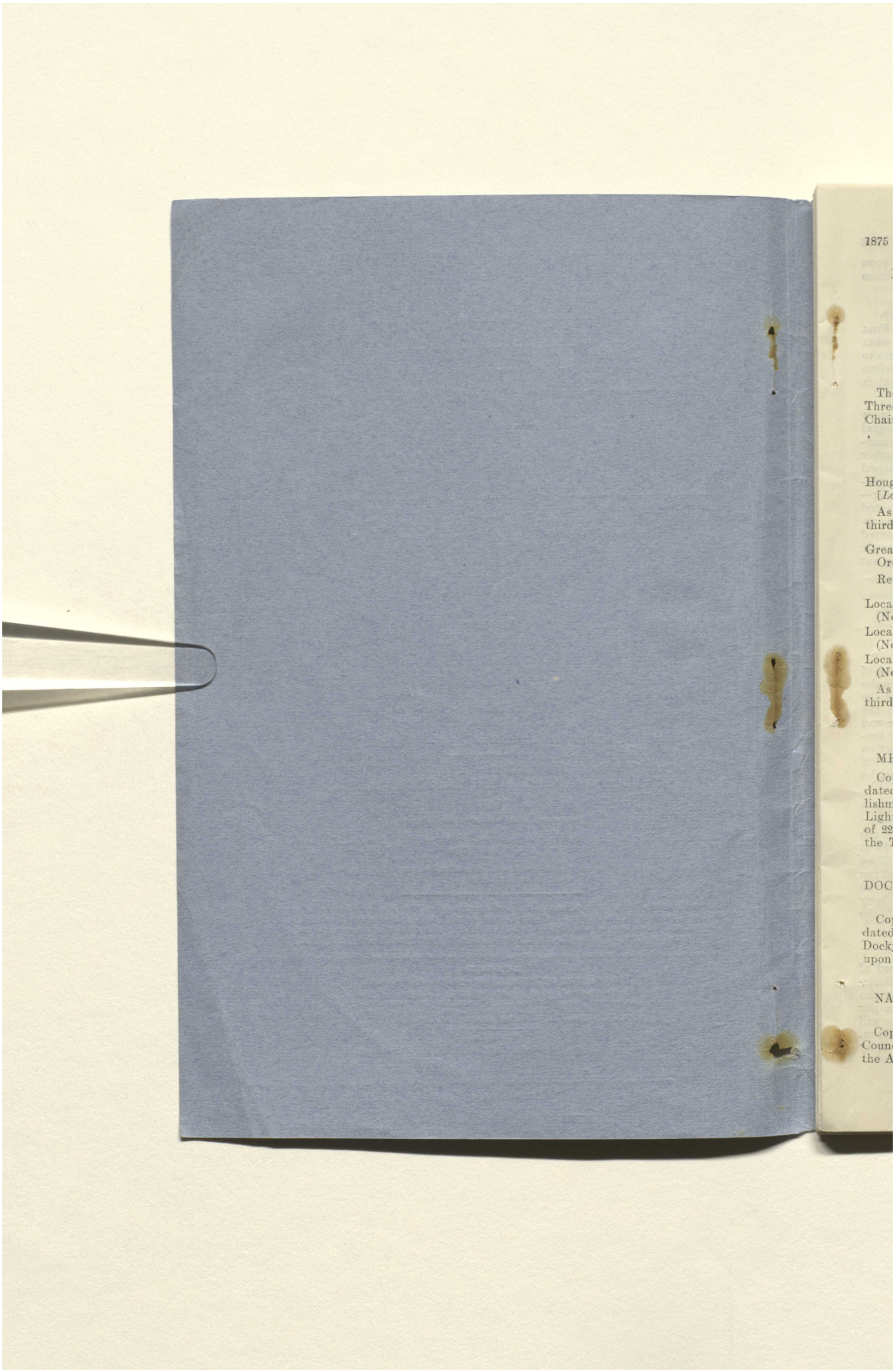

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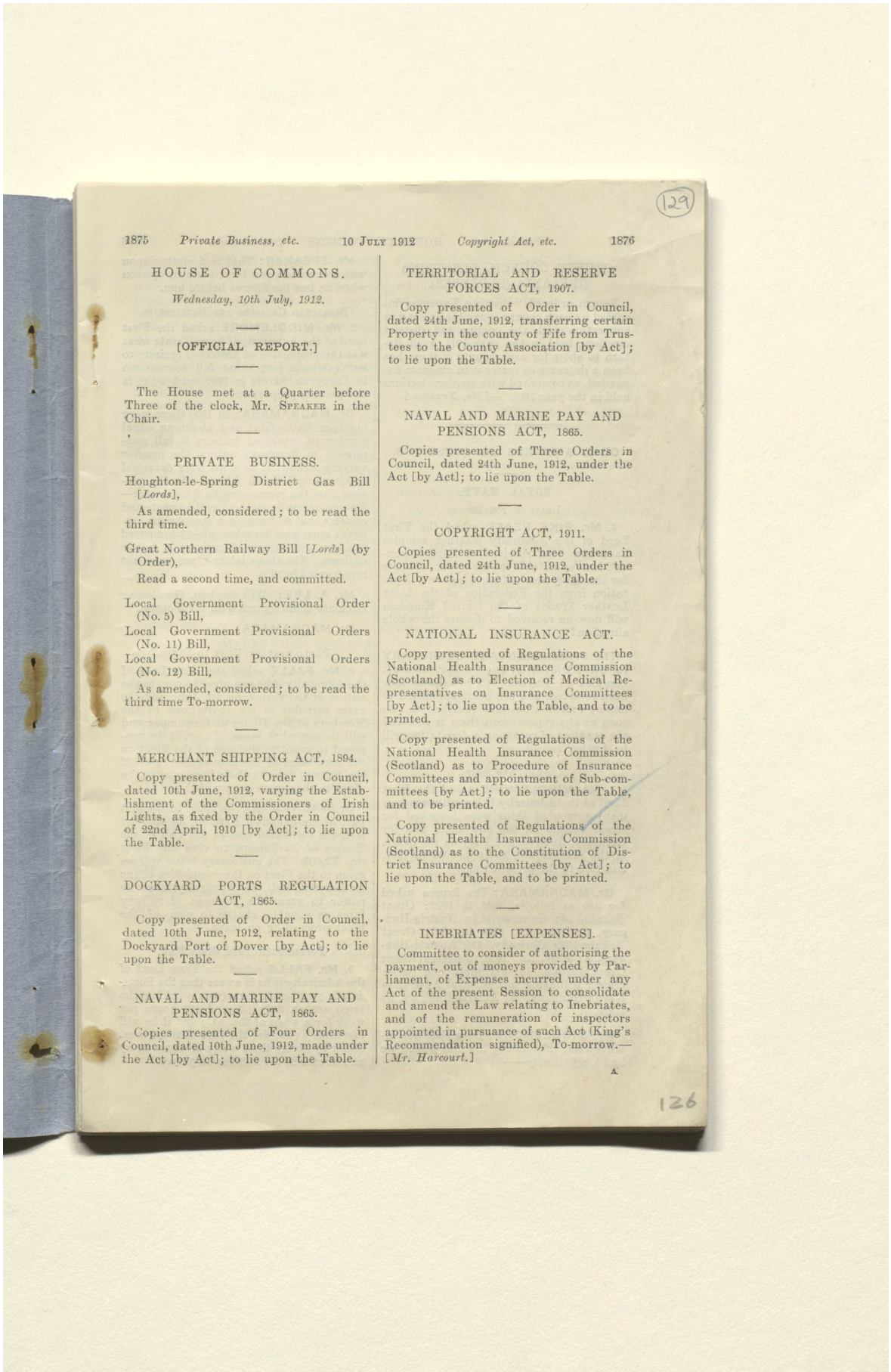

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 10th July, 1912.

[OFFICIAL REPORT.]

The House met at a Quarter before Three of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Houghton-le-Spring District Gas Bill [*Lords*],

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Great Northern Railway Bill [*Lords*] (by Order),

Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 5) Bill,
Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill,
Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 12) Bill,

As amended, considered; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894.

Copy presented of Order in Council, dated 10th June, 1912, varying the Establishment of the Commissioners of Irish Lights, as fixed by the Order in Council of 22nd April, 1910 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

DOCKYARD PORTS REGULATION ACT, 1865.

Copy presented of Order in Council, dated 10th June, 1912, relating to the Dockyard Port of Dover [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Copies presented of Four Orders in Council, dated 10th June, 1912, made under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES ACT, 1907.

Copy presented of Order in Council, dated 24th June, 1912, transferring certain Property in the county of Fife from Trustees to the County Association [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Copies presented of Three Orders in Council, dated 24th June, 1912, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COPYRIGHT ACT, 1911.

Copies presented of Three Orders in Council, dated 24th June, 1912, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

Copy presented of Regulations of the National Health Insurance Commission (Scotland) as to Election of Medical Representatives on Insurance Committees [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Copy presented of Regulations of the National Health Insurance Commission (Scotland) as to Procedure of Insurance Committees and appointment of Sub-committees [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Copy presented of Regulations of the National Health Insurance Commission (Scotland) as to the Constitution of District Insurance Committees [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

INEBRIATES [EXPENSES].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of Expenses incurred under any Act of the present Session to consolidate and amend the Law relating to Inebriates, and of the remuneration of inspectors appointed in pursuance of such Act (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—[*Mr. Harcourt.*]

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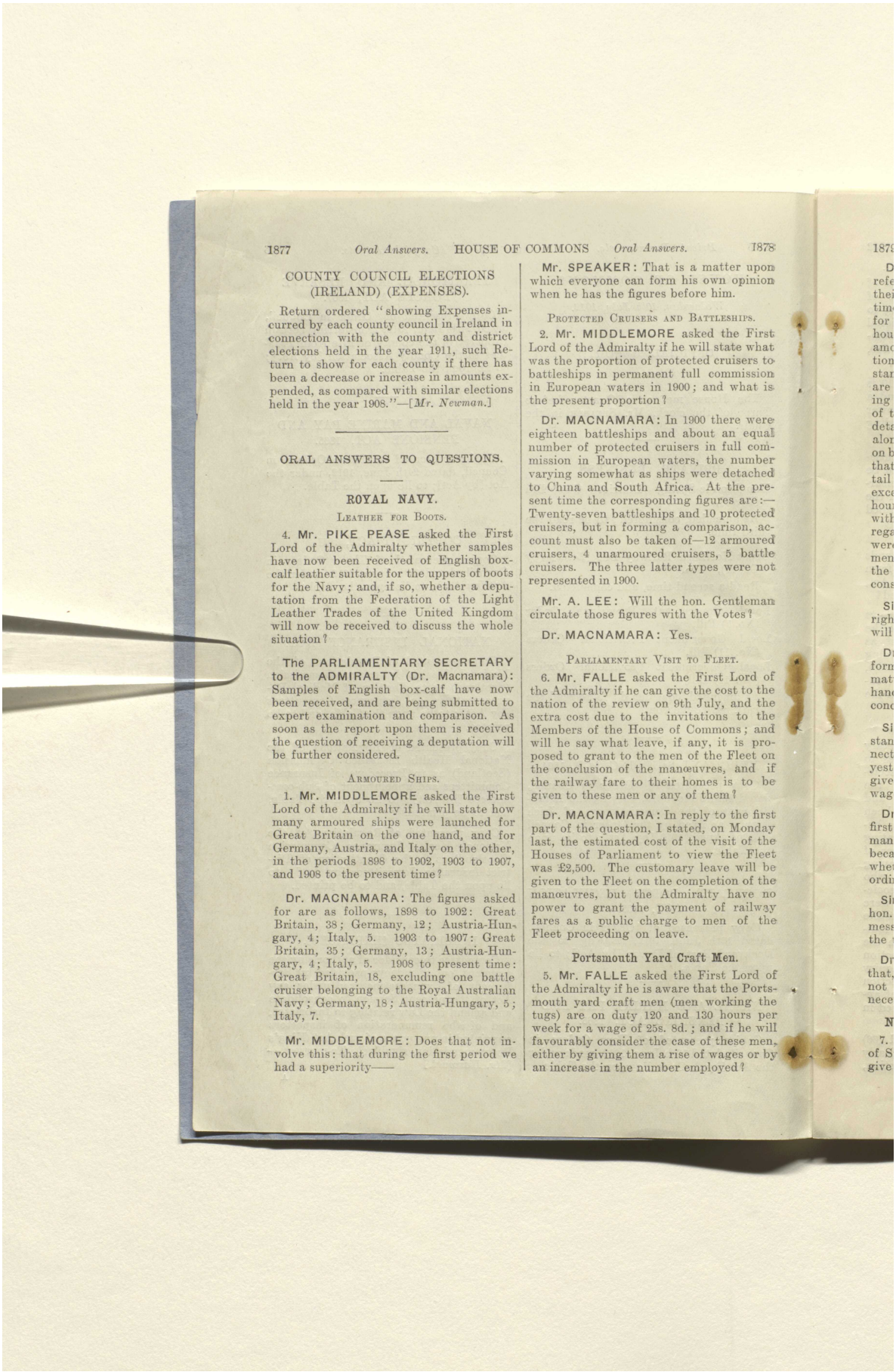

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (EXPENSES).

Return ordered "showing Expenses incurred by each county council in Ireland in connection with the county and district elections held in the year 1911, such Return to show for each county if there has been a decrease or increase in amounts expended, as compared with similar elections held in the year 1908."—[*Mr. Newman.*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

ROYAL NAVY.

Leather for Boots.

4. **Mr. PIKE PEASE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether samples have now been received of English box-calf leather suitable for the uppers of boots for the Navy; and, if so, whether a deputation from the Federation of the Light Leather Trades of the United Kingdom will now be received to discuss the whole situation?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Dr. Macnamara): Samples of English box-calf have now been received, and are being submitted to expert examination and comparison. As soon as the report upon them is received the question of receiving a deputation will be further considered.

Armoured Ships.

1. **Mr. MIDDLEMORE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state how many armoured ships were launched for Great Britain on the one hand, and for Germany, Austria, and Italy on the other, in the periods 1898 to 1902, 1903 to 1907, and 1908 to the present time?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The figures asked for are as follows, 1898 to 1902: Great Britain, 38; Germany, 12; Austria-Hungary, 4; Italy, 5. 1903 to 1907: Great Britain, 35; Germany, 13; Austria-Hungary, 4; Italy, 5. 1908 to present time: Great Britain, 18, excluding one battle cruiser belonging to the Royal Australian Navy; Germany, 18; Austria-Hungary, 5; Italy, 7.

Mr. MIDDLEMORE: Does that not involve this: that during the first period we had a superiority——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter upon which everyone can form his own opinion when he has the figures before him.

Protected Cruisers and Battleships.

2. **Mr. MIDDLEMORE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state what was the proportion of protected cruisers to battleships in permanent full commission in European waters in 1900; and what is the present proportion?

Dr. MACNAMARA: In 1900 there were eighteen battleships and about an equal number of protected cruisers in full commission in European waters, the number varying somewhat as ships were detached to China and South Africa. At the present time the corresponding figures are:—Twenty-seven battleships and 10 protected cruisers, but in forming a comparison, account must also be taken of—12 armoured cruisers, 4 unarmoured cruisers, 5 battle cruisers. The three latter types were not represented in 1900.

Mr. A. LEE: Will the hon. Gentleman circulate those figures with the Votes?

Dr. MACNAMARA: Yes.

Parliamentary Visit to Fleet.

6. **Mr. FALLE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can give the cost to the nation of the review on 9th July, and the extra cost due to the invitations to the Members of the House of Commons; and will he say what leave, if any, it is proposed to grant to the men of the Fleet on the conclusion of the manœuvres, and if the railway fare to their homes is to be given to these men or any of them?

Dr. MACNAMARA: In reply to the first part of the question, I stated, on Monday last, the estimated cost of the visit of the Houses of Parliament to view the Fleet was £2,500. The customary leave will be given to the Fleet on the completion of the manœuvres, but the Admiralty have no power to grant the payment of railway fares as a public charge to men of the Fleet proceeding on leave.

Portsmouth Yard Craft Men.

5. **Mr. FALLE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he is aware that the Portsmouth yard craft men (men working the tugs) are on duty 120 and 130 hours per week for a wage of 25s. 8d.; and if he will favourably consider the case of these men, either by giving them a rise of wages or by an increase in the number employed?

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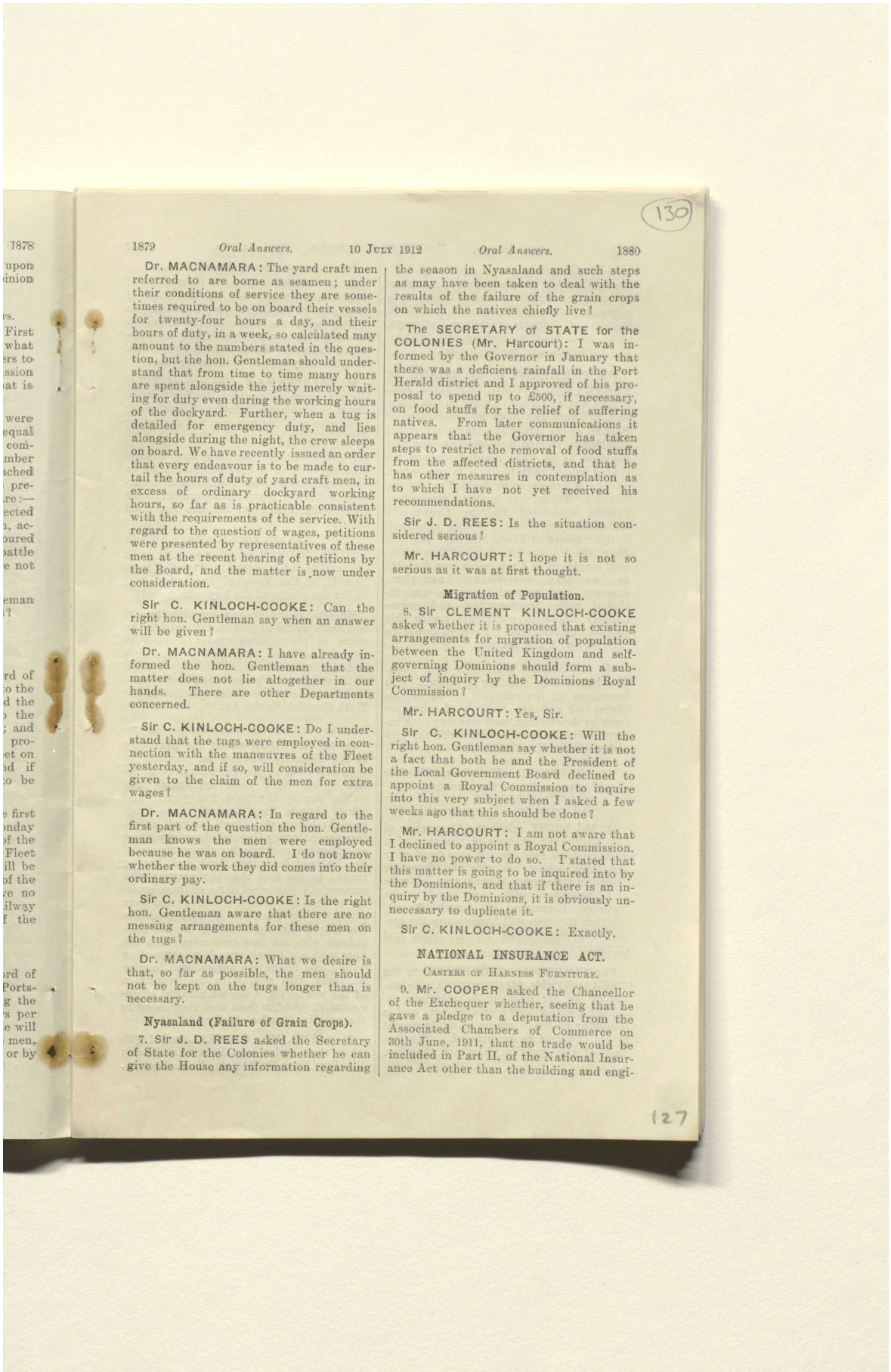

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Dr. MACNAMARA: The yard craft men referred to are borne as seamen; under their conditions of service they are sometimes required to be on board their vessels for twenty-four hours a day, and their hours of duty, in a week, so calculated may amount to the numbers stated in the question, but the hon. Gentleman should understand that from time to time many hours are spent alongside the jetty merely waiting for duty even during the working hours of the dockyard. Further, when a tug is detailed for emergency duty, and lies alongside during the night, the crew sleeps on board. We have recently issued an order that every endeavour is to be made to curtail the hours of duty of yard craft men, in excess of ordinary dockyard working hours, so far as is practicable consistent with the requirements of the service. With regard to the question of wages, petitions were presented by representatives of these men at the recent hearing of petitions by the Board, and the matter is now under consideration.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when an answer will be given?

Dr. MACNAMARA: I have already informed the hon. Gentleman that the matter does not lie altogether in our hands. There are other Departments concerned.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Do I understand that the tugs were employed in connection with the manœuvres of the Fleet yesterday, and if so, will consideration be given to the claim of the men for extra wages?

Dr. MACNAMARA: In regard to the first part of the question the hon. Gentleman knows the men were employed because he was on board. I do not know whether the work they did comes into their ordinary pay.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there are no messing arrangements for these men on the tugs?

Dr. MACNAMARA: What we desire is that, so far as possible, the men should not be kept on the tugs longer than is necessary.

Nyasaland (Failure of Grain Crops).

7. Sir J. D. REES asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give the House any information regarding the season in Nyasaland and such steps as may have been taken to deal with the results of the failure of the grain crops on which the natives chiefly live?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Harcourt): I was informed by the Governor in January that there was a deficient rainfall in the Port Herald district and I approved of his proposal to spend up to £500, if necessary, on food stuffs for the relief of suffering natives. From later communications it appears that the Governor has taken steps to restrict the removal of food stuffs from the affected districts, and that he has other measures in contemplation as to which I have not yet received his recommendations.

Sir J. D. REES: Is the situation considered serious?

Mr. HARCOURT: I hope it is not so serious as it was at first thought.

Migration of Population.

8. Sir CLEMENT KINLOCH-COOKE asked whether it is proposed that existing arrangements for migration of population between the United Kingdom and self-governing Dominions should form a subject of inquiry by the Dominions Royal Commission?

Mr. HARCOURT: Yes, Sir.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is not a fact that both he and the President of the Local Government Board declined to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into this very subject when I asked a few weeks ago that this should be done?

Mr. HARCOURT: I am not aware that I declined to appoint a Royal Commission. I have no power to do so. I stated that this matter is going to be inquired into by the Dominions, and that if there is an inquiry by the Dominions, it is obviously unnecessary to duplicate it.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Exactly.

NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

CASTERS OF HARNESS FURNITURE.

9. Mr. COOPER asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, seeing that he gave a pledge to a deputation from the Associated Chambers of Commerce on 30th June, 1911, that no trade would be included in Part II. of the National Insurance Act other than the building and engi-

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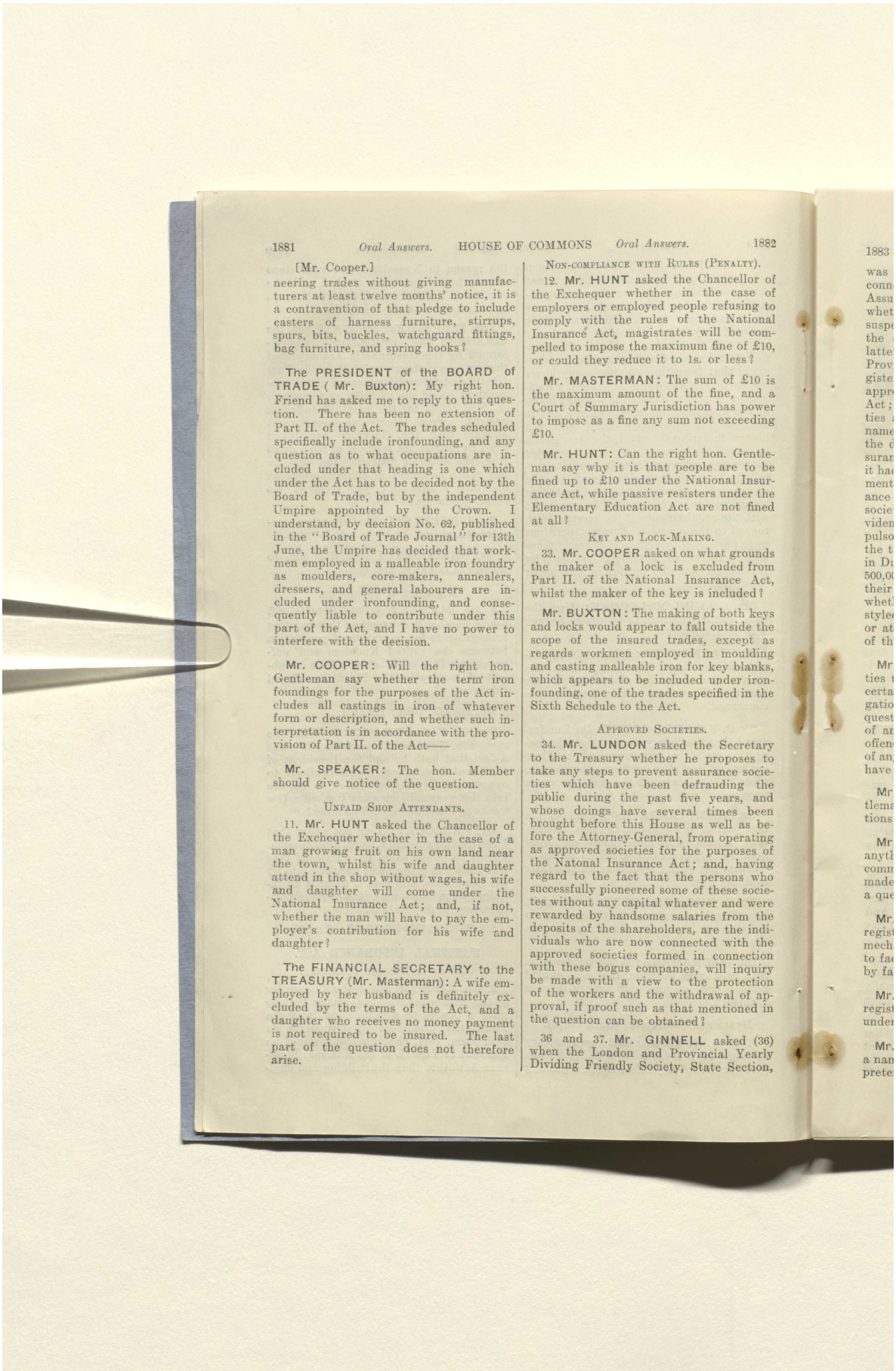

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[Mr. Cooper.]

neering trades without giving manufacturers at least twelve months' notice, it is a contravention of that pledge to include casters of harness furniture, stirrups, spurs, bits, buckles, watchguard fittings, bag furniture, and spring hooks?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Buxton): My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. There has been no extension of Part II. of the Act. The trades scheduled specifically include ironfounding, and any question as to what occupations are included under that heading is one which under the Act has to be decided not by the Board of Trade, but by the independent Umpire appointed by the Crown. I understand, by decision No. 62, published in the "Board of Trade Journal" for 13th June, the Umpire has decided that workmen employed in a malleable iron foundry as moulders, core-makers, annealers, dressers, and general labourers are included under ironfounding, and consequently liable to contribute under this part of the Act, and I have no power to interfere with the decision.

Mr. COOPER: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the term iron foundings for the purposes of the Act includes all castings in iron of whatever form or description, and whether such interpretation is in accordance with the provision of Part II. of the Act——

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should give notice of the question.

UNPAID SHOP ATTENDANTS.

11. Mr. HUNT asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in the case of a man growing fruit on his own land near the town, whilst his wife and daughter attend in the shop without wages, his wife and daughter will come under the National Insurance Act; and, if not, whether the man will have to pay the employer's contribution for his wife and daughter?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Masterman): A wife employed by her husband is definitely excluded by the terms of the Act, and a daughter who receives no money payment is not required to be insured. The last part of the question does not therefore arise.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RULES (PENALTY).

12. Mr. HUNT asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in the case of employers or employed people refusing to comply with the rules of the National Insurance Act, magistrates will be compelled to impose the maximum fine of £10, or could they reduce it to 1s. or less?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The sum of £10 is the maximum amount of the fine, and a Court of Summary Jurisdiction has power to impose as a fine any sum not exceeding £10.

Mr. HUNT: Can the right hon. Gentleman say why it is that people are to be fined up to £10 under the National Insurance Act, while passive resisters under the Elementary Education Act are not fined at all?

KEY AND LOCK-MAKING.

33. Mr. COOPER asked on what grounds the maker of a lock is excluded from Part II. of the National Insurance Act, whilst the maker of the key is included?

Mr. BUXTON: The making of both keys and locks would appear to fall outside the scope of the insured trades, except as regards workmen employed in moulding and casting malleable iron for key blanks, which appears to be included under ironfounding, one of the trades specified in the Sixth Schedule to the Act.

APPROVED SOCIETIES.

34. Mr. LUNDON asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he proposes to take any steps to prevent assurance societies which have been defrauding the public during the past five years, and whose doings have several times been brought before this House as well as before the Attorney-General, from operating as approved societies for the purposes of the Natonal Insurance Act; and, having regard to the fact that the persons who successfully pioneered some of these societes without any capital whatever and were rewarded by handsome salaries from the deposits of the shareholders, are the individuals who are now connected with the approved societies formed in connection with these bogus companies, will inquiry be made with a view to the protection of the workers and the withdrawal of approval, if proof such as that mentioned in the question can be obtained?

36 and 37. Mr. GINNELL asked (36) when the London and Provincial Yearly Dividing Friendly Society, State Section,

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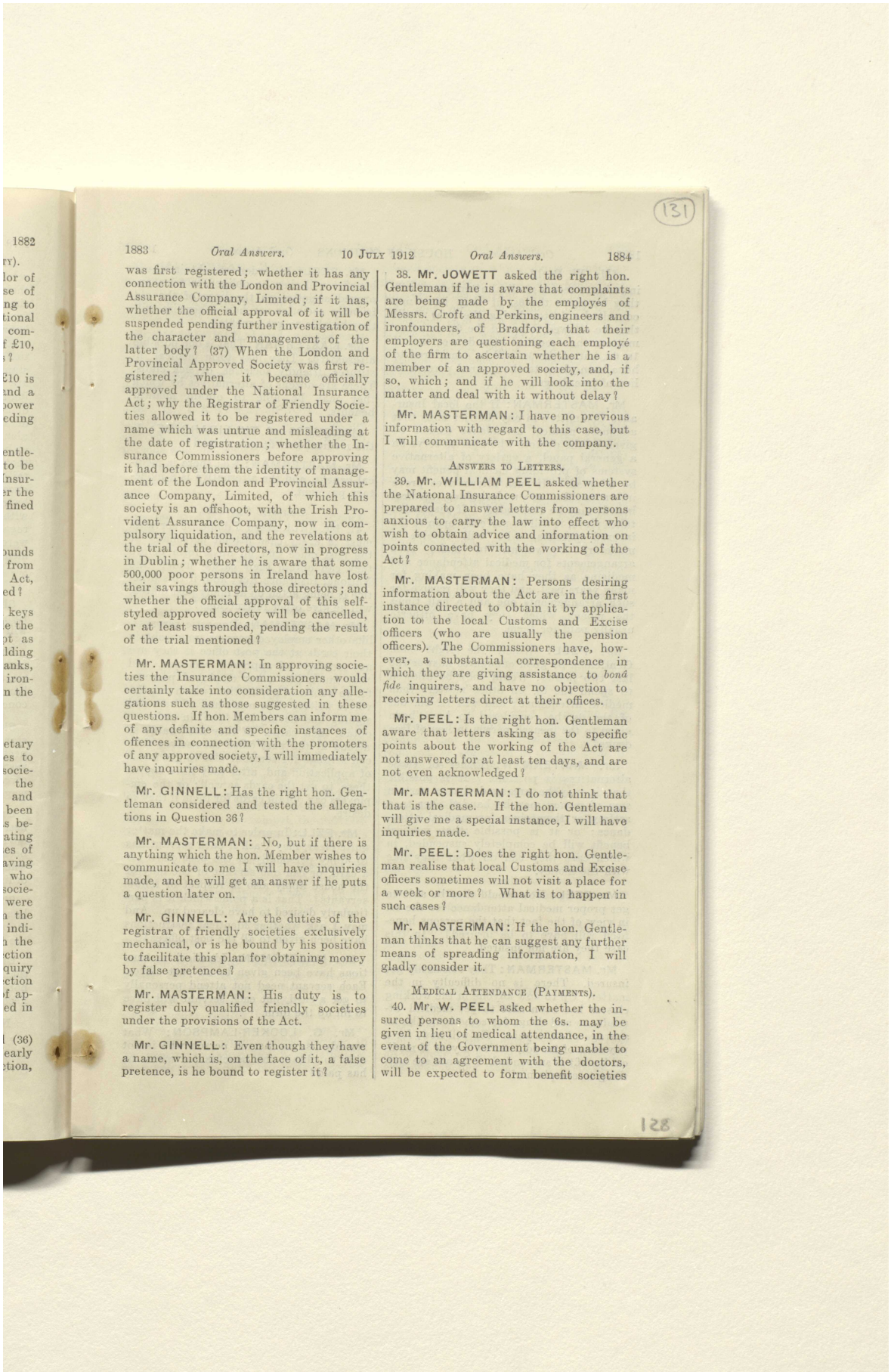

was first registered; whether it has any connection with the London and Provincial Assurance Company, Limited; if it has, whether the official approval of it will be suspended pending further investigation of the character and management of the latter body? (37) When the London and Provincial Approved Society was first registered; when it became officially approved under the National Insurance Act; why the Registrar of Friendly Societies allowed it to be registered under a name which was untrue and misleading at the date of registration; whether the Insurance Commissioners before approving it had before them the identity of management of the London and Provincial Assurance Company, Limited, of which this society is an offshoot, with the Irish Provident Assurance Company, now in compulsory liquidation, and the revelations at the trial of the directors, now in progress in Dublin; whether he is aware that some 500,000 poor persons in Ireland have lost their savings through those directors; and whether the official approval of this self-styled approved society will be cancelled, or at least suspended, pending the result of the trial mentioned?

Mr. MASTERMAN: In approving societies the Insurance Commissioners would certainly take into consideration any allegations such as those suggested in these questions. If hon. Members can inform me of any definite and specific instances of offences in connection with the promoters of any approved society, I will immediately have inquiries made.

Mr. GINNELL: Has the right hon. Gentleman considered and tested the allegations in Question 36?

Mr. MASTERMAN: No, but if there is anything which the hon. Member wishes to communicate to me I will have inquiries made, and he will get an answer if he puts a question later on.

Mr. GINNELL: Are the duties of the registrar of friendly societies exclusively mechanical, or is he bound by his position to facilitate this plan for obtaining money by false pretences?

Mr. MASTERMAN: His duty is to register duly qualified friendly societies under the provisions of the Act.

Mr. GINNELL: Even though they have a name, which is, on the face of it, a false pretence, is he bound to register it?

38. Mr. JOWETT asked the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that complaints are being made by the employés of Messrs. Croft and Perkins, engineers and ironfounders, of Bradford, that their employers are questioning each employé of the firm to ascertain whether he is a member of an approved society, and, if so, which; and if he will look into the matter and deal with it without delay?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I have no previous information with regard to this case, but I will communicate with the company.

ANSWERS TO LETTERS.

39. Mr. WILLIAM PEEL asked whether the National Insurance Commissioners are prepared to answer letters from persons anxious to carry the law into effect who wish to obtain advice and information on points connected with the working of the Act?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Persons desiring information about the Act are in the first instance directed to obtain it by application to the local Customs and Excise officers (who are usually the pension officers). The Commissioners have, however, a substantial correspondence in which they are giving assistance to *bonâ fide* inquirers, and have no objection to receiving letters direct at their offices.

Mr. PEEL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that letters asking as to specific points about the working of the Act are not answered for at least ten days, and are not even acknowledged?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I do not think that that is the case. If the hon. Gentleman will give me a special instance, I will have inquiries made.

Mr. PEEL: Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that local Customs and Excise officers sometimes will not visit a place for a week or more? What is to happen in such cases?

Mr. MASTERMAN: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that he can suggest any further means of spreading information, I will gladly consider it.

MEDICAL ATTENDANCE (PAYMENTS).

40. Mr. W. PEEL asked whether the insured persons to whom the 6s. may be given in lieu of medical attendance, in the event of the Government being unable to come to an agreement with the doctors, will be expected to form benefit societies

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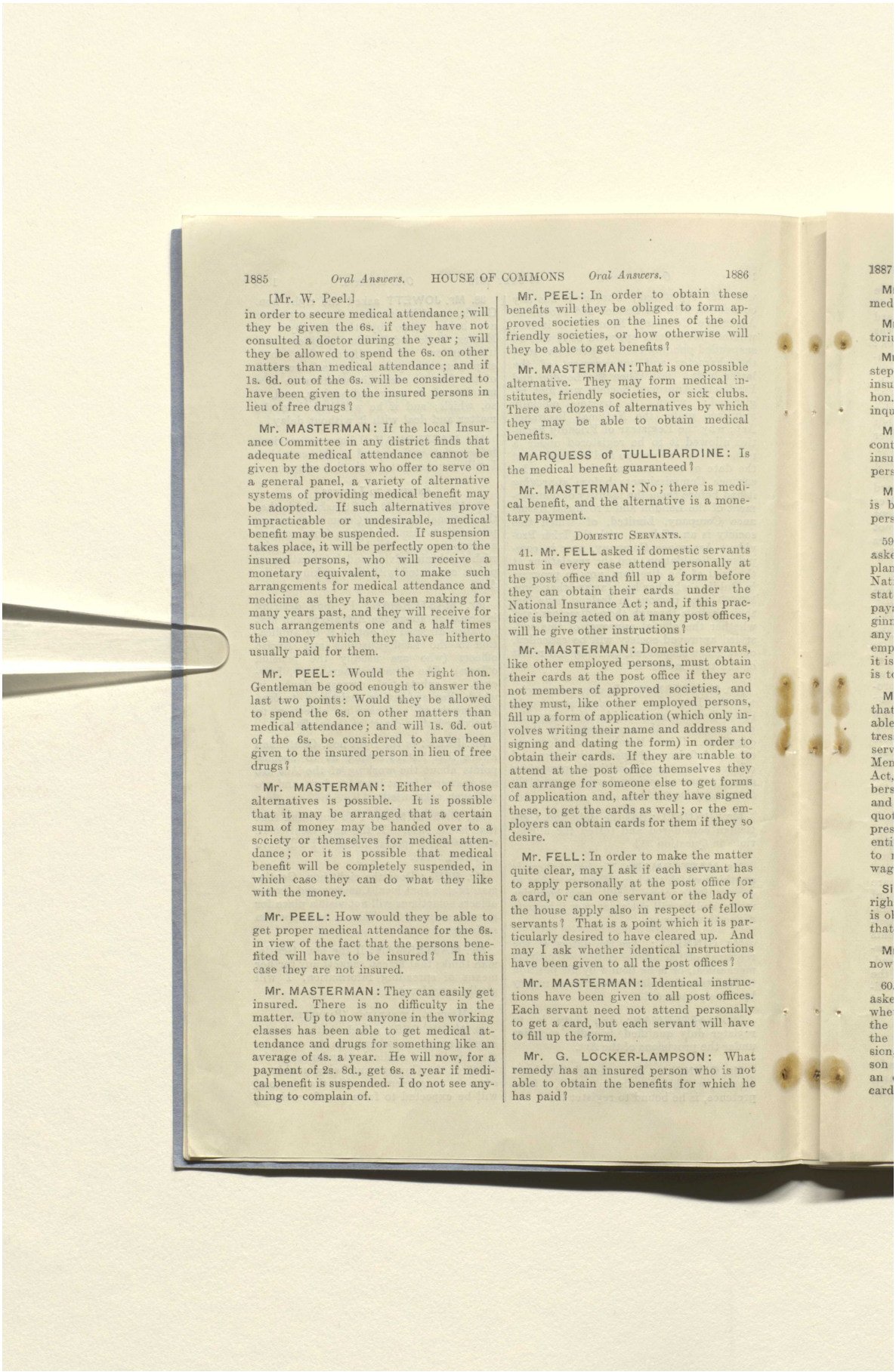

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[Mr. W. Peel.]

in order to secure medical attendance; will they be given the 6s. if they have not consulted a doctor during the year; will they be allowed to spend the 6s. on other matters than medical attendance; and if 1s. 6d. out of the 6s. will be considered to have been given to the insured persons in lieu of free drugs?

Mr. MASTERMAN: If the local Insurance Committee in any district finds that adequate medical attendance cannot be given by the doctors who offer to serve on a general panel, a variety of alternative systems of providing medical benefit may be adopted. If such alternatives prove impracticable or undesirable, medical benefit may be suspended. If suspension takes place, it will be perfectly open to the insured persons, who will receive a monetary equivalent, to make such arrangements for medical attendance and medicine as they have been making for many years past, and they will receive for such arrangements one and a half times the money which they have hitherto usually paid for them.

Mr. PEEL: Would the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to answer the last two points: Would they be allowed to spend the 6s. on other matters than medical attendance; and will 1s. 6d. out of the 6s. be considered to have been given to the insured person in lieu of free drugs?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Either of those alternatives is possible. It is possible that it may be arranged that a certain sum of money may be handed over to a society or themselves for medical attendance; or it is possible that medical benefit will be completely suspended, in which case they can do what they like with the money.

Mr. PEEL: How would they be able to get proper medical attendance for the 6s. in view of the fact that the persons benefited will have to be insured? In this case they are not insured.

Mr. MASTERMAN: They can easily get insured. There is no difficulty in the matter. Up to now anyone in the working classes has been able to get medical attendance and drugs for something like an average of 4s. a year. He will now, for a payment of 2s. 8d., get 6s. a year if medical benefit is suspended. I do not see anything to complain of.

Mr. PEEL: In order to obtain these benefits will they be obliged to form approved societies on the lines of the old friendly societies, or how otherwise will they be able to get benefits?

Mr. MASTERMAN: That is one possible alternative. They may form medical institutes, friendly societies, or sick clubs. There are dozens of alternatives by which they may be able to obtain medical benefits.

MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE: Is the medical benefit guaranteed?

Mr. MASTERMAN: No; there is medical benefit, and the alternative is a monetary payment.

DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

41. Mr. FELL asked if domestic servants must in every case attend personally at the post office and fill up a form before they can obtain their cards under the National Insurance Act; and, if this practice is being acted on at many post offices, will he give other instructions?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Domestic servants, like other employed persons, must obtain their cards at the post office if they are not members of approved societies, and they must, like other employed persons, fill up a form of application (which only involves writing their name and address and signing and dating the form) in order to obtain their cards. If they are unable to attend at the post office themselves they can arrange for someone else to get forms of application and, after they have signed these, to get the cards as well; or the employers can obtain cards for them if they so desire.

Mr. FELL: In order to make the matter quite clear, may I ask if each servant has to apply personally at the post office for a card, or can one servant or the lady of the house apply also in respect of fellow servants? That is a point which it is particularly desired to have cleared up. And may I ask whether identical instructions have been given to all the post offices?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Identical instructions have been given to all post offices. Each servant need not attend personally to get a card, but each servant will have to fill up the form.

Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON: What remedy has an insured person who is not able to obtain the benefits for which he has paid?

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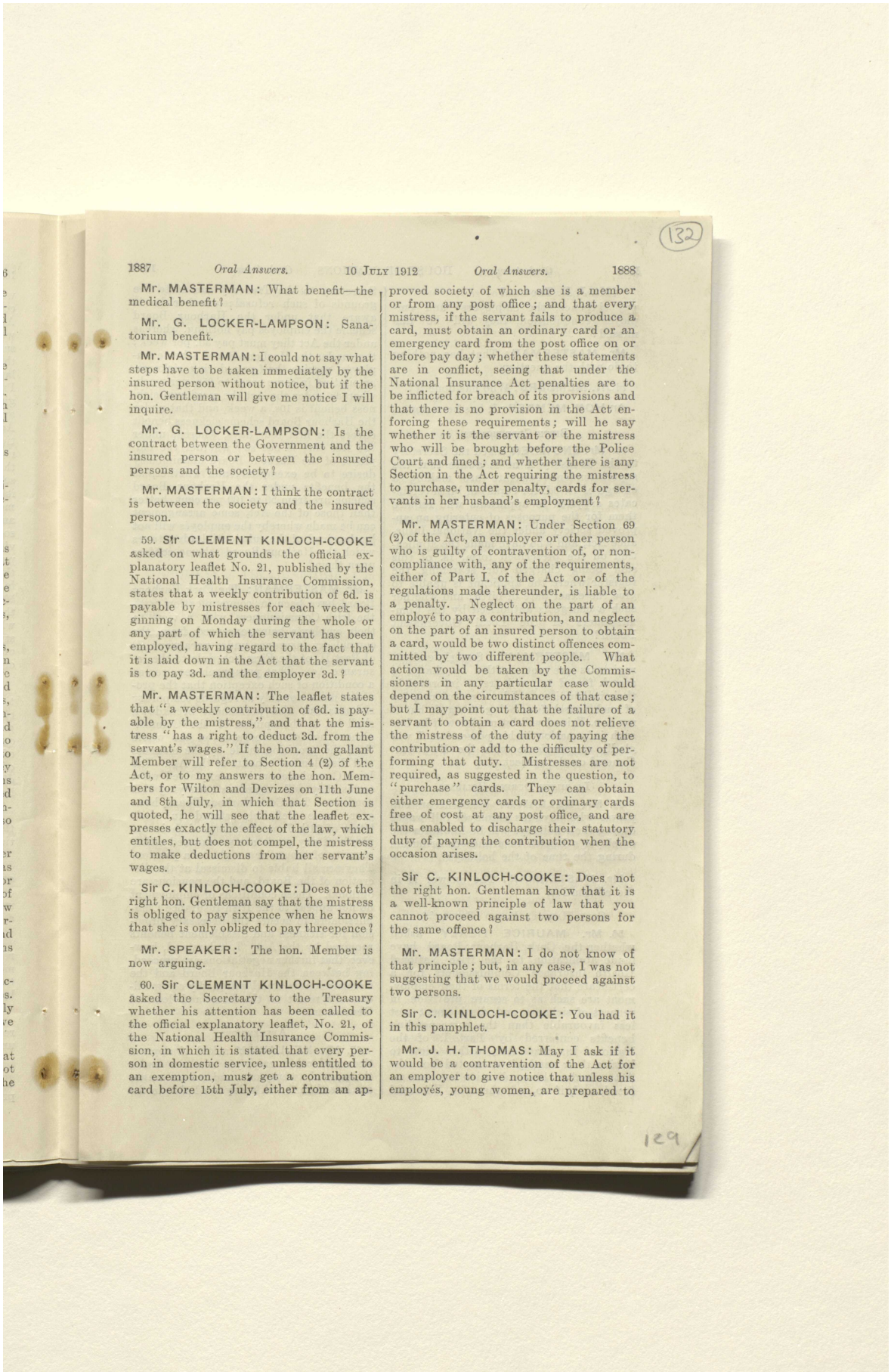

Mr. MASTERMAN: What benefit—the medical benefit?

Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON: Sanatorium benefit.

Mr. MASTERMAN: I could not say what steps have to be taken immediately by the insured person without notice, but if the hon. Gentleman will give me notice I will inquire.

Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON: Is the contract between the Government and the insured person or between the insured persons and the society?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I think the contract is between the society and the insured person.

59. Sir CLEMENT KINLOCH-COOKE asked on what grounds the official explanatory leaflet No. 21, published by the National Health Insurance Commission, states that a weekly contribution of 6d. is payable by mistresses for each week beginning on Monday during the whole or any part of which the servant has been employed, having regard to the fact that it is laid down in the Act that the servant is to pay 3d. and the employer 3d.?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The leaflet states that "a weekly contribution of 6d. is payable by the mistress," and that the mistress "has a right to deduct 3d. from the servant's wages." If the hon. and gallant Member will refer to Section 4 (2) of the Act, or to my answers to the hon. Members for Wilton and Devizes on 11th June and 8th July, in which that Section is quoted, he will see that the leaflet expresses exactly the effect of the law, which entitles, but does not compel, the mistress to make deductions from her servant's wages.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Does not the right hon. Gentleman say that the mistress is obliged to pay sixpence when he knows that she is only obliged to pay threepence?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now arguing.

60. Sir CLEMENT KINLOCH-COOKE asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the official explanatory leaflet, No. 21, of the National Health Insurance Commission, in which it is stated that every person in domestic service, unless entitled to an exemption, must get a contribution card before 15th July, either from an approved society of which she is a member or from any post office; and that every mistress, if the servant fails to produce a card, must obtain an ordinary card or an emergency card from the post office on or before pay day; whether these statements are in conflict, seeing that under the National Insurance Act penalties are to be inflicted for breach of its provisions and that there is no provision in the Act enforcing these requirements; will he say whether it is the servant or the mistress who will be brought before the Police Court and fined; and whether there is any Section in the Act requiring the mistress to purchase, under penalty, cards for servants in her husband's employment?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Under Section 69 (2) of the Act, an employer or other person who is guilty of contravention of, or non-compliance with, any of the requirements, either of Part I. of the Act or of the regulations made thereunder, is liable to a penalty. Neglect on the part of an employé to pay a contribution, and neglect on the part of an insured person to obtain a card, would be two distinct offences committed by two different people. What action would be taken by the Commissioners in any particular case would depend on the circumstances of that case; but I may point out that the failure of a servant to obtain a card does not relieve the mistress of the duty of paying the contribution or add to the difficulty of performing that duty. Mistresses are not required, as suggested in the question, to "purchase" cards. They can obtain either emergency cards or ordinary cards free of cost at any post office, and are thus enabled to discharge their statutory duty of paying the contribution when the occasion arises.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Does not the right hon. Gentleman know that it is a well-known principle of law that you cannot proceed against two persons for the same offence?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I do not know of that principle; but, in any case, I was not suggesting that we would proceed against two persons.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: You had it in this pamphlet.

Mr. J. H. THOMAS: May I ask if it would be a contravention of the Act for an employer to give notice that unless his employés, young women, are prepared to

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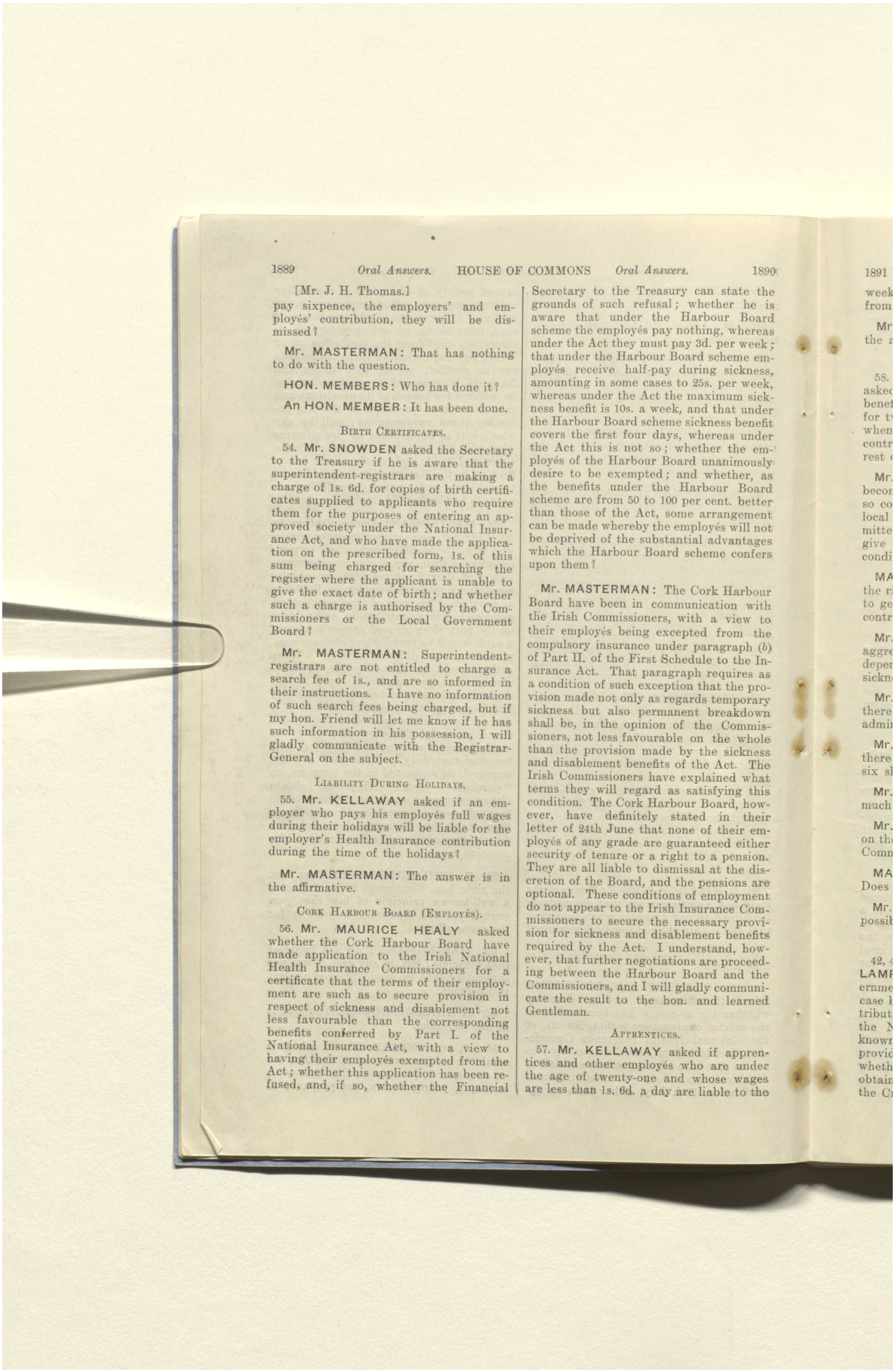

[Mr. J. H. Thomas.]

pay sixpence, the employers' and employés' contribution, they will be dismissed?

Mr. MASTERMAN: That has nothing to do with the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Who has done it?

An HON. MEMBER: It has been done.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES.

54. **Mr. SNOWDEN** asked the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that the superintendent-registrars are making a charge of 1s. 6d. for copies of birth certificates supplied to applicants who require them for the purposes of entering an approved society under the National Insurance Act, and who have made the application on the prescribed form, 1s. of this sum being charged for searching the register where the applicant is unable to give the exact date of birth; and whether such a charge is authorised by the Commissioners or the Local Government Board?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Superintendent-registrars are not entitled to charge a search fee of 1s., and are so informed in their instructions. I have no information of such search fees being charged, but if my hon. Friend will let me know if he has such information in his possession, I will gladly communicate with the Registrar-General on the subject.

LIABILITY DURING HOLIDAYS.

55. **Mr. KELLAWAY** asked if an employer who pays his employés full wages during their holidays will be liable for the employer's Health Insurance contribution during the time of the holidays?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The answer is in the affirmative.

CORK HARBOUR BOARD (EMPLOYÉS).

56. **Mr. MAURICE HEALY** asked whether the Cork Harbour Board have made application to the Irish National Health Insurance Commissioners for a certificate that the terms of their employment are such as to secure provision in respect of sickness and disablement not less favourable than the corresponding benefits conferred by Part I. of the National Insurance Act, with a view to having their employés exempted from the Act; whether this application has been refused, and, if so, whether the Financial Secretary to the Treasury can state the grounds of such refusal; whether he is aware that under the Harbour Board scheme the employés pay nothing, whereas under the Act they must pay 3d. per week; that under the Harbour Board scheme employés receive half-pay during sickness, amounting in some cases to 25s. per week, whereas under the Act the maximum sickness benefit is 10s. a week, and that under the Harbour Board scheme sickness benefit covers the first four days, whereas under the Act this is not so; whether the employés of the Harbour Board unanimously desire to be exempted; and whether, as the benefits under the Harbour Board scheme are from 50 to 100 per cent. better than those of the Act, some arrangement can be made whereby the employés will not be deprived of the substantial advantages which the Harbour Board scheme confers upon them?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The Cork Harbour Board have been in communication with the Irish Commissioners, with a view to their employés being excepted from the compulsory insurance under paragraph (*b*) of Part II. of the First Schedule to the Insurance Act. That paragraph requires as a condition of such exception that the provision made not only as regards temporary sickness but also permanent breakdown shall be, in the opinion of the Commissioners, not less favourable on the whole than the provision made by the sickness and disablement benefits of the Act. The Irish Commissioners have explained what terms they will regard as satisfying this condition. The Cork Harbour Board, however, have definitely stated in their letter of 24th June that none of their employés of any grade are guaranteed either security of tenure or a right to a pension. They are all liable to dismissal at the discretion of the Board, and the pensions are optional. These conditions of employment do not appear to the Irish Insurance Commissioners to secure the necessary provision for sickness and disablement benefits required by the Act. I understand, however, that further negotiations are proceeding between the Harbour Board and the Commissioners, and I will gladly communicate the result to the hon. and learned Gentleman.

APPRENTICES.

57. **Mr. KELLAWAY** asked if apprentices and other employés who are under the age of twenty-one and whose wages are less than 1s. 6d. a day are liable to the

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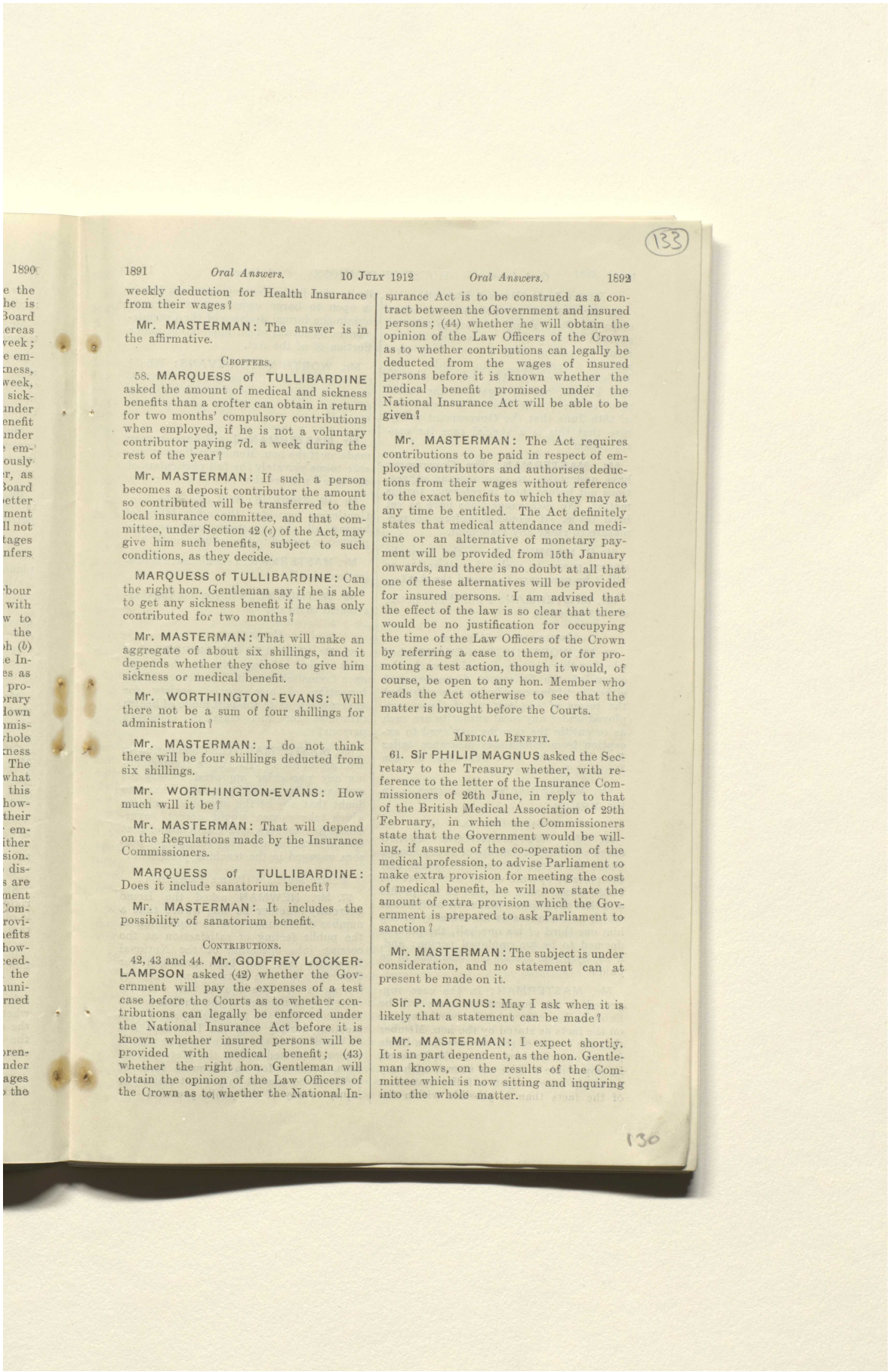

weekly deduction for Health Insurance from their wages?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The answer is in the affirmative.

CROFTERS.

58. **MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE** asked the amount of medical and sickness benefits than a crofter can obtain in return for two months' compulsory contributions when employed, if he is not a voluntary contributor paying 7d. a week during the rest of the year?

Mr. MASTERMAN: If such a person becomes a deposit contributor the amount so contributed will be transferred to the local insurance committee, and that committee, under Section 42 (*e*) of the Act, may give him such benefits, subject to such conditions, as they decide.

MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if he is able to get any sickness benefit if he has only contributed for two months?

Mr. MASTERMAN: That will make an aggregate of about six shillings, and it depends whether they chose to give him sickness or medical benefit.

Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: Will there not be a sum of four shillings for administration?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I do not think there will be four shillings deducted from six shillings.

Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: How much will it be?

Mr. MASTERMAN: That will depend on the Regulations made by the Insurance Commissioners.

MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE: Does it include sanatorium benefit?

Mr. MASTERMAN: It includes the possibility of sanatorium benefit.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

42, 43 and 44. **Mr. GODFREY LOCKER-LAMPSON** asked (42) whether the Government will pay the expenses of a test case before the Courts as to whether contributions can legally be enforced under the National Insurance Act before it is known whether insured persons will be provided with medical benefit; (43) whether the right hon. Gentleman will obtain the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to whether the National Insurance Act is to be construed as a contract between the Government and insured persons; (44) whether he will obtain the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to whether contributions can legally be deducted from the wages of insured persons before it is known whether the medical benefit promised under the National Insurance Act will be able to be given?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The Act requires contributions to be paid in respect of employed contributors and authorises deductions from their wages without reference to the exact benefits to which they may at any time be entitled. The Act definitely states that medical attendance and medicine or an alternative of monetary payment will be provided from 15th January onwards, and there is no doubt at all that one of these alternatives will be provided for insured persons. I am advised that the effect of the law is so clear that there would be no justification for occupying the time of the Law Officers of the Crown by referring a case to them, or for promoting a test action, though it would, of course, be open to any hon. Member who reads the Act otherwise to see that the matter is brought before the Courts.

MEDICAL BENEFIT.

61. **Sir PHILIP MAGNUS** asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the letter of the Insurance Commissioners of 26th June, in reply to that of the British Medical Association of 29th February, in which the Commissioners state that the Government would be willing, if assured of the co-operation of the medical profession, to advise Parliament to make extra provision for meeting the cost of medical benefit, he will now state the amount of extra provision which the Government is prepared to ask Parliament to sanction?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The subject is under consideration, and no statement can at present be made on it.

Sir P. MAGNUS: May I ask when it is likely that a statement can be made?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I expect shortly. It is in part dependent, as the hon. Gentleman knows, on the results of the Committee which is now sitting and inquiring into the whole matter.

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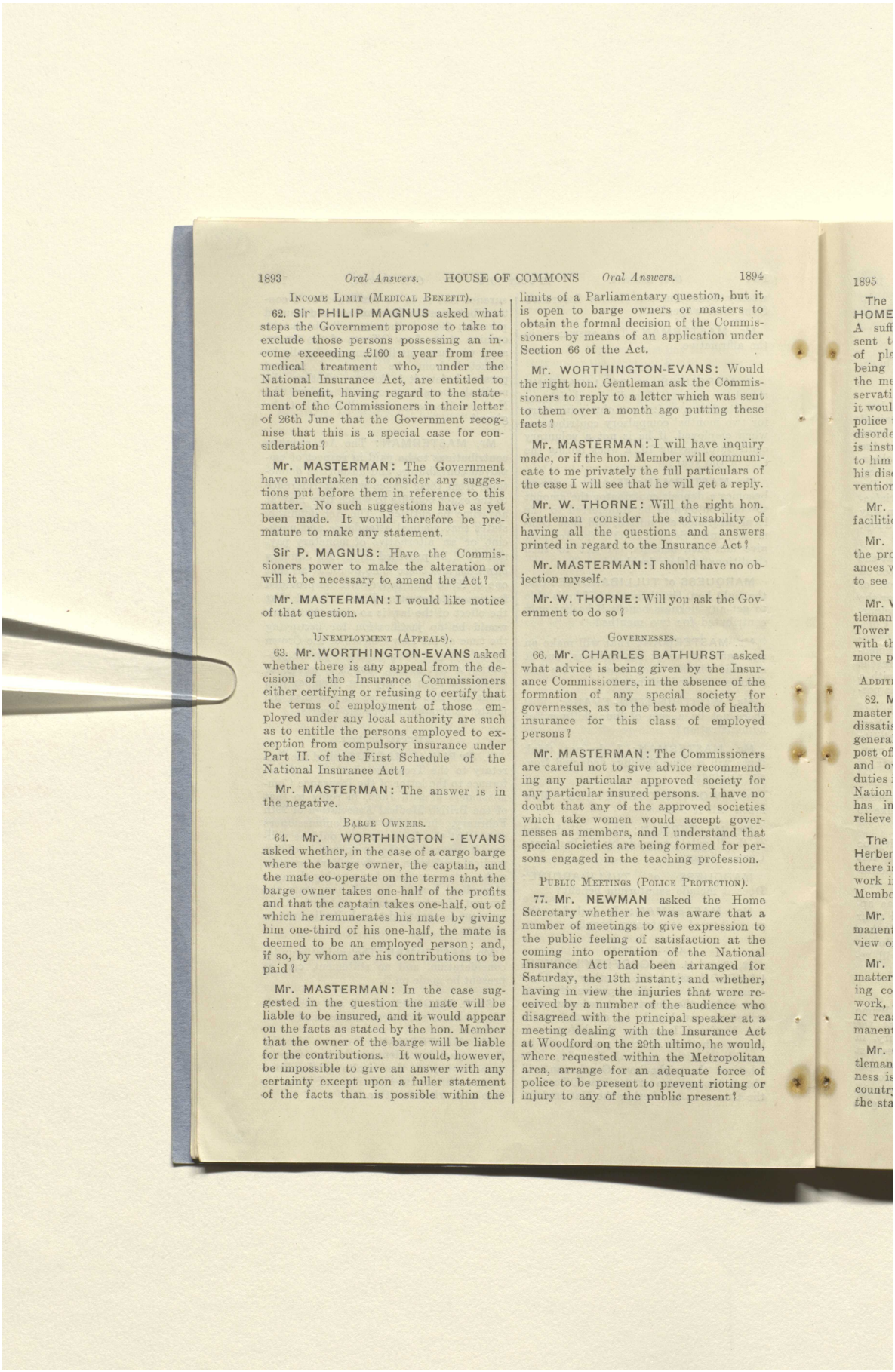

INCOME LIMIT (MEDICAL BENEFIT).

62. **Sir PHILIP MAGNUS** asked what steps the Government propose to take to exclude those persons possessing an income exceeding £160 a year from free medical treatment who, under the National Insurance Act, are entitled to that benefit, having regard to the statement of the Commissioners in their letter of 26th June that the Government recognise that this is a special case for consideration?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The Government have undertaken to consider any suggestions put before them in reference to this matter. No such suggestions have as yet been made. It would therefore be premature to make any statement.

Sir P. MAGNUS: Have the Commissioners power to make the alteration or will it be necessary to amend the Act?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I would like notice of that question.

UNEMPLOYMENT (APPEALS).

63. **Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS** asked whether there is any appeal from the decision of the Insurance Commissioners either certifying or refusing to certify that the terms of employment of those employed under any local authority are such as to entitle the persons employed to exception from compulsory insurance under Part II. of the First Schedule of the National Insurance Act?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The answer is in the negative.

BARGE OWNERS.

64. **Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS** asked whether, in the case of a cargo barge where the barge owner, the captain, and the mate co-operate on the terms that the barge owner takes one-half of the profits and that the captain takes one-half, out of which he remunerates his mate by giving him one-third of his one-half, the mate is deemed to be an employed person; and, if so, by whom are his contributions to be paid?

Mr. MASTERMAN: In the case suggested in the question the mate will be liable to be insured, and it would appear on the facts as stated by the hon. Member that the owner of the barge will be liable for the contributions. It would, however, be impossible to give an answer with any certainty except upon a fuller statement of the facts than is possible within the limits of a Parliamentary question, but it is open to barge owners or masters to obtain the formal decision of the Commissioners by means of an application under Section 66 of the Act.

Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: Would the right hon. Gentleman ask the Commissioners to reply to a letter which was sent to them over a month ago putting these facts?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I will have inquiry made, or if the hon. Member will communicate to me privately the full particulars of the case I will see that he will get a reply.

Mr. W. THORNE: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of having all the questions and answers printed in regard to the Insurance Act?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I should have no objection myself.

Mr. W. THORNE: Will you ask the Government to do so?

GOVERNESSES.

66. **Mr. CHARLES BATHURST** asked what advice is being given by the Insurance Commissioners, in the absence of the formation of any special society for governesses, as to the best mode of health insurance for this class of employed persons?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The Commissioners are careful not to give advice recommending any particular approved society for any particular insured persons. I have no doubt that any of the approved societies which take women would accept governesses as members, and I understand that special societies are being formed for persons engaged in the teaching profession.

PUBLIC MEETINGS (POLICE PROTECTION).

77. **Mr. NEWMAN** asked the Home Secretary whether he was aware that a number of meetings to give expression to the public feeling of satisfaction at the coming into operation of the National Insurance Act had been arranged for Saturday, the 13th instant; and whether, having in view the injuries that were received by a number of the audience who disagreed with the principal speaker at a meeting dealing with the Insurance Act at Woodford on the 29th ultimo, he would, where requested within the Metropolitan area, arrange for an adequate force of police to be present to prevent rioting or injury to any of the public present?

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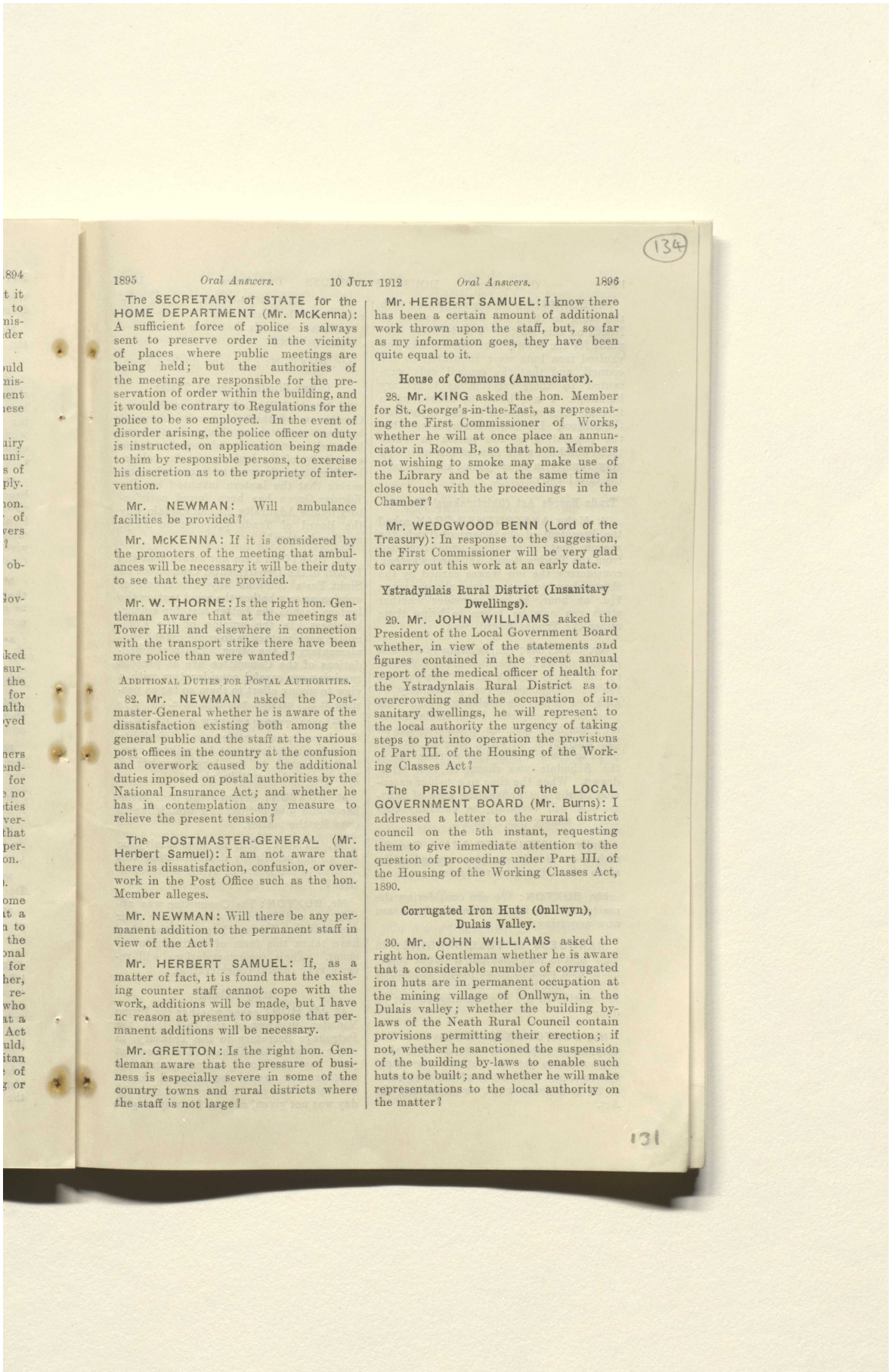

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. McKenna): A sufficient force of police is always sent to preserve order in the vicinity of places where public meetings are being held; but the authorities of the meeting are responsible for the preservation of order within the building, and it would be contrary to Regulations for the police to be so employed. In the event of disorder arising, the police officer on duty is instructed, on application being made to him by responsible persons, to exercise his discretion as to the propriety of intervention.

Mr. NEWMAN: Will ambulance facilities be provided?

Mr. McKENNA: If it is considered by the promoters of the meeting that ambulances will be necessary it will be their duty to see that they are provided.

Mr. W. THORNE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that at the meetings at Tower Hill and elsewhere in connection with the transport strike there have been more police than were wanted?

ADDITIONAL DUTIES FOR POSTAL AUTHORITIES.

82. Mr. NEWMAN asked the Postmaster-General whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction existing both among the general public and the staff at the various post offices in the country at the confusion and overwork caused by the additional duties imposed on postal authorities by the National Insurance Act; and whether he has in contemplation any measure to relieve the present tension?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Herbert Samuel): I am not aware that there is dissatisfaction, confusion, or overwork in the Post Office such as the hon. Member alleges.

Mr. NEWMAN: Will there be any permanent addition to the permanent staff in view of the Act?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: If, as a matter of fact, it is found that the existing counter staff cannot cope with the work, additions will be made, but I have no reason at present to suppose that permanent additions will be necessary.

Mr. GRETTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the pressure of business is especially severe in some of the country towns and rural districts where the staff is not large?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: I know there has been a certain amount of additional work thrown upon the staff, but, so far as my information goes, they have been quite equal to it.

House of Commons (Annunciator).

28. Mr. KING asked the hon. Member for St. George's-in-the-East, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will at once place an annunciator in Room B, so that hon. Members not wishing to smoke may make use of the Library and be at the same time in close touch with the proceedings in the Chamber?

Mr. WEDGWOOD BENN (Lord of the Treasury): In response to the suggestion, the First Commissioner will be very glad to carry out this work at an early date.

Ystradynlais Rural District (Insanitary Dwellings).

29. Mr. JOHN WILLIAMS asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the statements and figures contained in the recent annual report of the medical officer of health for the Ystradynlais Rural District as to overcrowding and the occupation of insanitary dwellings, he will represent to the local authority the urgency of taking steps to put into operation the provisions of Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Burns): I addressed a letter to the rural district council on the 5th instant, requesting them to give immediate attention to the question of proceeding under Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.

Corrugated Iron Huts (Onllwyn), Dulais Valley.

30. Mr. JOHN WILLIAMS asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that a considerable number of corrugated iron huts are in permanent occupation at the mining village of Onllwyn, in the Dulais valley; whether the building by-laws of the Neath Rural Council contain provisions permitting their erection; if not, whether he sanctioned the suspension of the building by-laws to enable such huts to be built; and whether he will make representations to the local authority on the matter?

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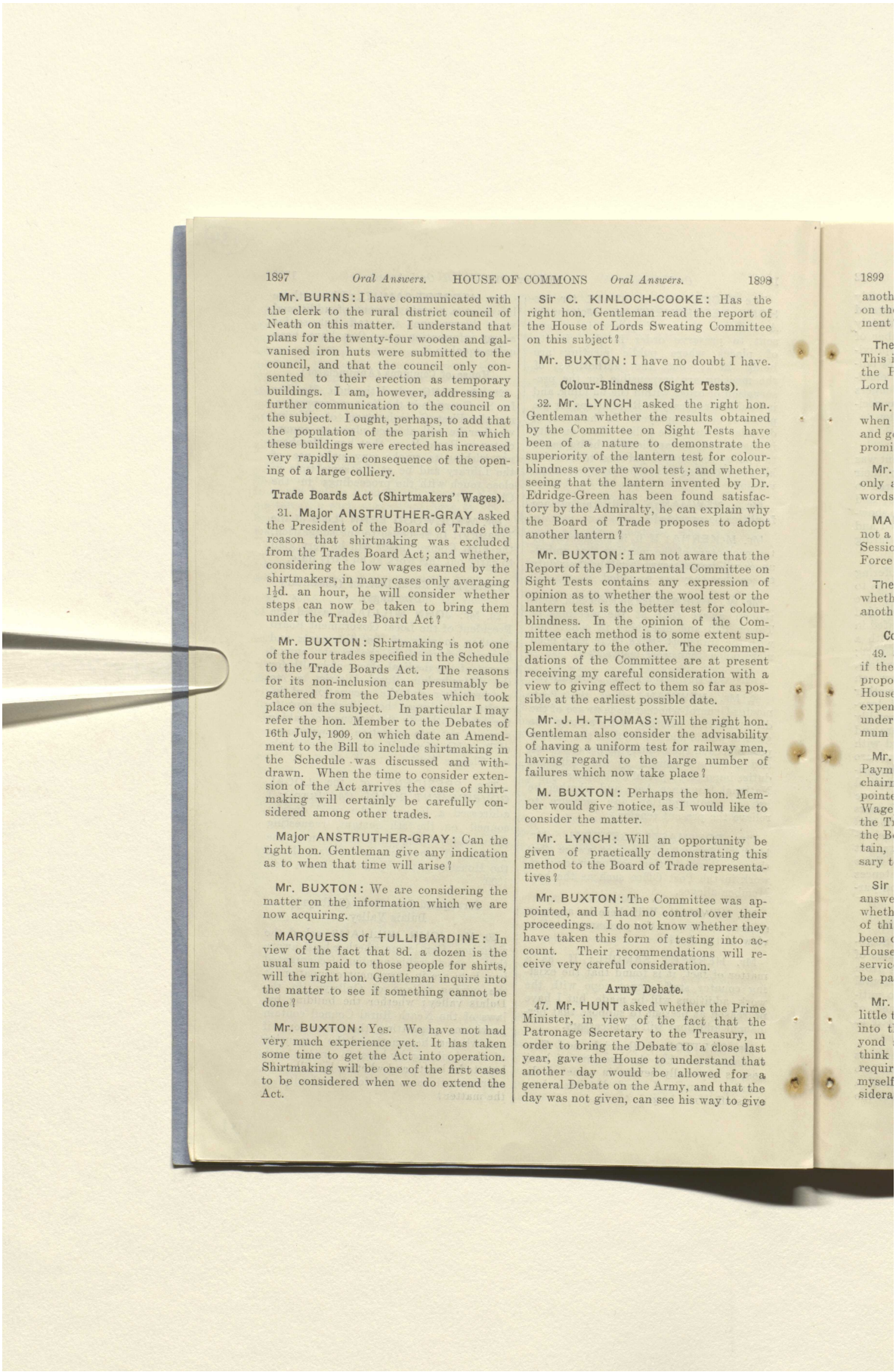

Mr. BURNS: I have communicated with the clerk to the rural district council of Neath on this matter. I understand that plans for the twenty-four wooden and galvanised iron huts were submitted to the council, and that the council only consented to their erection as temporary buildings. I am, however, addressing a further communication to the council on the subject. I ought, perhaps, to add that the population of the parish in which these buildings were erected has increased very rapidly in consequence of the opening of a large colliery.

Trade Boards Act (Shirtmakers' Wages).

31. Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY asked the President of the Board of Trade the reason that shirtmaking was excluded from the Trades Board Act; and whether, considering the low wages earned by the shirtmakers, in many cases only averaging 1½d. an hour, he will consider whether steps can now be taken to bring them under the Trades Board Act?

Mr. BUXTON: Shirtmaking is not one of the four trades specified in the Schedule to the Trade Boards Act. The reasons for its non-inclusion can presumably be gathered from the Debates which took place on the subject. In particular I may refer the hon. Member to the Debates of 16th July, 1909, on which date an Amendment to the Bill to include shirtmaking in the Schedule was discussed and withdrawn. When the time to consider extension of the Act arrives the case of shirtmaking will certainly be carefully considered among other trades.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman give any indication as to when that time will arise?

Mr. BUXTON: We are considering the matter on the information which we are now acquiring.

MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE: In view of the fact that 8d. a dozen is the usual sum paid to those people for shirts, will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the matter to see if something cannot be done?

Mr. BUXTON: Yes. We have not had very much experience yet. It has taken some time to get the Act into operation. Shirtmaking will be one of the first cases to be considered when we do extend the Act.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Has the right hon. Gentleman read the report of the House of Lords Sweating Committee on this subject?

Mr. BUXTON: I have no doubt I have.

Colour-Blindness (Sight Tests).

32. Mr. LYNCH asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the results obtained by the Committee on Sight Tests have been of a nature to demonstrate the superiority of the lantern test for colour-blindness over the wool test; and whether, seeing that the lantern invented by Dr. Edridge-Green has been found satisfactory by the Admiralty, he can explain why the Board of Trade proposes to adopt another lantern?

Mr. BUXTON: I am not aware that the Report of the Departmental Committee on Sight Tests contains any expression of opinion as to whether the wool test or the lantern test is the better test for colour-blindness. In the opinion of the Committee each method is to some extent supplementary to the other. The recommendations of the Committee are at present receiving my careful consideration with a view to giving effect to them so far as possible at the earliest possible date.

Mr. J. H. THOMAS: Will the right hon. Gentleman also consider the advisability of having a uniform test for railway men, having regard to the large number of failures which now take place?

M. BUXTON: Perhaps the hon. Member would give notice, as I would like to consider the matter.

Mr. LYNCH: Will an opportunity be given of practically demonstrating this method to the Board of Trade representatives?

Mr. BUXTON: The Committee was appointed, and I had no control over their proceedings. I do not know whether they have taken this form of testing into account. Their recommendations will receive very careful consideration.

Army Debate.

47. Mr. HUNT asked whether the Prime Minister, in view of the fact that the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, in order to bring the Debate to a close last year, gave the House to understand that another day would be allowed for a general Debate on the Army, and that the day was not given, can see his way to give

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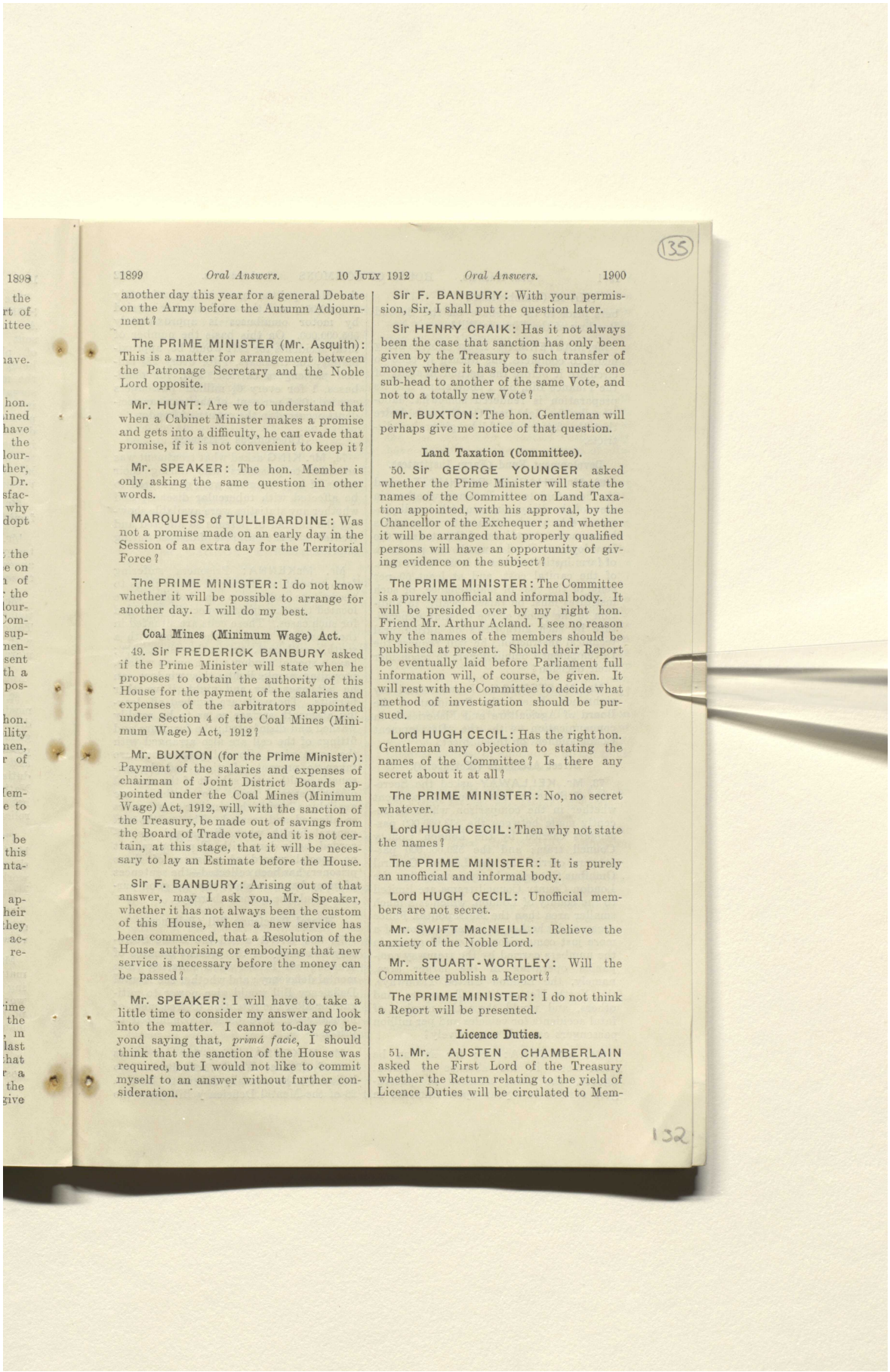

another day this year for a general Debate on the Army before the Autumn Adjournment?

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Asquith): This is a matter for arrangement between the Patronage Secretary and the Noble Lord opposite.

Mr. HUNT: Are we to understand that when a Cabinet Minister makes a promise and gets into a difficulty, he can evade that promise, if it is not convenient to keep it?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is only asking the same question in other words.

MARQUESS of TULLIBARDINE: Was not a promise made on an early day in the Session of an extra day for the Territorial Force?

The PRIME MINISTER: I do not know whether it will be possible to arrange for another day. I will do my best.

Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act.

49. Sir FREDERICK BANBURY asked if the Prime Minister will state when he proposes to obtain the authority of this House for the payment of the salaries and expenses of the arbitrators appointed under Section 4 of the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, 1912?

Mr. BUXTON (for the Prime Minister): Payment of the salaries and expenses of chairman of Joint District Boards appointed under the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, 1912, will, with the sanction of the Treasury, be made out of savings from the Board of Trade vote, and it is not certain, at this stage, that it will be necessary to lay an Estimate before the House.

Sir F. BANBURY: Arising out of that answer, may I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it has not always been the custom of this House, when a new service has been commenced, that a Resolution of the House authorising or embodying that new service is necessary before the money can be passed?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will have to take a little time to consider my answer and look into the matter. I cannot to-day go beyond saying that, *primâ facie*, I should think that the sanction of the House was required, but I would not like to commit myself to an answer without further consideration.

Sir F. BANBURY: With your permission, Sir, I shall put the question later.

Sir HENRY CRAIK: Has it not always been the case that sanction has only been given by the Treasury to such transfer of money where it has been from under one sub-head to another of the same Vote, and not to a totally new Vote?

Mr. BUXTON: The hon. Gentleman will perhaps give me notice of that question.

Land Taxation (Committee).

50. Sir GEORGE YOUNGER asked whether the Prime Minister will state the names of the Committee on Land Taxation appointed, with his approval, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and whether it will be arranged that properly qualified persons will have an opportunity of giving evidence on the subject?

The PRIME MINISTER: The Committee is a purely unofficial and informal body. It will be presided over by my right hon. Friend Mr. Arthur Acland. I see no reason why the names of the members should be published at present. Should their Report be eventually laid before Parliament full information will, of course, be given. It will rest with the Committee to decide what method of investigation should be pursued.

Lord HUGH CECIL: Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to stating the names of the Committee? Is there any secret about it at all?

The PRIME MINISTER: No, no secret whatever.

Lord HUGH CECIL: Then why not state the names?

The PRIME MINISTER: It is purely an unofficial and informal body.

Lord HUGH CECIL: Unofficial members are not secret.

Mr. SWIFT MacNEILL: Relieve the anxiety of the Noble Lord.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY: Will the Committee publish a Report?

The PRIME MINISTER: I do not think a Report will be presented.

Licence Duties.

51. Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Return relating to the yield of Licence Duties will be circulated to Mem-

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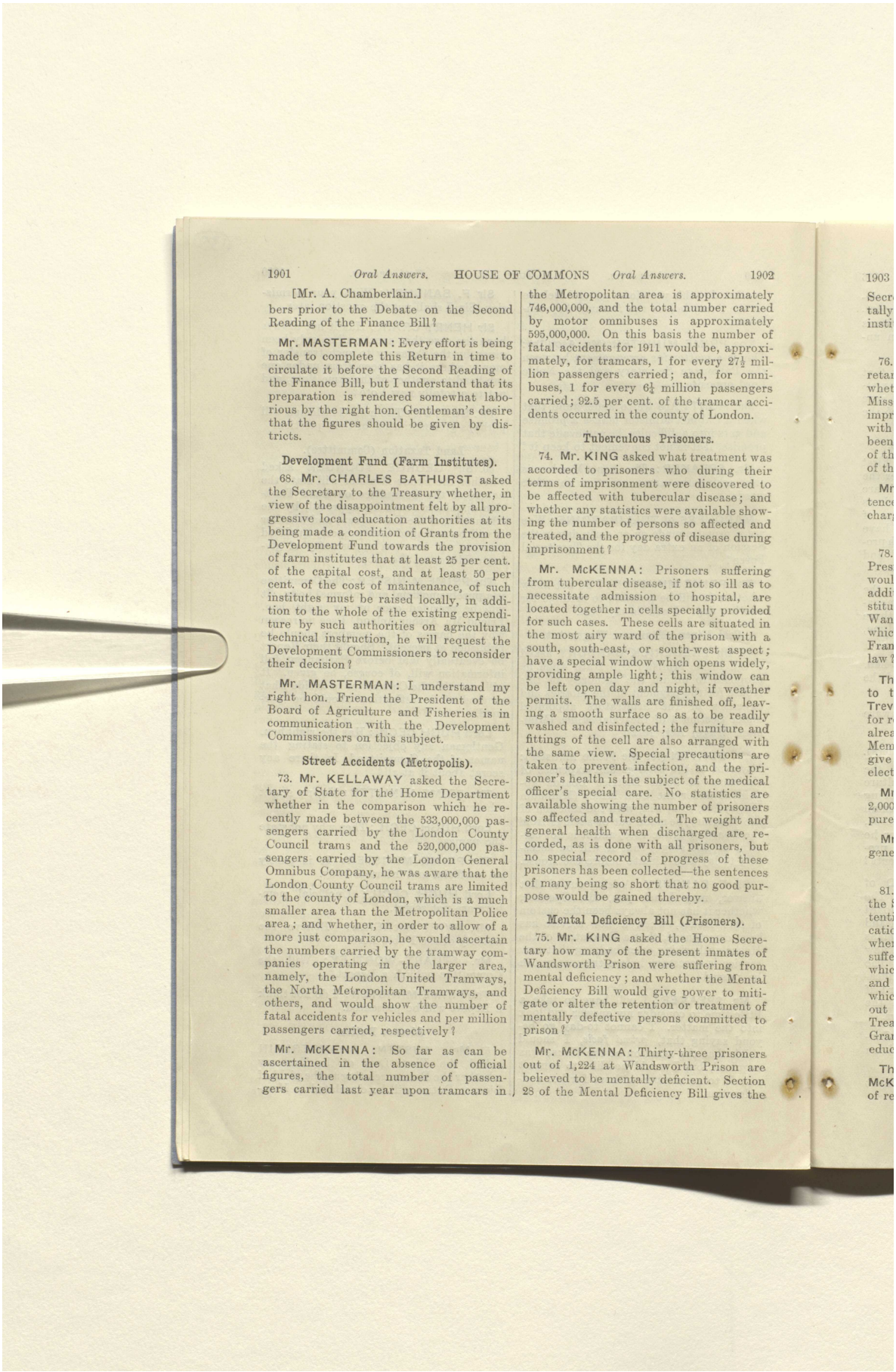

1901 *Oral Answers.* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Oral Answers.* 1902

[Mr. A. Chamberlain.]

bers prior to the Debate on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Every effort is being made to complete this Return in time to circulate it before the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, but I understand that its preparation is rendered somewhat laborious by the right hon. Gentleman's desire that the figures should be given by districts.

Development Fund (Farm Institutes).

68. **Mr. CHARLES BATHURST** asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the disappointment felt by all progressive local education authorities at its being made a condition of Grants from the Development Fund towards the provision of farm institutes that at least 25 per cent. of the capital cost, and at least 50 per cent. of the cost of maintenance, of such institutes must be raised locally, in addition to the whole of the existing expenditure by such authorities on agricultural technical instruction, he will request the Development Commissioners to reconsider their decision?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I understand my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries is in communication with the Development Commissioners on this subject.

Street Accidents (Metropolis).

73. **Mr. KELLAWAY** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether in the comparison which he recently made between the 533,000,000 passengers carried by the London County Council trams and the 520,000,000 passengers carried by the London General Omnibus Company, he was aware that the London County Council trams are limited to the county of London, which is a much smaller area than the Metropolitan Police area; and whether, in order to allow of a more just comparison, he would ascertain the numbers carried by the tramway companies operating in the larger area, namely, the London United Tramways, the North Metropolitan Tramways, and others, and would show the number of fatal accidents for vehicles and per million passengers carried, respectively?

Mr. McKENNA: So far as can be ascertained in the absence of official figures, the total number of passengers carried last year upon tramcars in the Metropolitan area is approximately 746,000,000, and the total number carried by motor omnibuses is approximately 595,000,000. On this basis the number of fatal accidents for 1911 would be, approximately, for tramcars, 1 for every 27½ million passengers carried; and, for omnibuses, 1 for every 6¼ million passengers carried; 92.5 per cent. of the tramcar accidents occurred in the county of London.

Tuberculous Prisoners.

74. **Mr. KING** asked what treatment was accorded to prisoners who during their terms of imprisonment were discovered to be affected with tubercular disease; and whether any statistics were available showing the number of persons so affected and treated, and the progress of disease during imprisonment?

Mr. McKENNA: Prisoners suffering from tubercular disease, if not so ill as to necessitate admission to hospital, are located together in cells specially provided for such cases. These cells are situated in the most airy ward of the prison with a south, south-east, or south-west aspect; have a special window which opens widely, providing ample light; this window can be left open day and night, if weather permits. The walls are finished off, leaving a smooth surface so as to be readily washed and disinfected; the furniture and fittings of the cell are also arranged with the same view. Special precautions are taken to prevent infection, and the prisoner's health is the subject of the medical officer's special care. No statistics are available showing the number of prisoners so affected and treated. The weight and general health when discharged are recorded, as is done with all prisoners, but no special record of progress of these prisoners has been collected—the sentences of many being so short that no good purpose would be gained thereby.

Mental Deficiency Bill (Prisoners).

75. **Mr. KING** asked the Home Secretary how many of the present inmates of Wandsworth Prison were suffering from mental deficiency; and whether the Mental Deficiency Bill would give power to mitigate or alter the retention or treatment of mentally defective persons committed to prison?

Mr. McKENNA: Thirty-three prisoners out of 1,224 at Wandsworth Prison are believed to be mentally deficient. Section 28 of the Mental Deficiency Bill gives the

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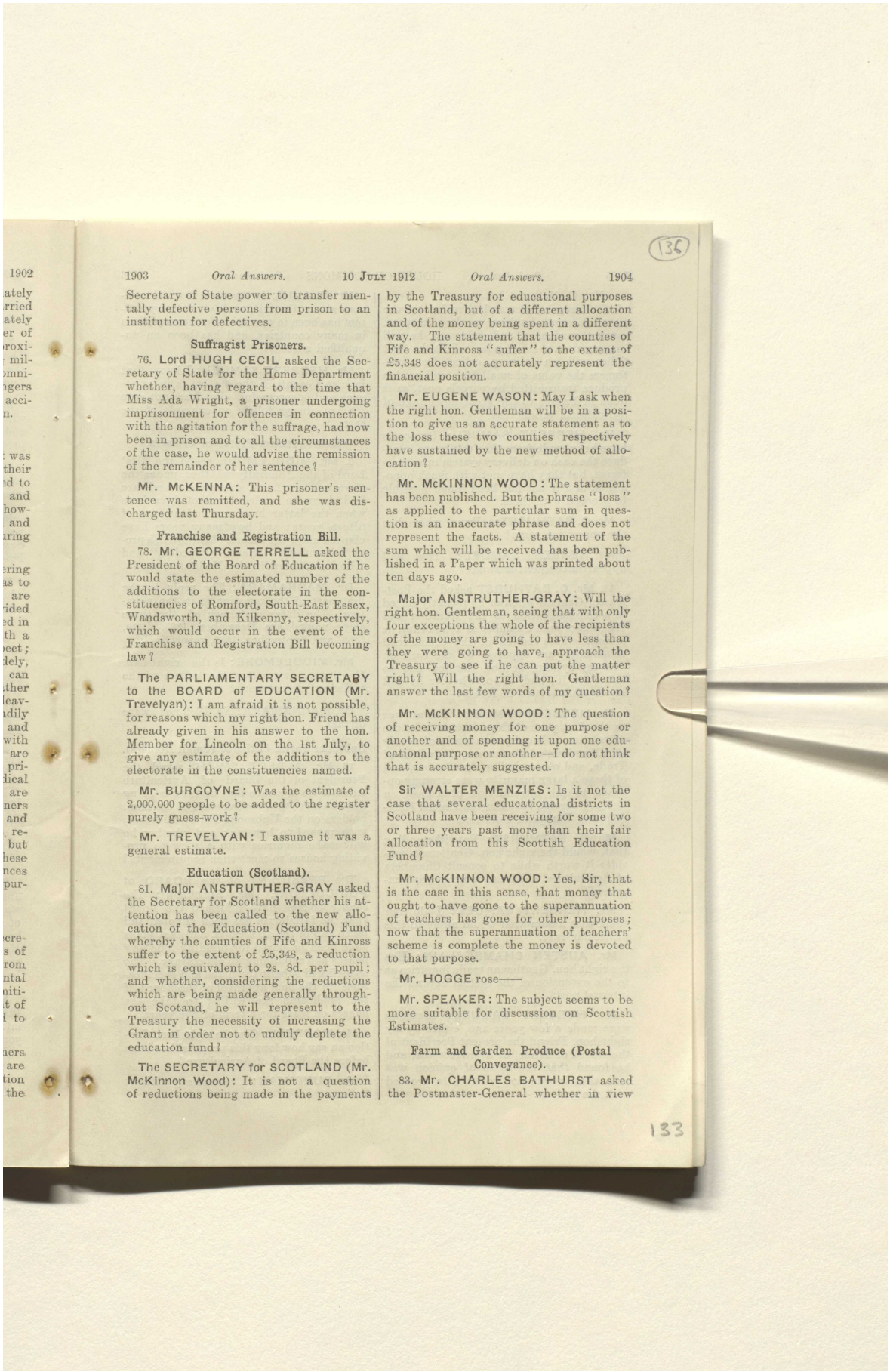

Secretary of State power to transfer mentally defective persons from prison to an institution for defectives.

Suffragist Prisoners.

76. Lord HUGH CECIL asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the time that Miss Ada Wright, a prisoner undergoing imprisonment for offences in connection with the agitation for the suffrage, had now been in prison and to all the circumstances of the case, he would advise the remission of the remainder of her sentence?

Mr. McKENNA: This prisoner's sentence was remitted, and she was discharged last Thursday.

Franchise and Registration Bill.

78. Mr. GEORGE TERRELL asked the President of the Board of Education if he would state the estimated number of the additions to the electorate in the constituencies of Romford, South-East Essex, Wandsworth, and Kilkenny, respectively, which would occur in the event of the Franchise and Registration Bill becoming law?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Trevelyan): I am afraid it is not possible, for reasons which my right hon. Friend has already given in his answer to the hon. Member for Lincoln on the 1st July, to give any estimate of the additions to the electorate in the constituencies named.

Mr. BURGOYNE: Was the estimate of 2,000,000 people to be added to the register purely guess-work?

Mr. TREVELYAN: I assume it was a general estimate.

Education (Scotland).

81. Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY asked the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the new allocation of the Education (Scotland) Fund whereby the counties of Fife and Kinross suffer to the extent of £5,348, a reduction which is equivalent to 2s. 8d. per pupil; and whether, considering the reductions which are being made generally throughout Scotand, he will represent to the Treasury the necessity of increasing the Grant in order not to unduly deplete the education fund?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. McKinnon Wood): It is not a question of reductions being made in the payments by the Treasury for educational purposes in Scotland, but of a different allocation and of the money being spent in a different way. The statement that the counties of Fife and Kinross "suffer" to the extent of £5,348 does not accurately represent the financial position.

Mr. EUGENE WASON: May I ask when the right hon. Gentleman will be in a position to give us an accurate statement as to the loss these two counties respectively have sustained by the new method of allocation?

Mr. McKINNON WOOD: The statement has been published. But the phrase "loss" as applied to the particular sum in question is an inaccurate phrase and does not represent the facts. A statement of the sum which will be received has been published in a Paper which was printed about ten days ago.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman, seeing that with only four exceptions the whole of the recipients of the money are going to have less than they were going to have, approach the Treasury to see if he can put the matter right? Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last few words of my question?

Mr. McKINNON WOOD: The question of receiving money for one purpose or another and of spending it upon one educational purpose or another—I do not think that is accurately suggested.

Sir WALTER MENZIES: Is it not the case that several educational districts in Scotland have been receiving for some two or three years past more than their fair allocation from this Scottish Education Fund?

Mr. McKINNON WOOD: Yes, Sir, that is the case in this sense, that money that ought to have gone to the superannuation of teachers has gone for other purposes; now that the superannuation of teachers' scheme is complete the money is devoted to that purpose.

Mr. HOGGE rose——

Mr. SPEAKER: The subject seems to be more suitable for discussion on Scottish Estimates.

Farm and Garden Produce (Postal Conveyance).

83. Mr. CHARLES BATHURST asked the Postmaster-General whether in view

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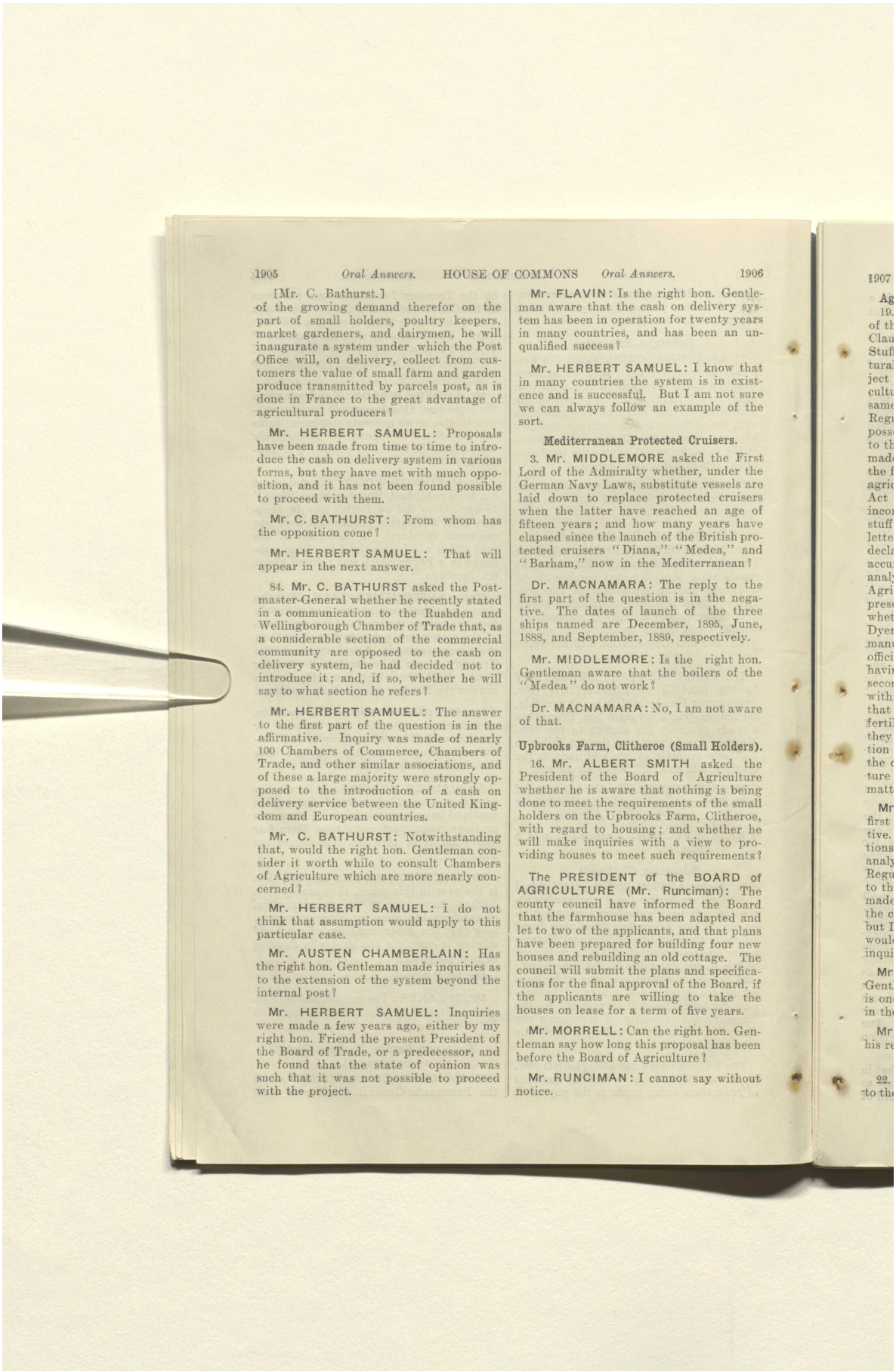

[Mr. C. Bathurst.]
of the growing demand therefor on the part of small holders, poultry keepers, market gardeners, and dairymen, he will inaugurate a system under which the Post Office will, on delivery, collect from customers the value of small farm and garden produce transmitted by parcels post, as is done in France to the great advantage of agricultural producers?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: Proposals have been made from time to time to introduce the cash on delivery system in various forms, but they have met with much opposition, and it has not been found possible to proceed with them.

Mr. C. BATHURST: From whom has the opposition come?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: That will appear in the next answer.

84. Mr. C. BATHURST asked the Postmaster-General whether he recently stated in a communication to the Rushden and Wellingborough Chamber of Trade that, as a considerable section of the commercial community are opposed to the cash on delivery system, he had decided not to introduce it; and, if so, whether he will say to what section he refers?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. Inquiry was made of nearly 100 Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Trade, and other similar associations, and of these a large majority were strongly opposed to the introduction of a cash on delivery service between the United Kingdom and European countries.

Mr. C. BATHURST: Notwithstanding that, would the right hon. Gentleman consider it worth while to consult Chambers of Agriculture which are more nearly concerned?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: I do not think that assumption would apply to this particular case.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Has the right hon. Gentleman made inquiries as to the extension of the system beyond the internal post?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: Inquiries were made a few years ago, either by my right hon. Friend the present President of the Board of Trade, or a predecessor, and he found that the state of opinion was such that it was not possible to proceed with the project.

Mr. FLAVIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the cash on delivery system has been in operation for twenty years in many countries, and has been an unqualified success?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: I know that in many countries the system is in existence and is successful. But I am not sure we can always follow an example of the sort.

Mediterranean Protected Cruisers.

3. Mr. MIDDLEMORE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, under the German Navy Laws, substitute vessels are laid down to replace protected cruisers when the latter have reached an age of fifteen years; and how many years have elapsed since the launch of the British protected cruisers "Diana," "Medea," and "Barham," now in the Mediterranean?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The reply to the first part of the question is in the negative. The dates of launch of the three ships named are December, 1895, June, 1888, and September, 1889, respectively.

Mr. MIDDLEMORE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the boilers of the "Medea" do not work?

Dr. MACNAMARA: No, I am not aware of that.

Upbrooks Farm, Clitheroe (Small Holders).

16. Mr. ALBERT SMITH asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that nothing is being done to meet the requirements of the small holders on the Upbrooks Farm, Clitheroe, with regard to housing; and whether he will make inquiries with a view to providing houses to meet such requirements?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Runciman): The county council have informed the Board that the farmhouse has been adapted and let to two of the applicants, and that plans have been prepared for building four new houses and rebuilding an old cottage. The council will submit the plans and specifications for the final approval of the Board, if the applicants are willing to take the houses on lease for a term of five years.

Mr. MORRELL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how long this proposal has been before the Board of Agriculture?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I cannot say without notice.

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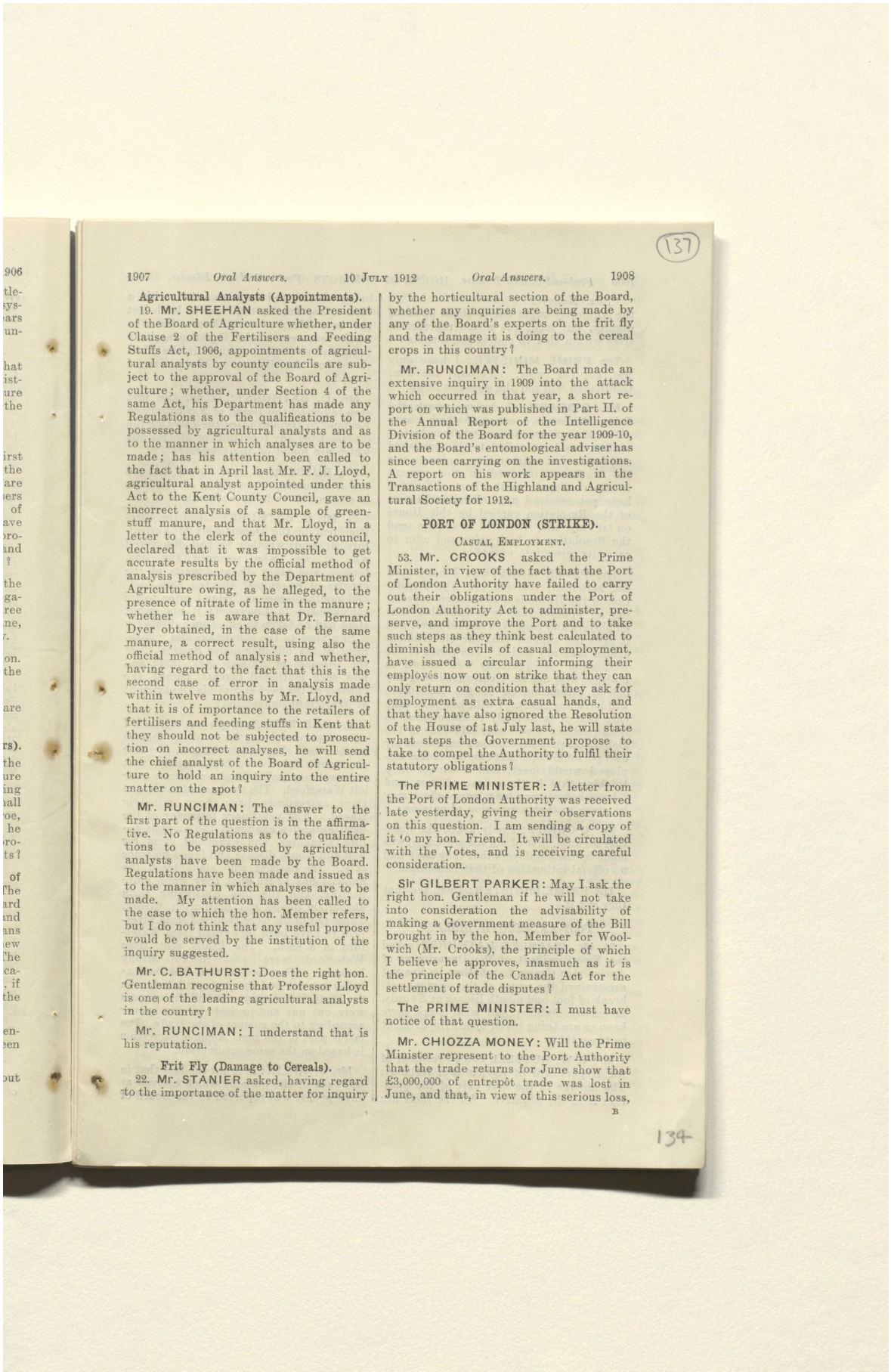

Agricultural Analysts (Appointments).

19. Mr. SHEEHAN asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, under Clause 2 of the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1906, appointments of agricultural analysts by county councils are subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture; whether, under Section 4 of the same Act, his Department has made any Regulations as to the qualifications to be possessed by agricultural analysts and as to the manner in which analyses are to be made; has his attention been called to the fact that in April last Mr. F. J. Lloyd, agricultural analyst appointed under this Act to the Kent County Council, gave an incorrect analysis of a sample of greenstuff manure, and that Mr. Lloyd, in a letter to the clerk of the county council, declared that it was impossible to get accurate results by the official method of analysis prescribed by the Department of Agriculture owing, as he alleged, to the presence of nitrate of lime in the manure; whether he is aware that Dr. Bernard Dyer obtained, in the case of the same manure, a correct result, using also the official method of analysis; and whether, having regard to the fact that this is the second case of error in analysis made within twelve months by Mr. Lloyd, and that it is of importance to the retailers of fertilisers and feeding stuffs in Kent that they should not be subjected to prosecution on incorrect analyses, he will send the chief analyst of the Board of Agriculture to hold an inquiry into the entire matter on the spot?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. No Regulations as to the qualifications to be possessed by agricultural analysts have been made by the Board. Regulations have been made and issued as to the manner in which analyses are to be made. My attention has been called to the case to which the hon. Member refers, but I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by the institution of the inquiry suggested.

Mr. C. BATHURST: Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that Professor Lloyd is one of the leading agricultural analysts in the country?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I understand that is his reputation.

Frit Fly (Damage to Cereals).

22. Mr. STANIER asked, having regard to the importance of the matter for inquiry by the horticultural section of the Board, whether any inquiries are being made by any of the Board's experts on the frit fly and the damage it is doing to the cereal crops in this country?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: The Board made an extensive inquiry in 1909 into the attack which occurred in that year, a short report on which was published in Part II. of the Annual Report of the Intelligence Division of the Board for the year 1909-10, and the Board's entomological adviser has since been carrying on the investigations. A report on his work appears in the Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society for 1912.

PORT OF LONDON (STRIKE).

CASUAL EMPLOYMENT.

53. Mr. CROOKS asked the Prime Minister, in view of the fact that the Port of London Authority have failed to carry out their obligations under the Port of London Authority Act to administer, preserve, and improve the Port and to take such steps as they think best calculated to diminish the evils of casual employment, have issued a circular informing their employés now out on strike that they can only return on condition that they ask for employment as extra casual hands, and that they have also ignored the Resolution of the House of 1st July last, he will state what steps the Government propose to take to compel the Authority to fulfil their statutory obligations?

The PRIME MINISTER: A letter from the Port of London Authority was received late yesterday, giving their observations on this question. I am sending a copy of it to my hon. Friend. It will be circulated with the Votes, and is receiving careful consideration.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will not take into consideration the advisability of making a Government measure of the Bill brought in by the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Crooks), the principle of which I believe he approves, inasmuch as it is the principle of the Canada Act for the settlement of trade disputes?

The PRIME MINISTER: I must have notice of that question.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY: Will the Prime Minister represent to the Port Authority that the trade returns for June show that £3,000,000 of entrepôt trade was lost in June, and that, in view of this serious loss,

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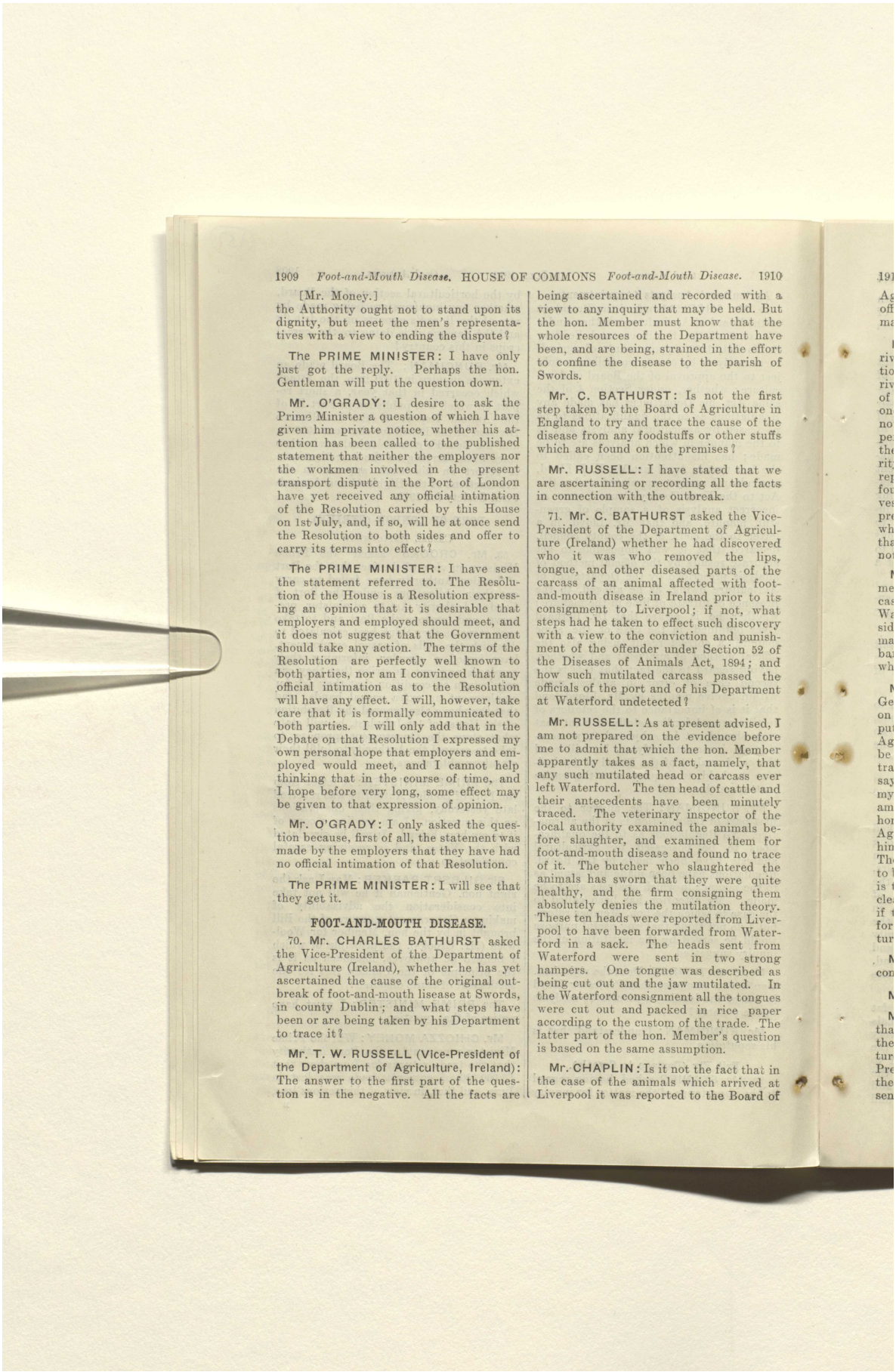

[Mr. Money.]

the Authority ought not to stand upon its dignity, but meet the men's representatives with a view to ending the dispute?

The PRIME MINISTER: I have only just got the reply. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put the question down.

Mr. O'GRADY: I desire to ask the Prime Minister a question of which I have given him private notice, whether his attention has been called to the published statement that neither the employers nor the workmen involved in the present transport dispute in the Port of London have yet received any official intimation of the Resolution carried by this House on 1st July, and, if so, will he at once send the Resolution to both sides and offer to carry its terms into effect?

The PRIME MINISTER: I have seen the statement referred to. The Resolution of the House is a Resolution expressing an opinion that it is desirable that employers and employed should meet, and it does not suggest that the Government should take any action. The terms of the Resolution are perfectly well known to both parties, nor am I convinced that any official intimation as to the Resolution will have any effect. I will, however, take care that it is formally communicated to both parties. I will only add that in the Debate on that Resolution I expressed my own personal hope that employers and employed would meet, and I cannot help thinking that in the course of time, and I hope before very long, some effect may be given to that expression of opinion.

Mr. O'GRADY: I only asked the question because, first of all, the statement was made by the employers that they have had no official intimation of that Resolution.

The PRIME MINISTER: I will see that they get it.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

70. Mr. CHARLES BATHURST asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), whether he has yet ascertained the cause of the original outbreak of foot-and-mouth lisease at Swords, in county Dublin; and what steps have been or are being taken by his Department to trace it?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture, Ireland): The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. All the facts are being ascertained and recorded with a view to any inquiry that may be held. But the hon. Member must know that the whole resources of the Department have been, and are being, strained in the effort to confine the disease to the parish of Swords.

Mr. C. BATHURST: Is not the first step taken by the Board of Agriculture in England to try and trace the cause of the disease from any foodstuffs or other stuffs which are found on the premises?

Mr. RUSSELL: I have stated that we are ascertaining or recording all the facts in connection with the outbreak.

71. Mr. C. BATHURST asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he had discovered who it was who removed the lips, tongue, and other diseased parts of the carcass of an animal affected with foot-and-mouth disease in Ireland prior to its consignment to Liverpool; if not, what steps had he taken to effect such discovery with a view to the conviction and punishment of the offender under Section 52 of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894; and how such mutilated carcass passed the officials of the port and of his Department at Waterford undetected?

Mr. RUSSELL: As at present advised, I am not prepared on the evidence before me to admit that which the hon. Member apparently takes as a fact, namely, that any such mutilated head or carcass ever left Waterford. The ten head of cattle and their antecedents have been minutely traced. The veterinary inspector of the local authority examined the animals before slaughter, and examined them for foot-and-mouth disease and found no trace of it. The butcher who slaughtered the animals has sworn that they were quite healthy, and the firm consigning them absolutely denies the mutilation theory. These ten heads were reported from Liverpool to have been forwarded from Waterford in a sack. The heads sent from Waterford were sent in two strong hampers. One tongue was described as being cut out and the jaw mutilated. In the Waterford consignment all the tongues were cut out and packed in rice paper according to the custom of the trade. The latter part of the hon. Member's question is based on the same assumption.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Is it not the fact that in the case of the animals which arrived at Liverpool it was reported to the Board of

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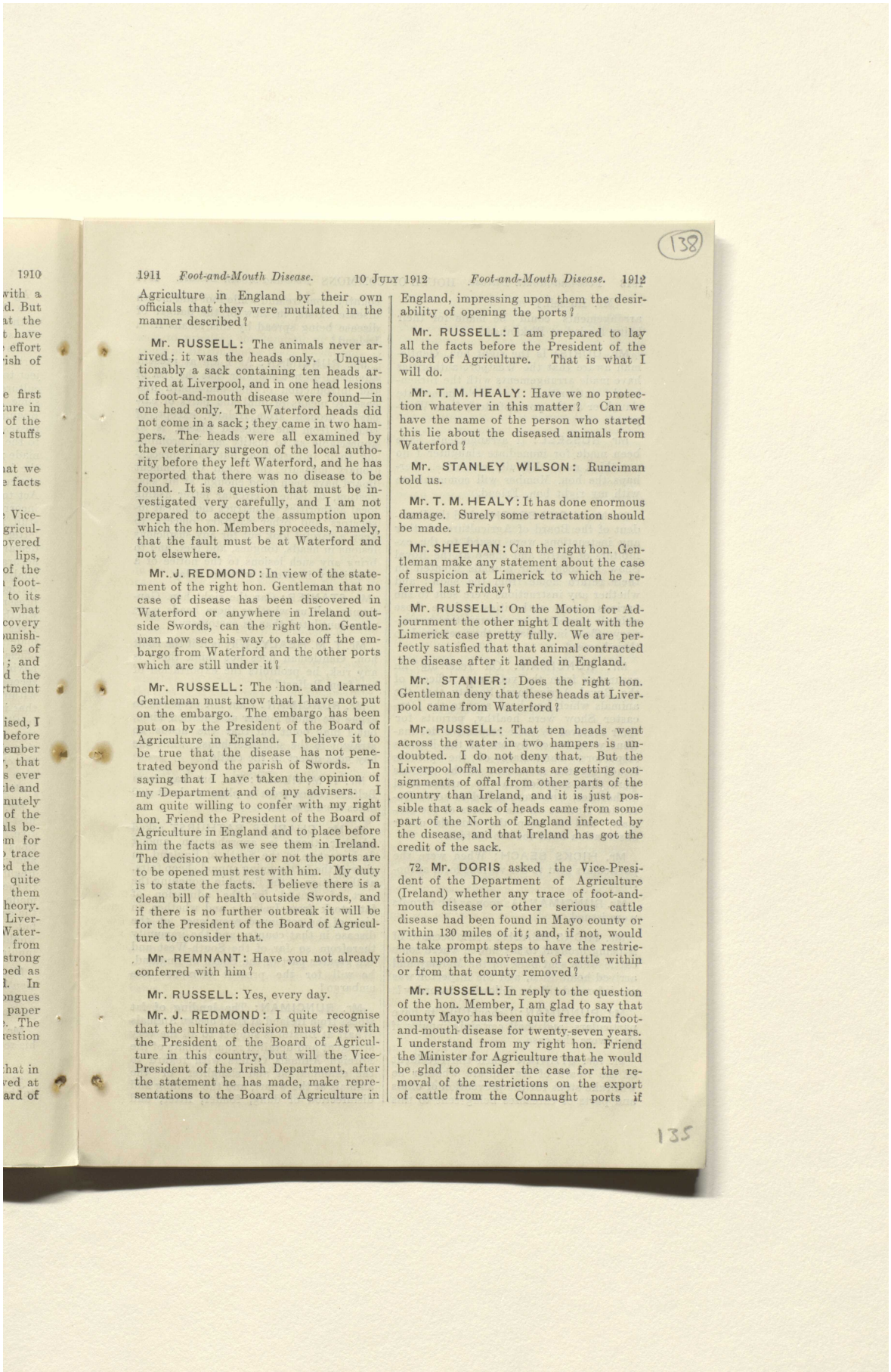

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Agriculture in England by their own officials that they were mutilated in the manner described?

Mr. RUSSELL: The animals never arrived; it was the heads only. Unquestionably a sack containing ten heads arrived at Liverpool, and in one head lesions of foot-and-mouth disease were found—in one head only. The Waterford heads did not come in a sack; they came in two hampers. The heads were all examined by the veterinary surgeon of the local authority before they left Waterford, and he has reported that there was no disease to be found. It is a question that must be investigated very carefully, and I am not prepared to accept the assumption upon which the hon. Members proceeds, namely, that the fault must be at Waterford and not elsewhere.

Mr. J. REDMOND: In view of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that no case of disease has been discovered in Waterford or anywhere in Ireland outside Swords, can the right hon. Gentleman now see his way to take off the embargo from Waterford and the other ports which are still under it?

Mr. RUSSELL: The hon. and learned Gentleman must know that I have not put on the embargo. The embargo has been put on by the President of the Board of Agriculture in England. I believe it to be true that the disease has not penetrated beyond the parish of Swords. In saying that I have taken the opinion of my Department and of my advisers. I am quite willing to confer with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture in England and to place before him the facts as we see them in Ireland. The decision whether or not the ports are to be opened must rest with him. My duty is to state the facts. I believe there is a clean bill of health outside Swords, and if there is no further outbreak it will be for the President of the Board of Agriculture to consider that.

Mr. REMNANT: Have you not already conferred with him?

Mr. RUSSELL: Yes, every day.

Mr. J. REDMOND: I quite recognise that the ultimate decision must rest with the President of the Board of Agriculture in this country, but will the Vice-President of the Irish Department, after the statement he has made, make representations to the Board of Agriculture in England, impressing upon them the desirability of opening the ports?

Mr. RUSSELL: I am prepared to lay all the facts before the President of the Board of Agriculture. That is what I will do.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Have we no protection whatever in this matter? Can we have the name of the person who started this lie about the diseased animals from Waterford?

Mr. STANLEY WILSON: Runciman told us.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: It has done enormous damage. Surely some retractation should be made.

Mr. SHEEHAN: Can the right hon. Gentleman make any statement about the case of suspicion at Limerick to which he referred last Friday?

Mr. RUSSELL: On the Motion for Adjournment the other night I dealt with the Limerick case pretty fully. We are perfectly satisfied that that animal contracted the disease after it landed in England.

Mr. STANIER: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that these heads at Liverpool came from Waterford?

Mr. RUSSELL: That ten heads went across the water in two hampers is undoubted. I do not deny that. But the Liverpool offal merchants are getting consignments of offal from other parts of the country than Ireland, and it is just possible that a sack of heads came from some part of the North of England infected by the disease, and that Ireland has got the credit of the sack.

72. Mr. DORIS asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether any trace of foot-and-mouth disease or other serious cattle disease had been found in Mayo county or within 130 miles of it; and, if not, would he take prompt steps to have the restrictions upon the movement of cattle within or from that county removed?

Mr. RUSSELL: In reply to the question of the hon. Member, I am glad to say that county Mayo has been quite free from foot-and-mouth disease for twenty-seven years. I understand from my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture that he would be glad to consider the case for the removal of the restrictions on the export of cattle from the Connaught ports if

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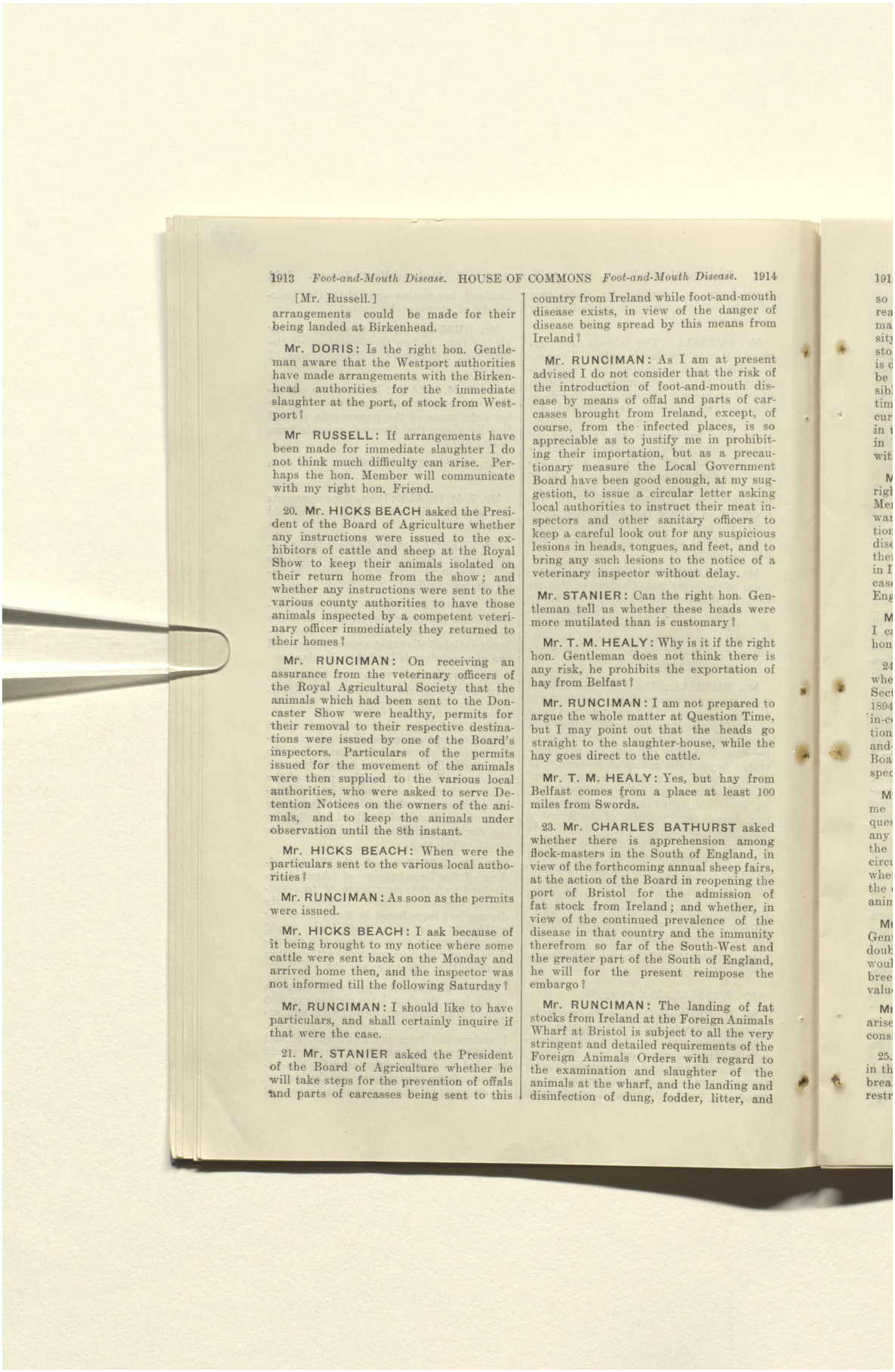

[Mr. Russell.]

arrangements could be made for their being landed at Birkenhead.

Mr. DORIS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Westport authorities have made arrangements with the Birkenhead authorities for the immediate slaughter at the port, of stock from Westport?

Mr RUSSELL: If arrangements have been made for immediate slaughter I do not think much difficulty can arise. Perhaps the hon. Member will communicate with my right hon. Friend.

20. **Mr. HICKS BEACH** asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether any instructions were issued to the exhibitors of cattle and sheep at the Royal Show to keep their animals isolated on their return home from the show; and whether any instructions were sent to the various county authorities to have those animals inspected by a competent veterinary officer immediately they returned to their homes?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: On receiving an assurance from the veterinary officers of the Royal Agricultural Society that the animals which had been sent to the Doncaster Show were healthy, permits for their removal to their respective destinations were issued by one of the Board's inspectors. Particulars of the permits issued for the movement of the animals were then supplied to the various local authorities, who were asked to serve Detention Notices on the owners of the animals, and to keep the animals under observation until the 8th instant.

Mr. HICKS BEACH: When were the particulars sent to the various local authorities?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: As soon as the permits were issued.

Mr. HICKS BEACH: I ask because of it being brought to my notice where some cattle were sent back on the Monday and arrived home then, and the inspector was not informed till the following Saturday?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I should like to have particulars, and shall certainly inquire if that were the case.

21. **Mr. STANIER** asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will take steps for the prevention of offals and parts of carcasses being sent to this country from Ireland while foot-and-mouth disease exists, in view of the danger of disease being spread by this means from Ireland?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: As I am at present advised I do not consider that the risk of the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease by means of offal and parts of carcasses brought from Ireland, except, of course, from the infected places, is so appreciable as to justify me in prohibiting their importation, but as a precautionary measure the Local Government Board have been good enough, at my suggestion, to issue a circular letter asking local authorities to instruct their meat inspectors and other sanitary officers to keep a careful look out for any suspicious lesions in heads, tongues, and feet, and to bring any such lesions to the notice of a veterinary inspector without delay.

Mr. STANIER: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether these heads were more mutilated than is customary?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Why is it if the right hon. Gentleman does not think there is any risk, he prohibits the exportation of hay from Belfast?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I am not prepared to argue the whole matter at Question Time, but I may point out that the heads go straight to the slaughter-house, while the hay goes direct to the cattle.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Yes, but hay from Belfast comes from a place at least 100 miles from Swords.

23. **Mr. CHARLES BATHURST** asked whether there is apprehension among flock-masters in the South of England, in view of the forthcoming annual sheep fairs, at the action of the Board in reopening the port of Bristol for the admission of fat stock from Ireland; and whether, in view of the continued prevalence of the disease in that country and the immunity therefrom so far of the South-West and the greater part of the South of England, he will for the present reimpose the embargo?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: The landing of fat stocks from Ireland at the Foreign Animals Wharf at Bristol is subject to all the very stringent and detailed requirements of the Foreign Animals Orders with regard to the examination and slaughter of the animals at the wharf, and the landing and disinfection of dung, fodder, litter, and

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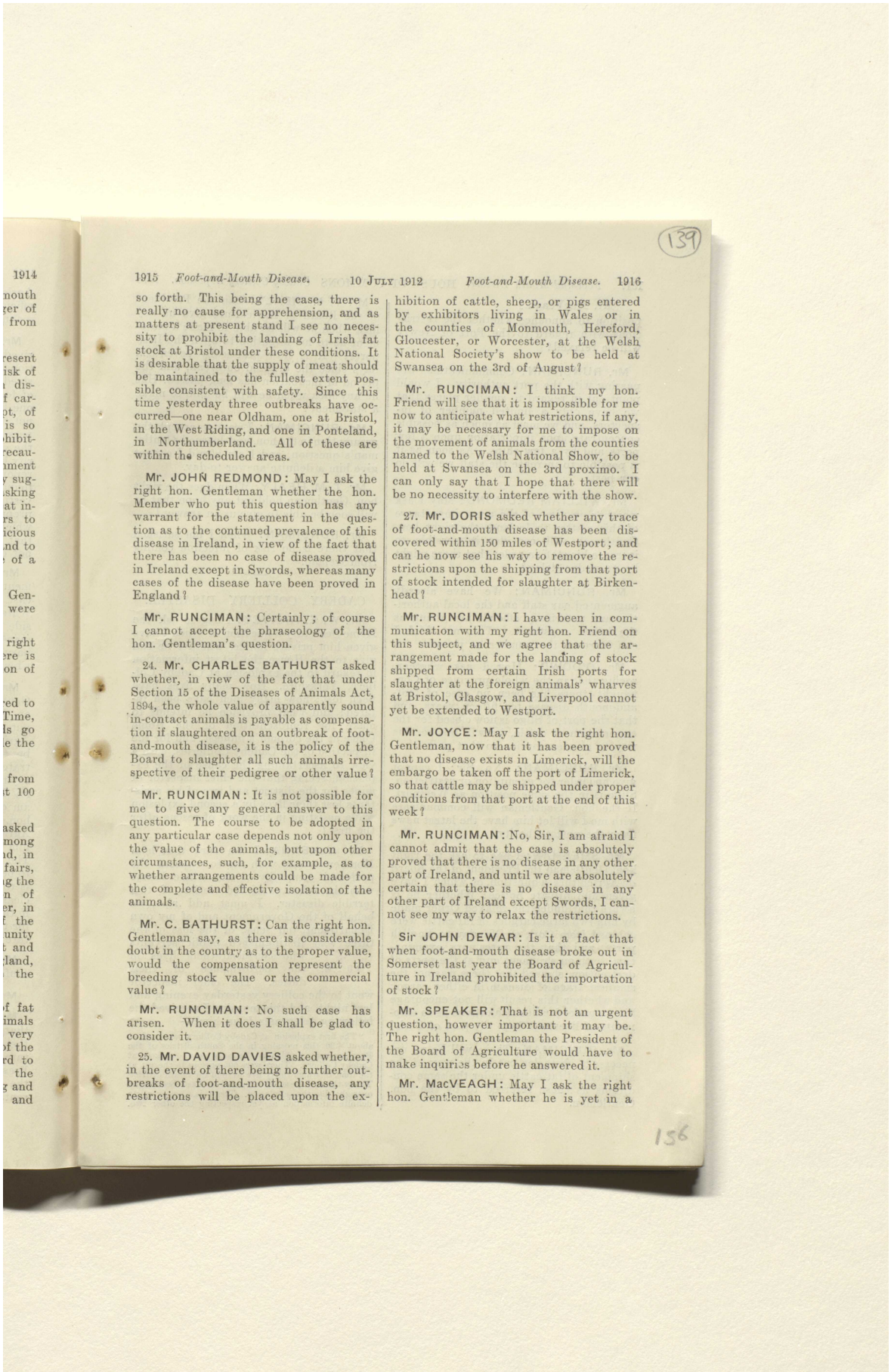

so forth. This being the case, there is really no cause for apprehension, and as matters at present stand I see no necessity to prohibit the landing of Irish fat stock at Bristol under these conditions. It is desirable that the supply of meat should be maintained to the fullest extent possible consistent with safety. Since this time yesterday three outbreaks have occurred—one near Oldham, one at Bristol, in the West Riding, and one in Ponteland, in Northumberland. All of these are within the scheduled areas.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the hon. Member who put this question has any warrant for the statement in the question as to the continued prevalence of this disease in Ireland, in view of the fact that there has been no case of disease proved in Ireland except in Swords, whereas many cases of the disease have been proved in England?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: Certainly; of course I cannot accept the phraseology of the hon. Gentleman's question.

24. Mr. CHARLES BATHURST asked whether, in view of the fact that under Section 15 of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, the whole value of apparently sound in-contact animals is payable as compensation if slaughtered on an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, it is the policy of the Board to slaughter all such animals irrespective of their pedigree or other value?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: It is not possible for me to give any general answer to this question. The course to be adopted in any particular case depends not only upon the value of the animals, but upon other circumstances, such, for example, as to whether arrangements could be made for the complete and effective isolation of the animals.

Mr. C. BATHURST: Can the right hon. Gentleman say, as there is considerable doubt in the country as to the proper value, would the compensation represent the breeding stock value or the commercial value?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No such case has arisen. When it does I shall be glad to consider it.

25. Mr. DAVID DAVIES asked whether, in the event of there being no further outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, any restrictions will be placed upon the exhibition of cattle, sheep, or pigs entered by exhibitors living in Wales or in the counties of Monmouth, Hereford, Gloucester, or Worcester, at the Welsh National Society's show to be held at Swansea on the 3rd of August?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I think my hon. Friend will see that it is impossible for me now to anticipate what restrictions, if any, it may be necessary for me to impose on the movement of animals from the counties named to the Welsh National Show, to be held at Swansea on the 3rd proximo. I can only say that I hope that there will be no necessity to interfere with the show.

27. Mr. DORIS asked whether any trace of foot-and-mouth disease has been discovered within 150 miles of Westport; and can he now see his way to remove the restrictions upon the shipping from that port of stock intended for slaughter at Birkenhead?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I have been in communication with my right hon. Friend on this subject, and we agree that the arrangement made for the landing of stock shipped from certain Irish ports for slaughter at the foreign animals' wharves at Bristol, Glasgow, and Liverpool cannot yet be extended to Westport.

Mr. JOYCE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, now that it has been proved that no disease exists in Limerick, will the embargo be taken off the port of Limerick, so that cattle may be shipped under proper conditions from that port at the end of this week?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir, I am afraid I cannot admit that the case is absolutely proved that there is no disease in any other part of Ireland, and until we are absolutely certain that there is no disease in any other part of Ireland except Swords, I cannot see my way to relax the restrictions.

Sir JOHN DEWAR: Is it a fact that when foot-and-mouth disease broke out in Somerset last year the Board of Agriculture in Ireland prohibited the importation of stock?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not an urgent question, however important it may be. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture would have to make inquiries before he answered it.

Mr. MacVEAGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is yet in a

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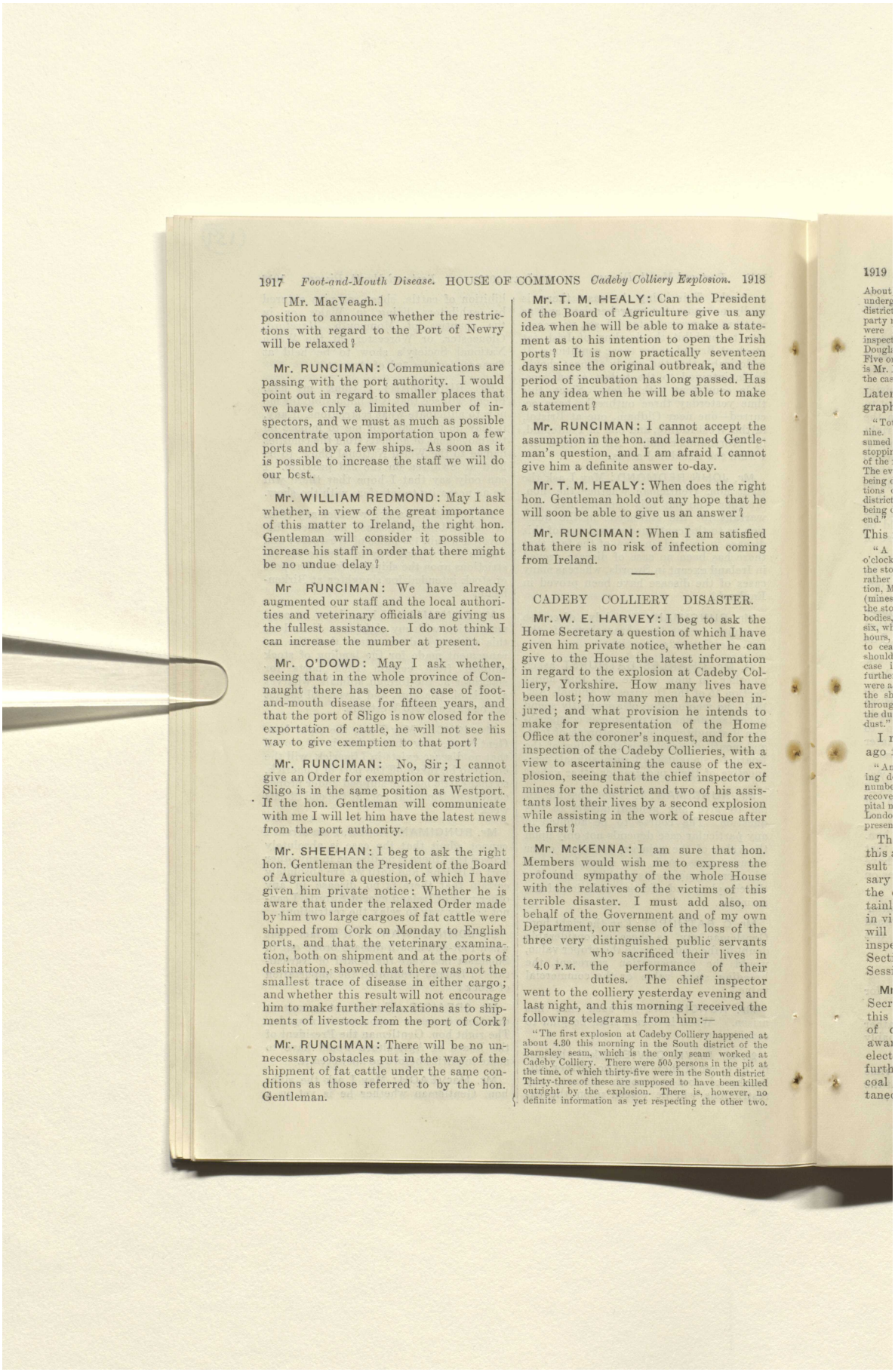

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[Mr. MacVeagh.]

position to announce whether the restrictions with regard to the Port of Newry will be relaxed?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: Communications are passing with the port authority. I would point out in regard to smaller places that we have only a limited number of inspectors, and we must as much as possible concentrate upon importation upon a few ports and by a few ships. As soon as it is possible to increase the staff we will do our best.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask whether, in view of the great importance of this matter to Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman will consider it possible to increase his staff in order that there might be no undue delay?

Mr RUNCIMAN: We have already augmented our staff and the local authorities and veterinary officials are giving us the fullest assistance. I do not think I can increase the number at present.

Mr. O'DOWD: May I ask whether, seeing that in the whole province of Connaught there has been no case of foot-and-mouth disease for fifteen years, and that the port of Sligo is now closed for the exportation of cattle, he will not see his way to give exemption to that port?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir; I cannot give an Order for exemption or restriction. Sligo is in the same position as Westport. If the hon. Gentleman will communicate with me I will let him have the latest news from the port authority.

Mr. SHEEHAN: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture a question, of which I have given him private notice: Whether he is aware that under the relaxed Order made by him two large cargoes of fat cattle were shipped from Cork on Monday to English ports, and that the veterinary examination, both on shipment and at the ports of destination, showed that there was not the smallest trace of disease in either cargo; and whether this result will not encourage him to make further relaxations as to shipments of livestock from the port of Cork?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: There will be no unnecessary obstacles put in the way of the shipment of fat cattle under the same conditions as those referred to by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Can the President of the Board of Agriculture give us any idea when he will be able to make a statement as to his intention to open the Irish ports? It is now practically seventeen days since the original outbreak, and the period of incubation has long passed. Has he any idea when he will be able to make a statement?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I cannot accept the assumption in the hon. and learned Gentleman's question, and I am afraid I cannot give him a definite answer to-day.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: When does the right hon. Gentleman hold out any hope that he will soon be able to give us an answer?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: When I am satisfied that there is no risk of infection coming from Ireland.

CADEBY COLLIERY DISASTER.

Mr. W. E. HARVEY: I beg to ask the Home Secretary a question of which I have given him private notice, whether he can give to the House the latest information in regard to the explosion at Cadeby Colliery, Yorkshire. How many lives have been lost; how many men have been injured; and what provision he intends to make for representation of the Home Office at the coroner's inquest, and for the inspection of the Cadeby Collieries, with a view to ascertaining the cause of the explosion, seeing that the chief inspector of mines for the district and two of his assistants lost their lives by a second explosion while assisting in the work of rescue after the first?

Mr. McKENNA: I am sure that hon. Members would wish me to express the profound sympathy of the whole House with the relatives of the victims of this terrible disaster. I must add also, on behalf of the Government and of my own Department, our sense of the loss of the three very distinguished public servants who sacrificed their lives in
4.0 P.M. the performance of their duties. The chief inspector went to the colliery yesterday evening and last night, and this morning I received the following telegrams from him:—

"The first explosion at Cadeby Colliery happened at about 4.30 this morning in the South district of the Barnsley seam, which is the only seam worked at Cadeby Colliery. There were 505 persons in the pit at the time, of which thirty-five were in the South district. Thirty-three of these are supposed to have been killed outright by the explosion. There is, however, no definite information as yet respecting the other two.

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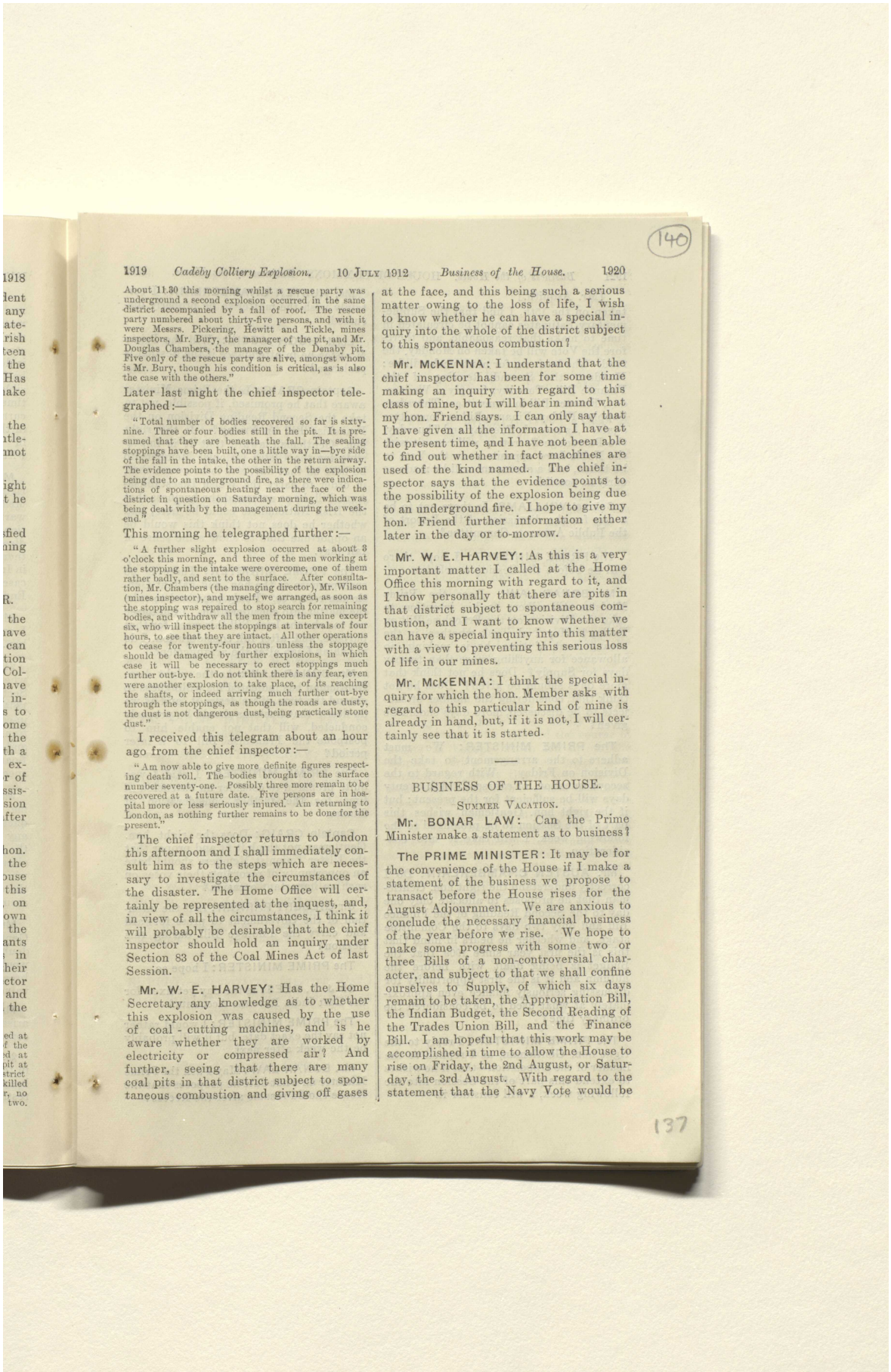

About 11.30 this morning whilst a rescue party was underground a second explosion occurred in the same district accompanied by a fall of roof. The rescue party numbered about thirty-five persons, and with it were Messrs. Pickering, Hewitt and Tickle, mines inspectors, Mr. Bury, the manager of the pit, and Mr. Douglas Chambers, the manager of the Denaby pit. Five only of the rescue party are alive, amongst whom is Mr. Bury, though his condition is critical, as is also the case with the others."

Later last night the chief inspector telegraphed:—

"Total number of bodies recovered so far is sixty-nine. Three or four bodies still in the pit. It is presumed that they are beneath the fall. The sealing stoppings have been built, one a little way in—bye side of the fall in the intake, the other in the return airway. The evidence points to the possibility of the explosion being due to an underground fire, as there were indications of spontaneous heating near the face of the district in question on Saturday morning, which was being dealt with by the management during the week-end."

This morning he telegraphed further:—

"A further slight explosion occurred at about 3 o'clock this morning, and three of the men working at the stopping in the intake were overcome, one of them rather badly, and sent to the surface. After consultation, Mr. Chambers (the managing director), Mr. Wilson (mines inspector), and myself, we arranged, as soon as the stopping was repaired to stop search for remaining bodies, and withdraw all the men from the mine except six, who will inspect the stoppings at intervals of four hours, to see that they are intact. All other operations to cease for twenty-four hours unless the stoppage should be damaged by further explosions, in which case it will be necessary to erect stoppings much further out-bye. I do not think there is any fear, even were another explosion to take place, of its reaching the shafts, or indeed arriving much further out-bye through the stoppings, as though the roads are dusty, the dust is not dangerous dust, being practically stone dust."

I received this telegram about an hour ago from the chief inspector:—

"Am now able to give more definite figures respecting death roll. The bodies brought to the surface number seventy-one. Possibly three more remain to be recovered at a future date. Five persons are in hospital more or less seriously injured. Am returning to London, as nothing further remains to be done for the present."

The chief inspector returns to London this afternoon and I shall immediately consult him as to the steps which are necessary to investigate the circumstances of the disaster. The Home Office will certainly be represented at the inquest, and, in view of all the circumstances, I think it will probably be desirable that the chief inspector should hold an inquiry under Section 83 of the Coal Mines Act of last Session.

Mr. W. E. HARVEY: Has the Home Secretary any knowledge as to whether this explosion was caused by the use of coal-cutting machines, and is he aware whether they are worked by electricity or compressed air? And further, seeing that there are many coal pits in that district subject to spontaneous combustion and giving off gases at the face, and this being such a serious matter owing to the loss of life, I wish to know whether he can have a special inquiry into the whole of the district subject to this spontaneous combustion?

Mr. McKENNA: I understand that the chief inspector has been for some time making an inquiry with regard to this class of mine, but I will bear in mind what my hon. Friend says. I can only say that I have given all the information I have at the present time, and I have not been able to find out whether in fact machines are used of the kind named. The chief inspector says that the evidence points to the possibility of the explosion being due to an underground fire. I hope to give my hon. Friend further information either later in the day or to-morrow.

Mr. W. E. HARVEY: As this is a very important matter I called at the Home Office this morning with regard to it, and I know personally that there are pits in that district subject to spontaneous combustion, and I want to know whether we can have a special inquiry into this matter with a view to preventing this serious loss of life in our mines.

Mr. McKENNA: I think the special inquiry for which the hon. Member asks with regard to this particular kind of mine is already in hand, but, if it is not, I will certainly see that it is started.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SUMMER VACATION.

Mr. BONAR LAW: Can the Prime Minister make a statement as to business?

The PRIME MINISTER: It may be for the convenience of the House if I make a statement of the business we propose to transact before the House rises for the August Adjournment. We are anxious to conclude the necessary financial business of the year before we rise. We hope to make some progress with some two or three Bills of a non-controversial character, and subject to that we shall confine ourselves to Supply, of which six days remain to be taken, the Appropriation Bill, the Indian Budget, the Second Reading of the Trades Union Bill, and the Finance Bill. I am hopeful that this work may be accomplished in time to allow the House to rise on Friday, the 2nd August, or Saturday, the 3rd August. With regard to the statement that the Navy Vote would be

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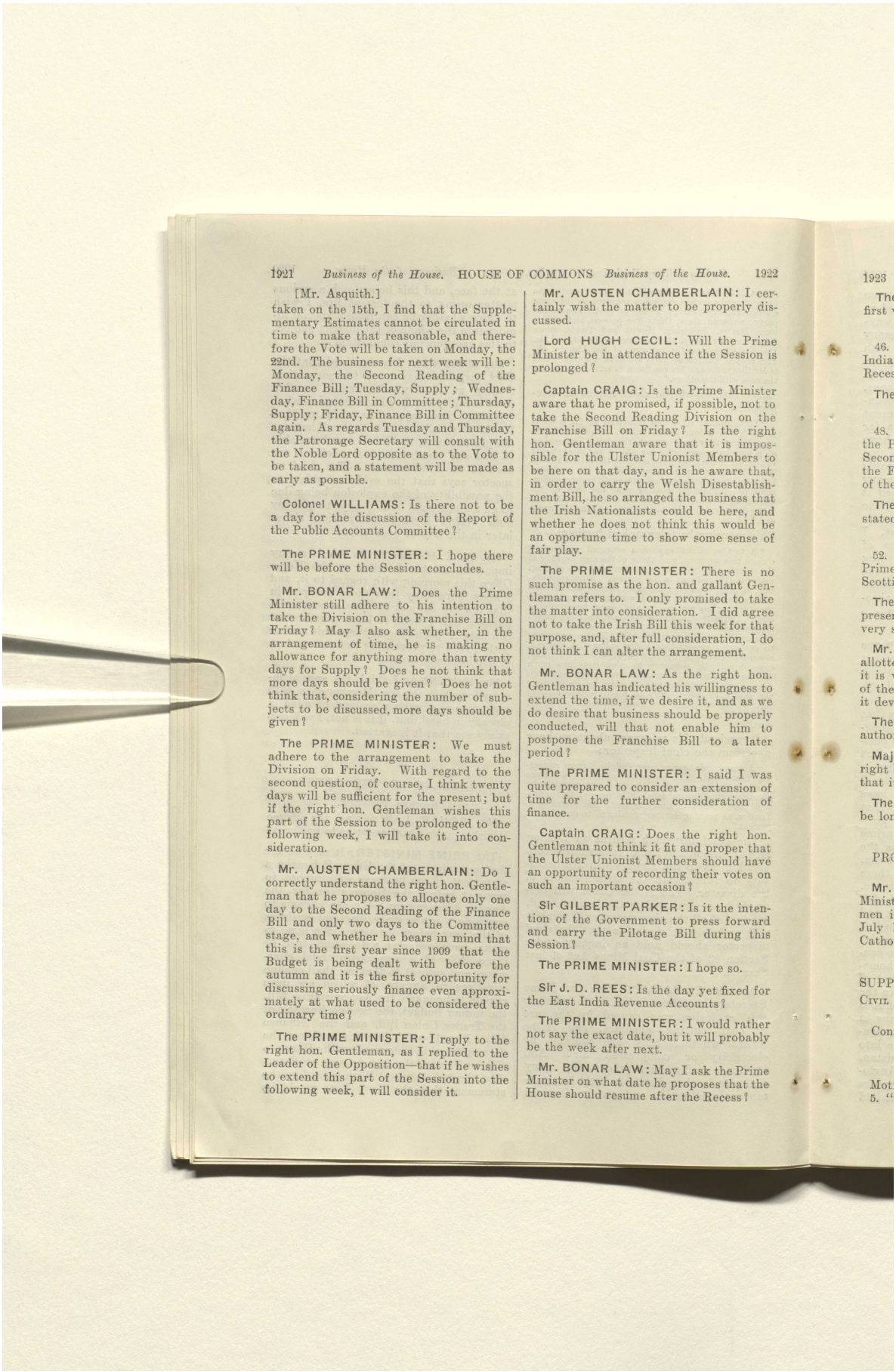

1921 *Business of the House.* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Business of the House.* 1922

[Mr. Asquith.]

taken on the 15th, I find that the Supplementary Estimates cannot be circulated in time to make that reasonable, and therefore the Vote will be taken on Monday, the 22nd. The business for next week will be: Monday, the Second Reading of the Finance Bill; Tuesday, Supply; Wednesday, Finance Bill in Committee; Thursday, Supply; Friday, Finance Bill in Committee again. As regards Tuesday and Thursday, the Patronage Secretary will consult with the Noble Lord opposite as to the Vote to be taken, and a statement will be made as early as possible.

Colonel WILLIAMS: Is there not to be a day for the discussion of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee?

The PRIME MINISTER: I hope there will be before the Session concludes.

Mr. BONAR LAW: Does the Prime Minister still adhere to his intention to take the Division on the Franchise Bill on Friday? May I also ask whether, in the arrangement of time, he is making no allowance for anything more than twenty days for Supply? Does he not think that more days should be given? Does he not think that, considering the number of subjects to be discussed, more days should be given?

The PRIME MINISTER: We must adhere to the arrangement to take the Division on Friday. With regard to the second question, of course, I think twenty days will be sufficient for the present; but if the right hon. Gentleman wishes this part of the Session to be prolonged to the following week, I will take it into consideration.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Do I correctly understand the right hon. Gentleman that he proposes to allocate only one day to the Second Reading of the Finance Bill and only two days to the Committee stage, and whether he bears in mind that this is the first year since 1909 that the Budget is being dealt with before the autumn and it is the first opportunity for discussing seriously finance even approximately at what used to be considered the ordinary time?

The PRIME MINISTER: I reply to the right hon. Gentleman, as I replied to the Leader of the Opposition—that if he wishes to extend this part of the Session into the following week, I will consider it.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I certainly wish the matter to be properly discussed.

Lord HUGH CECIL: Will the Prime Minister be in attendance if the Session is prolonged?

Captain CRAIG: Is the Prime Minister aware that he promised, if possible, not to take the Second Reading Division on the Franchise Bill on Friday? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is impossible for the Ulster Unionist Members to be here on that day, and is he aware that, in order to carry the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, he so arranged the business that the Irish Nationalists could be here, and whether he does not think this would be an opportune time to show some sense of fair play.

The PRIME MINISTER: There is no such promise as the hon. and gallant Gentleman refers to. I only promised to take the matter into consideration. I did agree not to take the Irish Bill this week for that purpose, and, after full consideration, I do not think I can alter the arrangement.

Mr. BONAR LAW: As the right hon. Gentleman has indicated his willingness to extend the time, if we desire it, and as we do desire that business should be properly conducted, will that not enable him to postpone the Franchise Bill to a later period?

The PRIME MINISTER: I said I was quite prepared to consider an extension of time for the further consideration of finance.

Captain CRAIG: Does the right hon. Gentleman not think it fit and proper that the Ulster Unionist Members should have an opportunity of recording their votes on such an important occasion?

Sir GILBERT PARKER: Is it the intention of the Government to press forward and carry the Pilotage Bill during this Session?

The PRIME MINISTER: I hope so.

Sir J. D. REES: Is the day yet fixed for the East India Revenue Accounts?

The PRIME MINISTER: I would rather not say the exact date, but it will probably be the week after next.

Mr. BONAR LAW: May I ask the Prime Minister on what date he proposes that the House should resume after the Recess?

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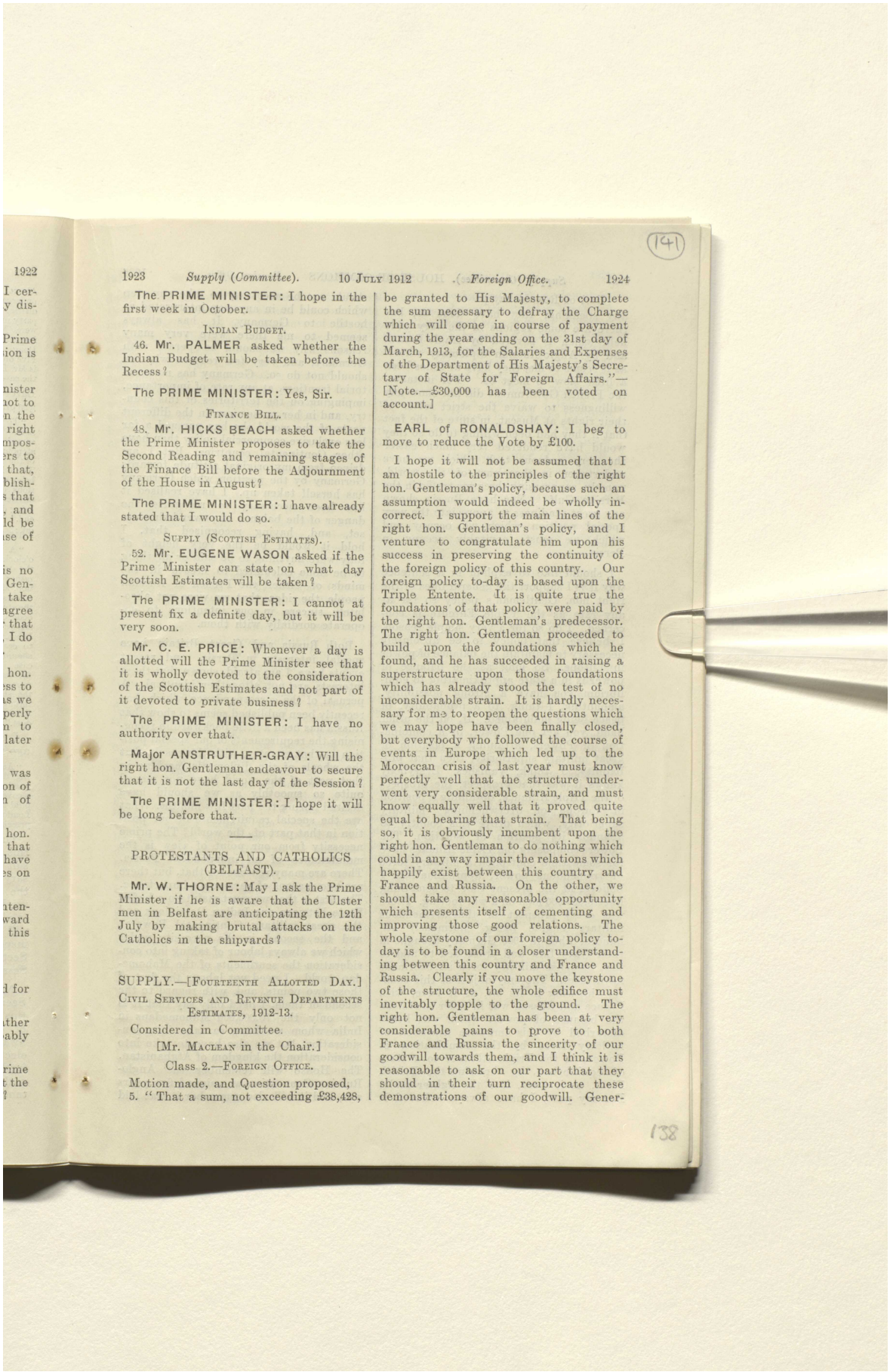

The PRIME MINISTER: I hope in the first week in October.

INDIAN BUDGET.

46. **Mr. PALMER** asked whether the Indian Budget will be taken before the Recess?

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Sir.

FINANCE BILL.

48. **Mr. HICKS BEACH** asked whether the Prime Minister proposes to take the Second Reading and remaining stages of the Finance Bill before the Adjournment of the House in August?

The PRIME MINISTER: I have already stated that I would do so.

SUPPLY (SCOTTISH ESTIMATES).

52. **Mr. EUGENE WASON** asked if the Prime Minister can state on what day Scottish Estimates will be taken?

The PRIME MINISTER: I cannot at present fix a definite day, but it will be very soon.

Mr. C. E. PRICE: Whenever a day is allotted will the Prime Minister see that it is wholly devoted to the consideration of the Scottish Estimates and not part of it devoted to private business?

The PRIME MINISTER: I have no authority over that.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman endeavour to secure that it is not the last day of the Session?

The PRIME MINISTER: I hope it will be long before that.

PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS (BELFAST).

Mr. W. THORNE: May I ask the Prime Minister if he is aware that the Ulster men in Belfast are anticipating the 12th July by making brutal attacks on the Catholics in the shipyards?

SUPPLY.—[FOURTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1912-13.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. MACLEAN in the Chair.]

Class 2.—FOREIGN OFFICE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £38,428, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1913, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs."—[Note.—£30,000 has been voted on account.]

EARL of RONALDSHAY: I beg to move to reduce the Vote by £100.

I hope it will not be assumed that I am hostile to the principles of the right hon. Gentleman's policy, because such an assumption would indeed be wholly incorrect. I support the main lines of the right hon. Gentleman's policy, and I venture to congratulate him upon his success in preserving the continuity of the foreign policy of this country. Our foreign policy to-day is based upon the Triple Entente. It is quite true the foundations of that policy were paid by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor. The right hon. Gentleman proceeded to build upon the foundations which he found, and he has succeeded in raising a superstructure upon those foundations which has already stood the test of no inconsiderable strain. It is hardly necessary for me to reopen the questions which we may hope have been finally closed, but everybody who followed the course of events in Europe which led up to the Moroccan crisis of last year must know perfectly well that the structure underwent very considerable strain, and must know equally well that it proved quite equal to bearing that strain. That being so, it is obviously incumbent upon the right hon. Gentleman to do nothing which could in any way impair the relations which happily exist between this country and France and Russia. On the other, we should take any reasonable opportunity which presents itself of cementing and improving those good relations. The whole keystone of our foreign policy to-day is to be found in a closer understanding between this country and France and Russia. Clearly if you move the keystone of the structure, the whole edifice must inevitably topple to the ground. The right hon. Gentleman has been at very considerable pains to prove to both France and Russia the sincerity of our goodwill towards them, and I think it is reasonable to ask on our part that they should in their turn reciprocate these demonstrations of our goodwill. Gener-

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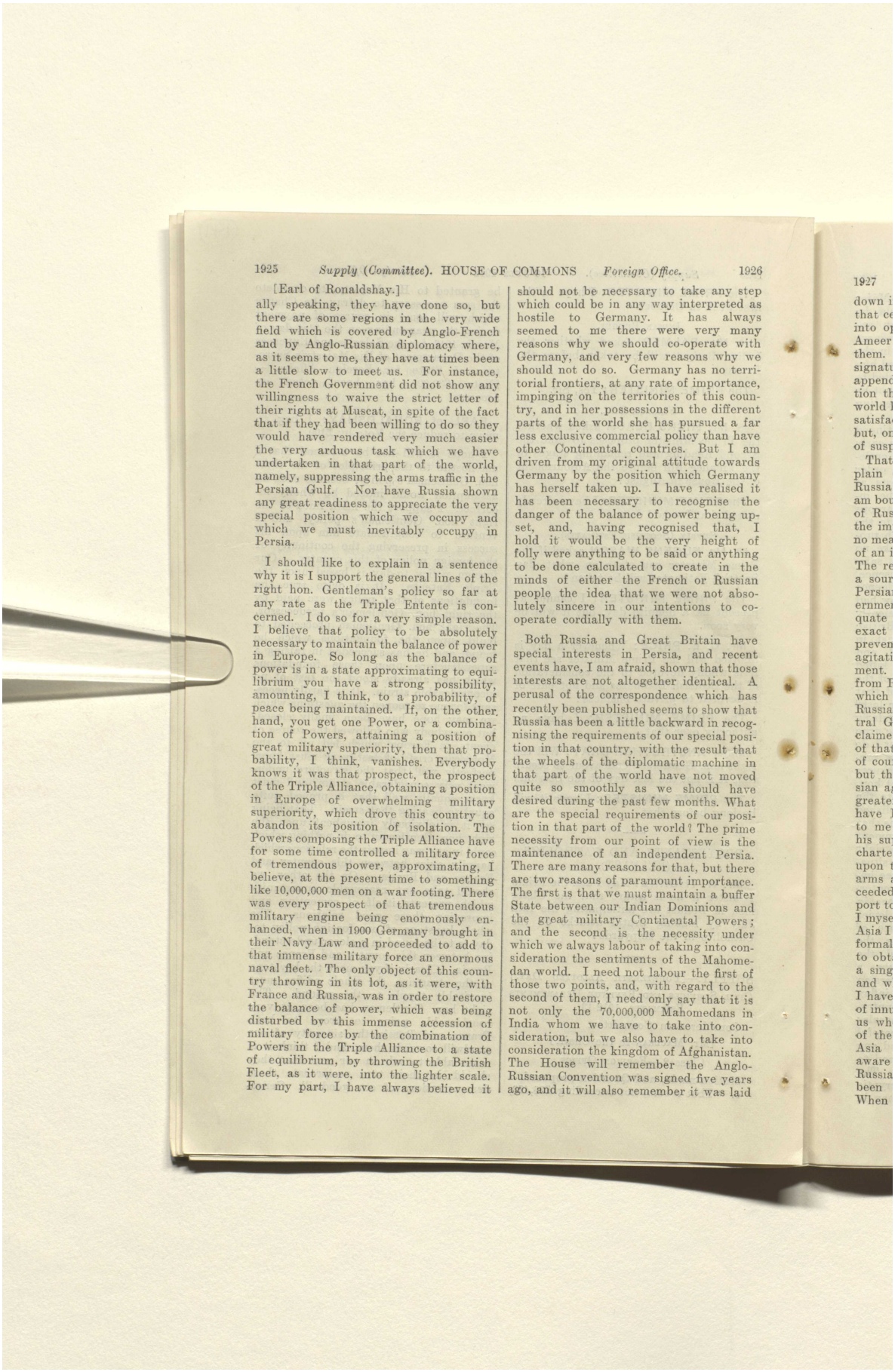

1925 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1926

[Earl of Ronaldshay.]

ally speaking, they have done so, but there are some regions in the very wide field which is covered by Anglo-French and by Anglo-Russian diplomacy where, as it seems to me, they have at times been a little slow to meet us. For instance, the French Government did not show any willingness to waive the strict letter of their rights at Muscat, in spite of the fact that if they had been willing to do so they would have rendered very much easier the very arduous task which we have undertaken in that part of the world, namely, suppressing the arms traffic in the Persian Gulf. Nor have Russia shown any great readiness to appreciate the very special position which we occupy and which we must inevitably occupy in Persia.

I should like to explain in a sentence why it is I support the general lines of the right hon. Gentleman's policy so far at any rate as the Triple Entente is concerned. I do so for a very simple reason. I believe that policy to be absolutely necessary to maintain the balance of power in Europe. So long as the balance of power is in a state approximating to equilibrium you have a strong possibility, amounting, I think, to a probability, of peace being maintained. If, on the other hand, you get one Power, or a combination of Powers, attaining a position of great military superiority, then that probability, I think, vanishes. Everybody knows it was that prospect, the prospect of the Triple Alliance, obtaining a position in Europe of overwhelming military superiority, which drove this country to abandon its position of isolation. The Powers composing the Triple Alliance have for some time controlled a military force of tremendous power, approximating, I believe, at the present time to something like 10,000,000 men on a war footing. There was every prospect of that tremendous military engine being enormously enhanced, when in 1900 Germany brought in their Navy Law and proceeded to add to that immense military force an enormous naval fleet. The only object of this country throwing in its lot, as it were, with France and Russia, was in order to restore the balance of power, which was being disturbed by this immense accession of military force by the combination of Powers in the Triple Alliance to a state of equilibrium, by throwing the British Fleet, as it were, into the lighter scale. For my part, I have always believed it should not be necessary to take any step which could be in any way interpreted as hostile to Germany. It has always seemed to me there were very many reasons why we should co-operate with Germany, and very few reasons why we should not do so. Germany has no territorial frontiers, at any rate of importance, impinging on the territories of this country, and in her possessions in the different parts of the world she has pursued a far less exclusive commercial policy than have other Continental countries. But I am driven from my original attitude towards Germany by the position which Germany has herself taken up. I have realised it has been necessary to recognise the danger of the balance of power being upset, and, having recognised that, I hold it would be the very height of folly were anything to be said or anything to be done calculated to create in the minds of either the French or Russian people the idea that we were not absolutely sincere in our intentions to co-operate cordially with them.

Both Russia and Great Britain have special interests in Persia, and recent events have, I am afraid, shown that those interests are not altogether identical. A perusal of the correspondence which has recently been published seems to show that Russia has been a little backward in recognising the requirements of our special position in that country, with the result that the wheels of the diplomatic machine in that part of the world have not moved quite so smoothly as we should have desired during the past few months. What are the special requirements of our position in that part of the world? The prime necessity from our point of view is the maintenance of an independent Persia. There are many reasons for that, but there are two reasons of paramount importance. The first is that we must maintain a buffer State between our Indian Dominions and the great military Continental Powers; and the second is the necessity under which we always labour of taking into consideration the sentiments of the Mahomedan world. I need not labour the first of those two points, and, with regard to the second of them, I need only say that it is not only the 70,000,000 Mahomedans in India whom we have to take into consideration, but we also have to take into consideration the kingdom of Afghanistan. The House will remember the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed five years ago, and it will also remember it was laid

1927

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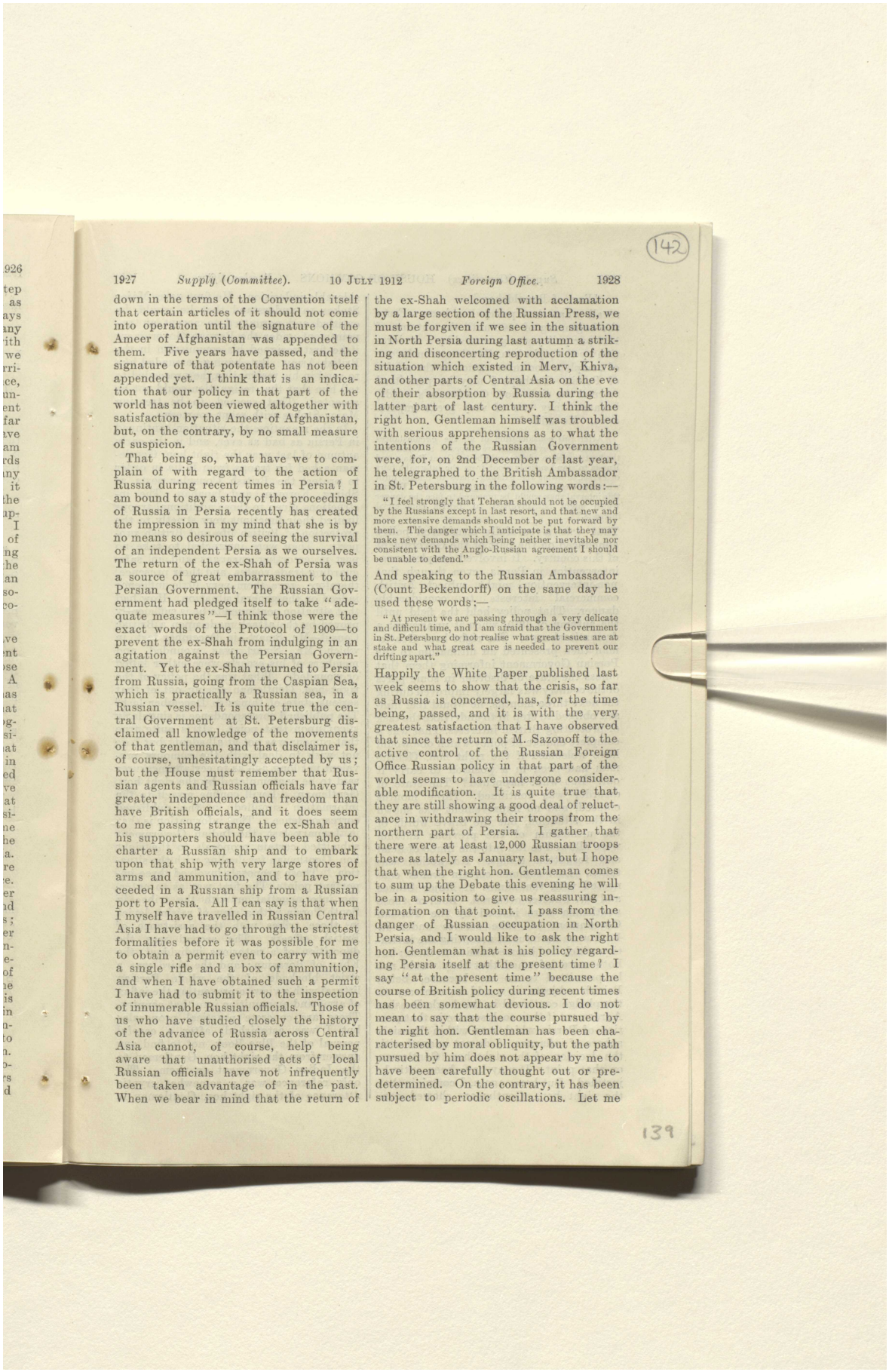

down in the terms of the Convention itself that certain articles of it should not come into operation until the signature of the Ameer of Afghanistan was appended to them. Five years have passed, and the signature of that potentate has not been appended yet. I think that is an indication that our policy in that part of the world has not been viewed altogether with satisfaction by the Ameer of Afghanistan, but, on the contrary, by no small measure of suspicion.

That being so, what have we to complain of with regard to the action of Russia during recent times in Persia? I am bound to say a study of the proceedings of Russia in Persia recently has created the impression in my mind that she is by no means so desirous of seeing the survival of an independent Persia as we ourselves. The return of the ex-Shah of Persia was a source of great embarrassment to the Persian Government. The Russian Government had pledged itself to take "adequate measures"—I think those were the exact words of the Protocol of 1909—to prevent the ex-Shah from indulging in an agitation against the Persian Government. Yet the ex-Shah returned to Persia from Russia, going from the Caspian Sea, which is practically a Russian sea, in a Russian vessel. It is quite true the central Government at St. Petersburg disclaimed all knowledge of the movements of that gentleman, and that disclaimer is, of course, unhesitatingly accepted by us; but the House must remember that Russian agents and Russian officials have far greater independence and freedom than have British officials, and it does seem to me passing strange the ex-Shah and his supporters should have been able to charter a Russian ship and to embark upon that ship with very large stores of arms and ammunition, and to have proceeded in a Russian ship from a Russian port to Persia. All I can say is that when I myself have travelled in Russian Central Asia I have had to go through the strictest formalities before it was possible for me to obtain a permit even to carry with me a single rifle and a box of ammunition, and when I have obtained such a permit I have had to submit it to the inspection of innumerable Russian officials. Those of us who have studied closely the history of the advance of Russia across Central Asia cannot, of course, help being aware that unauthorised acts of local Russian officials have not infrequently been taken advantage of in the past. When we bear in mind that the return of the ex-Shah welcomed with acclamation by a large section of the Russian Press, we must be forgiven if we see in the situation in North Persia during last autumn a striking and disconcerting reproduction of the situation which existed in Merv, Khiva, and other parts of Central Asia on the eve of their absorption by Russia during the latter part of last century. I think the right hon. Gentleman himself was troubled with serious apprehensions as to what the intentions of the Russian Government were, for, on 2nd December of last year, he telegraphed to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg in the following words:—

"I feel strongly that Teheran should not be occupied by the Russians except in last resort, and that new and more extensive demands should not be put forward by them. The danger which I anticipate is that they may make new demands which being neither inevitable nor consistent with the Anglo-Russian agreement I should be unable to defend."

And speaking to the Russian Ambassador (Count Beckendorff) on the same day he used these words:—

"At present we are passing through a very delicate and difficult time, and I am afraid that the Government in St. Petersburg do not realise what great issues are at stake and what great care is needed to prevent our drifting apart."

Happily the White Paper published last week seems to show that the crisis, so far as Russia is concerned, has, for the time being, passed, and it is with the very greatest satisfaction that I have observed that since the return of M. Sazonoff to the active control of the Russian Foreign Office Russian policy in that part of the world seems to have undergone considerable modification. It is quite true that they are still showing a good deal of reluctance in withdrawing their troops from the northern part of Persia. I gather that there were at least 12,000 Russian troops there as lately as January last, but I hope that when the right hon. Gentleman comes to sum up the Debate this evening he will be in a position to give us reassuring information on that point. I pass from the danger of Russian occupation in North Persia, and I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman what is his policy regarding Persia itself at the present time? I say "at the present time" because the course of British policy during recent times has been somewhat devious. I do not mean to say that the course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman has been characterised by moral obliquity, but the path pursued by him does not appear by me to have been carefully thought out or predetermined. On the contrary, it has been subject to periodic oscillations. Let me

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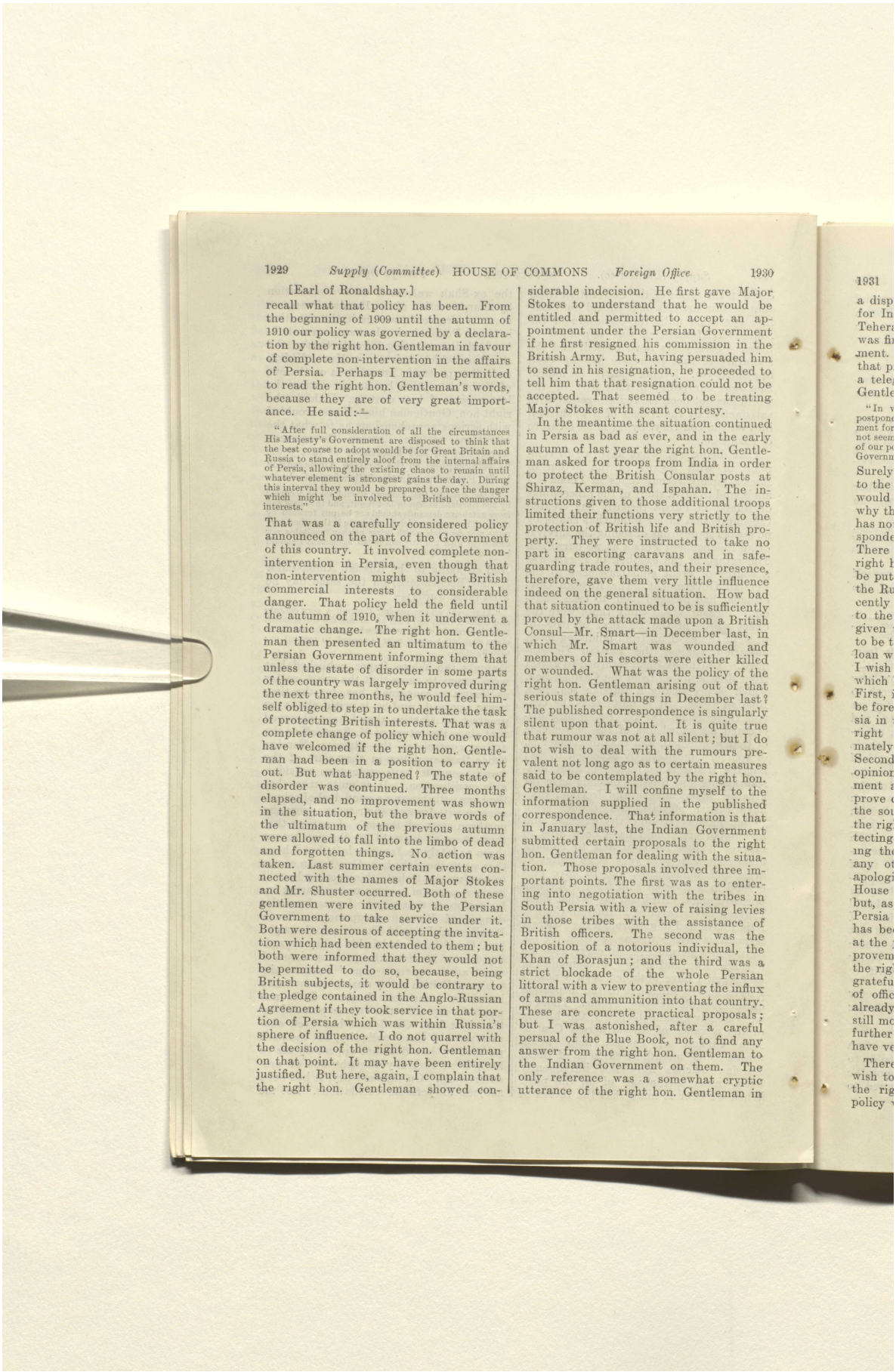

1929 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1930

[Earl of Ronaldshay.]

recall what that policy has been. From the beginning of 1909 until the autumn of 1910 our policy was governed by a declaration by the right hon. Gentleman in favour of complete non-intervention in the affairs of Persia. Perhaps I may be permitted to read the right hon. Gentleman's words, because they are of very great importance. He said:—

"After full consideration of all the circumstances His Majesty's Government are disposed to think that the best course to adopt would be for Great Britain and Russia to stand entirely aloof from the internal affairs of Persia, allowing the existing chaos to remain until whatever element is strongest gains the day. During this interval they would be prepared to face the danger which might be involved to British commercial interests."

That was a carefully considered policy announced on the part of the Government of this country. It involved complete non-intervention in Persia, even though that non-intervention might subject British commercial interests to considerable danger. That policy held the field until the autumn of 1910, when it underwent a dramatic change. The right hon. Gentleman then presented an ultimatum to the Persian Government informing them that unless the state of disorder in some parts of the country was largely improved during the next three months, he would feel himself obliged to step in to undertake the task of protecting British interests. That was a complete change of policy which one would have welcomed if the right hon. Gentleman had been in a position to carry it out. But what happened? The state of disorder was continued. Three months elapsed, and no improvement was shown in the situation, but the brave words of the ultimatum of the previous autumn were allowed to fall into the limbo of dead and forgotten things. No action was taken. Last summer certain events connected with the names of Major Stokes and Mr. Shuster occurred. Both of these gentlemen were invited by the Persian Government to take service under it. Both were desirous of accepting the invitation which had been extended to them; but both were informed that they would not be permitted to do so, because, being British subjects, it would be contrary to the pledge contained in the Anglo-Russian Agreement if they took service in that portion of Persia which was within Russia's sphere of influence. I do not quarrel with the decision of the right hon. Gentleman on that point. It may have been entirely justified. But here, again, I complain that the right hon. Gentleman showed considerable indecision. He first gave Major Stokes to understand that he would be entitled and permitted to accept an appointment under the Persian Government if he first resigned his commission in the British Army. But, having persuaded him to send in his resignation, he proceeded to tell him that that resignation could not be accepted. That seemed to be treating Major Stokes with scant courtesy.

In the meantime the situation continued in Persia as bad as ever, and in the early autumn of last year the right hon. Gentleman asked for troops from India in order to protect the British Consular posts at Shiraz, Kerman, and Ispahan. The instructions given to those additional troops limited their functions very strictly to the protection of British life and British property. They were instructed to take no part in escorting caravans and in safeguarding trade routes, and their presence, therefore, gave them very little influence indeed on the general situation. How bad that situation continued to be is sufficiently proved by the attack made upon a British Consul—Mr. Smart—in December last, in which Mr. Smart was wounded and members of his escorts were either killed or wounded. What was the policy of the right hon. Gentleman arising out of that serious state of things in December last? The published correspondence is singularly silent upon that point. It is quite true that rumour was not at all silent; but I do not wish to deal with the rumours prevalent not long ago as to certain measures said to be contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman. I will confine myself to the information supplied in the published correspondence. That information is that in January last, the Indian Government submitted certain proposals to the right hon. Gentleman for dealing with the situation. Those proposals involved three important points. The first was as to entering into negotiation with the tribes in South Persia with a view of raising levies in those tribes with the assistance of British officers. The second was the deposition of a notorious individual, the Khan of Borasjun; and the third was a strict blockade of the whole Persian littoral with a view to preventing the influx of arms and ammunition into that country. These are concrete practical proposals; but I was astonished, after a careful persual of the Blue Book, not to find any answer from the right hon. Gentleman to the Indian Government on them. The only reference was a somewhat cryptic utterance of the right hon. Gentleman in

1931

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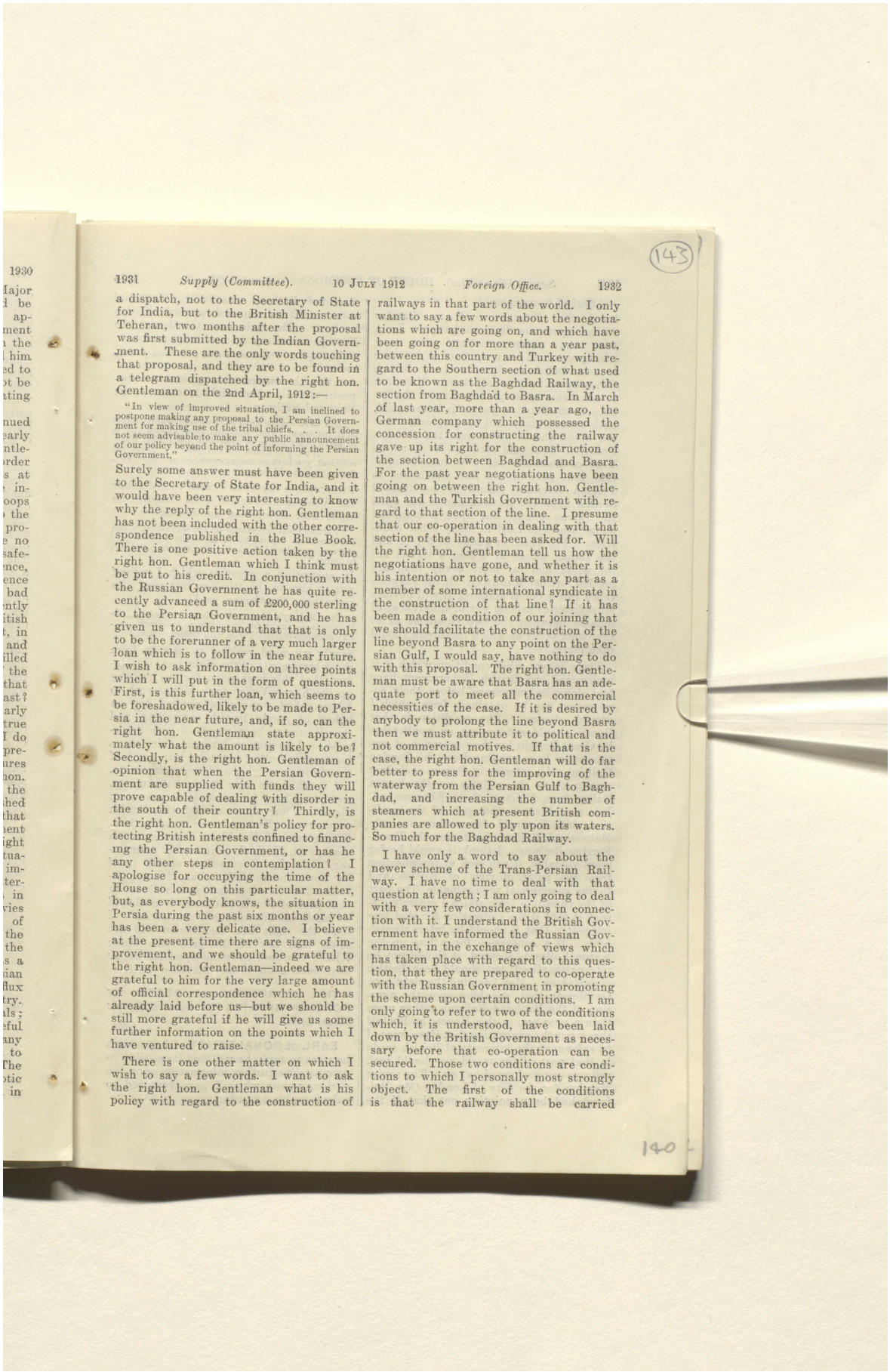

a dispatch, not to the Secretary of State for India, but to the British Minister at Teheran, two months after the proposal was first submitted by the Indian Government. These are the only words touching that proposal, and they are to be found in a telegram dispatched by the right hon. Gentleman on the 2nd April, 1912:—

"In view of improved situation, I am inclined to postpone making any proposal to the Persian Government for making use of the tribal chiefs. . . It does not seem advisable to make any public announcement of our policy beyond the point of informing the Persian Government."

Surely some answer must have been given to the Secretary of State for India, and it would have been very interesting to know why the reply of the right hon. Gentleman has not been included with the other correspondence published in the Blue Book. There is one positive action taken by the right hon. Gentleman which I think must be put to his credit. In conjunction with the Russian Government he has quite recently advanced a sum of £200,000 sterling to the Persian Government, and he has given us to understand that that is only to be the forerunner of a very much larger loan which is to follow in the near future. I wish to ask information on three points which I will put in the form of questions. First, is this further loan, which seems to be foreshadowed, likely to be made to Persia in the near future, and, if so, can the right hon. Gentleman state approximately what the amount is likely to be? Secondly, is the right hon. Gentleman of opinion that when the Persian Government are supplied with funds they will prove capable of dealing with disorder in the south of their country? Thirdly, is the right hon. Gentleman's policy for protecting British interests confined to financing the Persian Government, or has he any other steps in contemplation? I apologise for occupying the time of the House so long on this particular matter, but, as everybody knows, the situation in Persia during the past six months or year has been a very delicate one. I believe at the present time there are signs of improvement, and we should be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman—indeed we are grateful to him for the very large amount of official correspondence which he has already laid before us—but we should be still more grateful if he will give us some further information on the points which I have ventured to raise.

There is one other matter on which I wish to say a few words. I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman what is his policy with regard to the construction of railways in that part of the world. I only want to say a few words about the negotiations which are going on, and which have been going on for more than a year past, between this country and Turkey with regard to the Southern section of what used to be known as the Baghdad Railway, the section from Baghdad to Basra. In March of last year, more than a year ago, the German company which possessed the concession for constructing the railway gave up its right for the construction of the section between Baghdad and Basra. For the past year negotiations have been going on between the right hon. Gentleman and the Turkish Government with regard to that section of the line. I presume that our co-operation in dealing with that section of the line has been asked for. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us how the negotiations have gone, and whether it is his intention or not to take any part as a member of some international syndicate in the construction of that line? If it has been made a condition of our joining that we should facilitate the construction of the line beyond Basra to any point on the Persian Gulf, I would say, have nothing to do with this proposal. The right hon. Gentleman must be aware that Basra has an adequate port to meet all the commercial necessities of the case. If it is desired by anybody to prolong the line beyond Basra then we must attribute it to political and not commercial motives. If that is the case, the right hon. Gentleman will do far better to press for the improving of the waterway from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad, and increasing the number of steamers which at present British companies are allowed to ply upon its waters. So much for the Baghdad Railway.

I have only a word to say about the newer scheme of the Trans-Persian Railway. I have no time to deal with that question at length; I am only going to deal with a very few considerations in connection with it. I understand the British Government have informed the Russian Government, in the exchange of views which has taken place with regard to this question, that they are prepared to co-operate with the Russian Government in promoting the scheme upon certain conditions. I am only going to refer to two of the conditions which, it is understood, have been laid down by the British Government as necessary before that co-operation can be secured. Those two conditions are conditions to which I personally most strongly object. The first of the conditions is that the railway shall be carried

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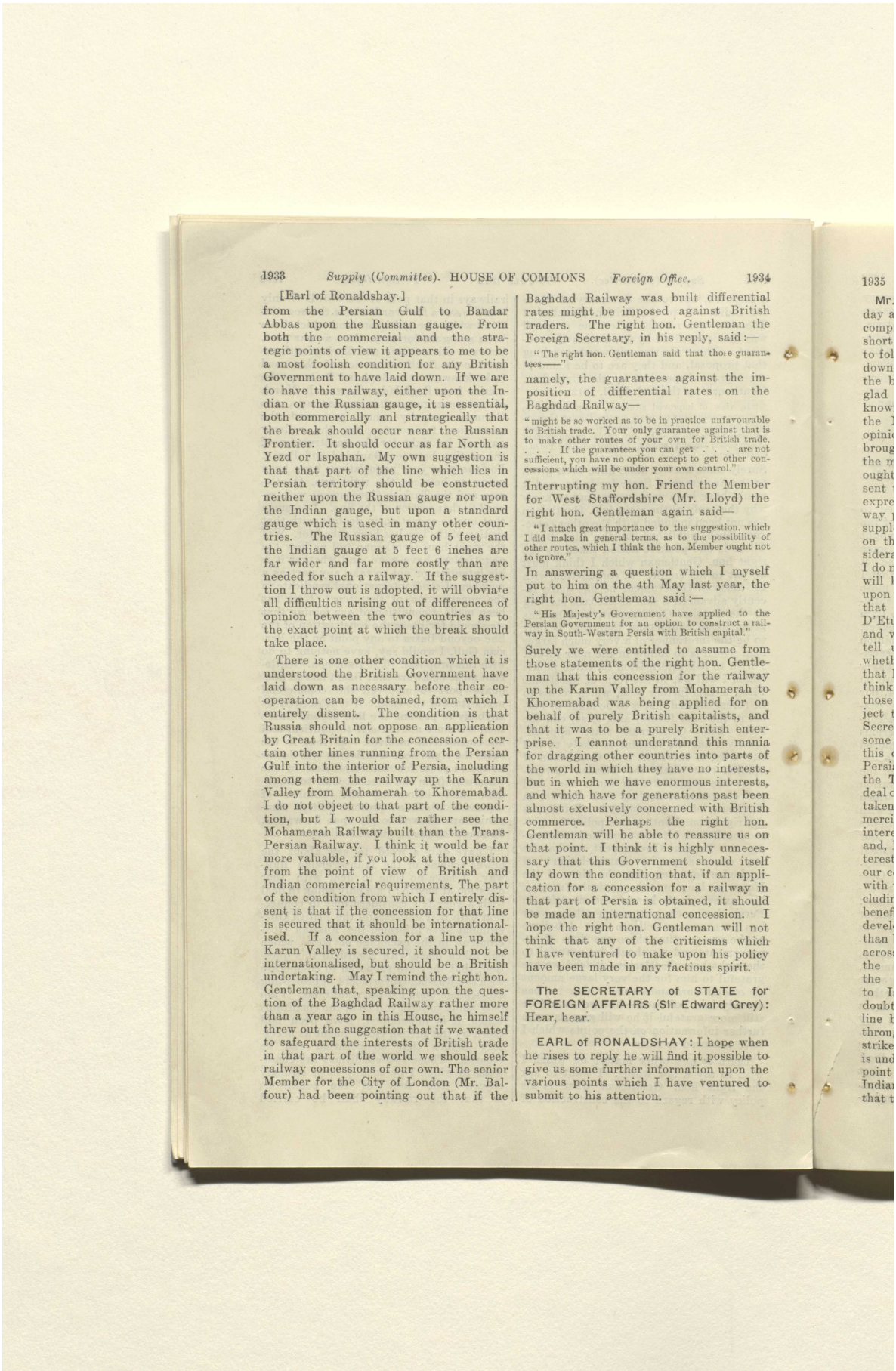

1933 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1934

[Earl of Ronaldshay.]

from the Persian Gulf to Bandar Abbas upon the Russian gauge. From both the commercial and the strategic points of view it appears to me to be a most foolish condition for any British Government to have laid down. If we are to have this railway, either upon the Indian or the Russian gauge, it is essential, both commercially anl strategically that the break should occur near the Russian Frontier. It should occur as far North as Yezd or Ispahan. My own suggestion is that that part of the line which lies in Persian territory should be constructed neither upon the Russian gauge nor upon the Indian gauge, but upon a standard gauge which is used in many other countries. The Russian gauge of 5 feet and the Indian gauge at 5 feet 6 inches are far wider and far more costly than are needed for such a railway. If the suggestion I throw out is adopted, it will obviate all difficulties arising out of differences of opinion between the two countries as to the exact point at which the break should take place.

There is one other condition which it is understood the British Government have laid down as necessary before their co-operation can be obtained, from which I entirely dissent. The condition is that Russia should not oppose an application by Great Britain for the concession of certain other lines running from the Persian Gulf into the interior of Persia, including among them the railway up the Karun Valley from Mohamerah to Khoremabad. I do not object to that part of the condition, but I would far rather see the Mohamerah Railway built than the Trans-Persian Railway. I think it would be far more valuable, if you look at the question from the point of view of British and Indian commercial requirements. The part of the condition from which I entirely dissent is that if the concession for that line is secured that it should be internationalised. If a concession for a line up the Karun Valley is secured, it should not be internationalised, but should be a British undertaking. May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that, speaking upon the question of the Baghdad Railway rather more than a year ago in this House, he himself threw out the suggestion that if we wanted to safeguard the interests of British trade in that part of the world we should seek railway concessions of our own. The senior Member for the City of London (Mr. Balfour) had been pointing out that if the Baghdad Railway was built differential rates might be imposed against British traders. The right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary, in his reply, said:—

"The right hon. Gentleman said that those guarantees——"

namely, the guarantees against the imposition of differential rates on the Baghdad Railway—

"might be so worked as to be in practice unfavourable to British trade. Your only guarantee against that is to make other routes of your own for British trade. . . . If the guarantees you can get . . . are not sufficient, you have no option except to get other concessions which will be under your own control."

Interrupting my hon. Friend the Member for West Staffordshire (Mr. Lloyd) the right hon. Gentleman again said—

"I attach great importance to the suggestion, which I did make in general terms, as to the possibility of other routes, which I think the hon. Member ought not to ignore."

In answering a question which I myself put to him on the 4th May last year, the right hon. Gentleman said:—

"His Majesty's Government have applied to the Persian Government for an option to construct a railway in South-Western Persia with British capital."

Surely we were entitled to assume from those statements of the right hon. Gentleman that this concession for the railway up the Karun Valley from Mohamerah to Khoremabad was being applied for on behalf of purely British capitalists, and that it was to be a purely British enterprise. I cannot understand this mania for dragging other countries into parts of the world in which they have no interests, but in which we have enormous interests, and which have for generations past been almost exclusively concerned with British commerce. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be able to reassure us on that point. I think it is highly unnecessary that this Government should itself lay down the condition that, if an application for a concession for a railway in that part of Persia is obtained, it should be made an international concession. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not think that any of the criticisms which I have ventured to make upon his policy have been made in any factious spirit.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey): Hear, hear.

EARL of RONALDSHAY: I hope when he rises to reply he will find it possible to give us some further information upon the various points which I have ventured to submit to his attention.

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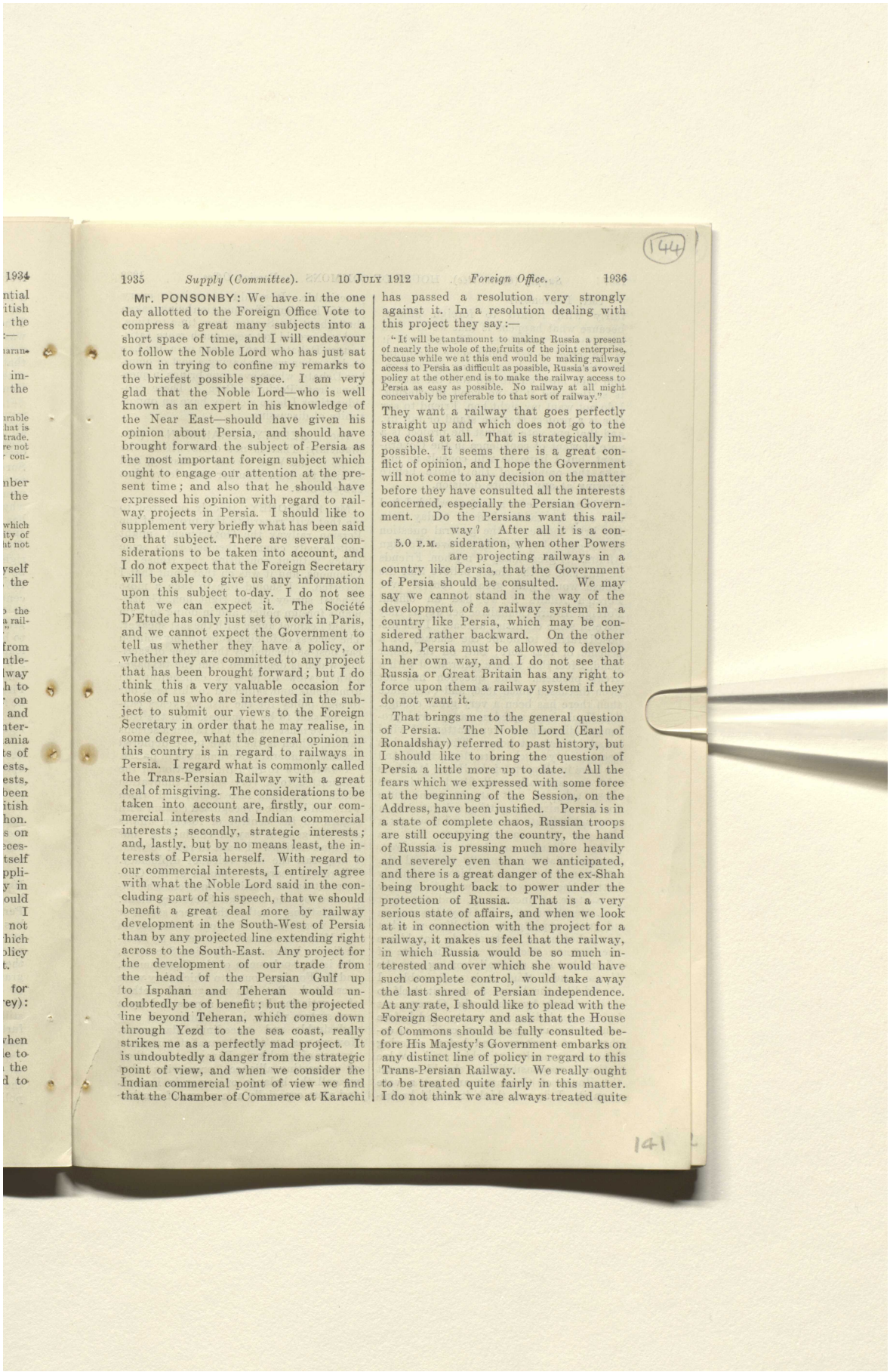

Mr. PONSONBY: We have in the one day allotted to the Foreign Office Vote to compress a great many subjects into a short space of time, and I will endeavour to follow the Noble Lord who has just sat down in trying to confine my remarks to the briefest possible space. I am very glad that the Noble Lord—who is well known as an expert in his knowledge of the Near East—should have given his opinion about Persia, and should have brought forward the subject of Persia as the most important foreign subject which ought to engage our attention at the present time; and also that he should have expressed his opinion with regard to railway projects in Persia. I should like to supplement very briefly what has been said on that subject. There are several considerations to be taken into account, and I do not expect that the Foreign Secretary will be able to give us any information upon this subject to-day. I do not see that we can expect it. The Société D'Etude has only just set to work in Paris, and we cannot expect the Government to tell us whether they have a policy, or whether they are committed to any project that has been brought forward; but I do think this a very valuable occasion for those of us who are interested in the subject to submit our views to the Foreign Secretary in order that he may realise, in some degree, what the general opinion in this country is in regard to railways in Persia. I regard what is commonly called the Trans-Persian Railway with a great deal of misgiving. The considerations to be taken into account are, firstly, our commercial interests and Indian commercial interests; secondly, strategic interests; and, lastly, but by no means least, the interests of Persia herself. With regard to our commercial interests, I entirely agree with what the Noble Lord said in the concluding part of his speech, that we should benefit a great deal more by railway development in the South-West of Persia than by any projected line extending right across to the South-East. Any project for the development of our trade from the head of the Persian Gulf up to Ispahan and Teheran would undoubtedly be of benefit; but the projected line beyond Teheran, which comes down through Yezd to the sea coast, really strikes me as a perfectly mad project. It is undoubtedly a danger from the strategic point of view, and when we consider the Indian commercial point of view we find that the Chamber of Commerce at Karachi has passed a resolution very strongly against it. In a resolution dealing with this project they say:—

"It will be tantamount to making Russia a present of nearly the whole of the fruits of the joint enterprise, because while we at this end would be making railway access to Persia as difficult as possible, Russia's avowed policy at the other end is to make the railway access to Persia as easy as possible. No railway at all might conceivably be preferable to that sort of railway."

They want a railway that goes perfectly straight up and which does not go to the sea coast at all. That is strategically impossible. It seems there is a great conflict of opinion, and I hope the Government will not come to any decision on the matter before they have consulted all the interests concerned, especially the Persian Government. Do the Persians want this railway? After all it is a consideration, when other Powers are projecting railways in a country like Persia, that the Government of Persia should be consulted. We may say we cannot stand in the way of the development of a railway system in a country like Persia, which may be considered rather backward. On the other hand, Persia must be allowed to develop in her own way, and I do not see that Russia or Great Britain has any right to force upon them a railway system if they do not want it.

5.0 P.M.

That brings me to the general question of Persia. The Noble Lord (Earl of Ronaldshay) referred to past history, but I should like to bring the question of Persia a little more up to date. All the fears which we expressed with some force at the beginning of the Session, on the Address, have been justified. Persia is in a state of complete chaos, Russian troops are still occupying the country, the hand of Russia is pressing much more heavily and severely even than we anticipated, and there is a great danger of the ex-Shah being brought back to power under the protection of Russia. That is a very serious state of affairs, and when we look at it in connection with the project for a railway, it makes us feel that the railway, in which Russia would be so much interested and over which she would have such complete control, would take away the last shred of Persian independence. At any rate, I should like to plead with the Foreign Secretary and ask that the House of Commons should be fully consulted before His Majesty's Government embarks on any distinct line of policy in regard to this Trans-Persian Railway. We really ought to be treated quite fairly in this matter. I do not think we are always treated quite

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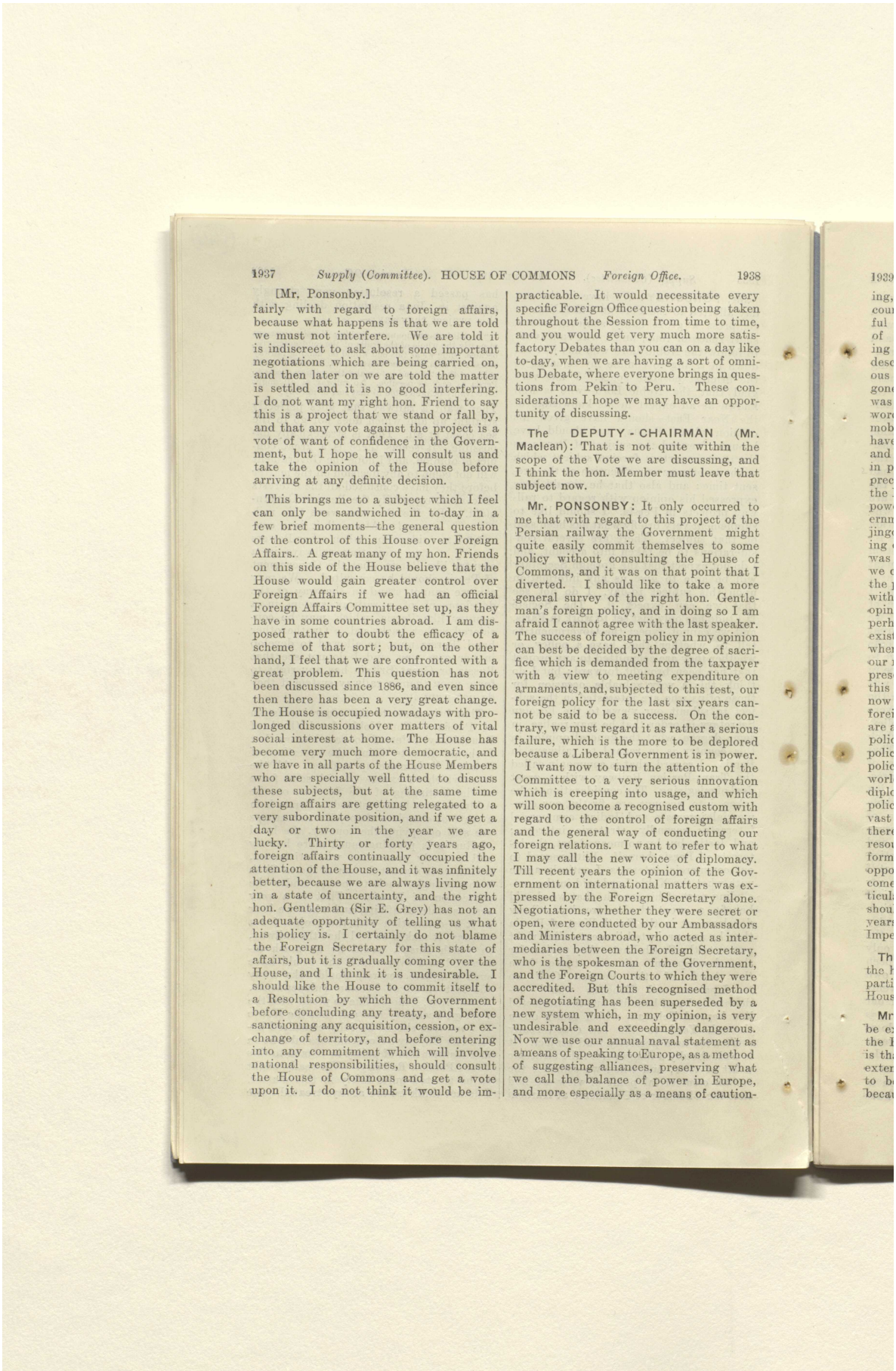

[Mr. Ponsonby.]

fairly with regard to foreign affairs, because what happens is that we are told we must not interfere. We are told it is indiscreet to ask about some important negotiations which are being carried on, and then later on we are told the matter is settled and it is no good interfering. I do not want my right hon. Friend to say this is a project that we stand or fall by, and that any vote against the project is a vote of want of confidence in the Government, but I hope he will consult us and take the opinion of the House before arriving at any definite decision.

This brings me to a subject which I feel can only be sandwiched in to-day in a few brief moments—the general question of the control of this House over Foreign Affairs. A great many of my hon. Friends on this side of the House believe that the House would gain greater control over Foreign Affairs if we had an official Foreign Affairs Committee set up, as they have in some countries abroad. I am disposed rather to doubt the efficacy of a scheme of that sort; but, on the other hand, I feel that we are confronted with a great problem. This question has not been discussed since 1886, and even since then there has been a very great change. The House is occupied nowadays with prolonged discussions over matters of vital social interest at home. The House has become very much more democratic, and we have in all parts of the House Members who are specially well fitted to discuss these subjects, but at the same time foreign affairs are getting relegated to a very subordinate position, and if we get a day or two in the year we are lucky. Thirty or forty years ago, foreign affairs continually occupied the attention of the House, and it was infinitely better, because we are always living now in a state of uncertainty, and the right hon. Gentleman (Sir E. Grey) has not an adequate opportunity of telling us what his policy is. I certainly do not blame the Foreign Secretary for this state of affairs, but it is gradually coming over the House, and I think it is undesirable. I should like the House to commit itself to a Resolution by which the Government before concluding any treaty, and before sanctioning any acquisition, cession, or exchange of territory, and before entering into any commitment which will involve national responsibilities, should consult the House of Commons and get a vote upon it. I do not think it would be impracticable. It would necessitate every specific Foreign Office question being taken throughout the Session from time to time, and you would get very much more satisfactory Debates than you can on a day like to-day, when we are having a sort of omnibus Debate, where everyone brings in questions from Pekin to Peru. These considerations I hope we may have an opportunity of discussing.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN (Mr. Maclean): That is not quite within the scope of the Vote we are discussing, and I think the hon. Member must leave that subject now.

Mr. PONSONBY: It only occurred to me that with regard to this project of the Persian railway the Government might quite easily commit themselves to some policy without consulting the House of Commons, and it was on that point that I diverted. I should like to take a more general survey of the right hon. Gentleman's foreign policy, and in doing so I am afraid I cannot agree with the last speaker. The success of foreign policy in my opinion can best be decided by the degree of sacrifice which is demanded from the taxpayer with a view to meeting expenditure on armaments, and, subjected to this test, our foreign policy for the last six years cannot be said to be a success. On the contrary, we must regard it as rather a serious failure, which is the more to be deplored because a Liberal Government is in power.

I want now to turn the attention of the Committee to a very serious innovation which is creeping into usage, and which will soon become a recognised custom with regard to the control of foreign affairs and the general way of conducting our foreign relations. I want to refer to what I may call the new voice of diplomacy. Till recent years the opinion of the Government on international matters was expressed by the Foreign Secretary alone. Negotiations, whether they were secret or open, were conducted by our Ambassadors and Ministers abroad, who acted as intermediaries between the Foreign Secretary, who is the spokesman of the Government, and the Foreign Courts to which they were accredited. But this recognised method of negotiating has been superseded by a new system which, in my opinion, is very undesirable and exceedingly dangerous. Now we use our annual naval statement as a means of speaking to Europe, as a method of suggesting alliances, preserving what we call the balance of power in Europe, and more especially as a means of caution-

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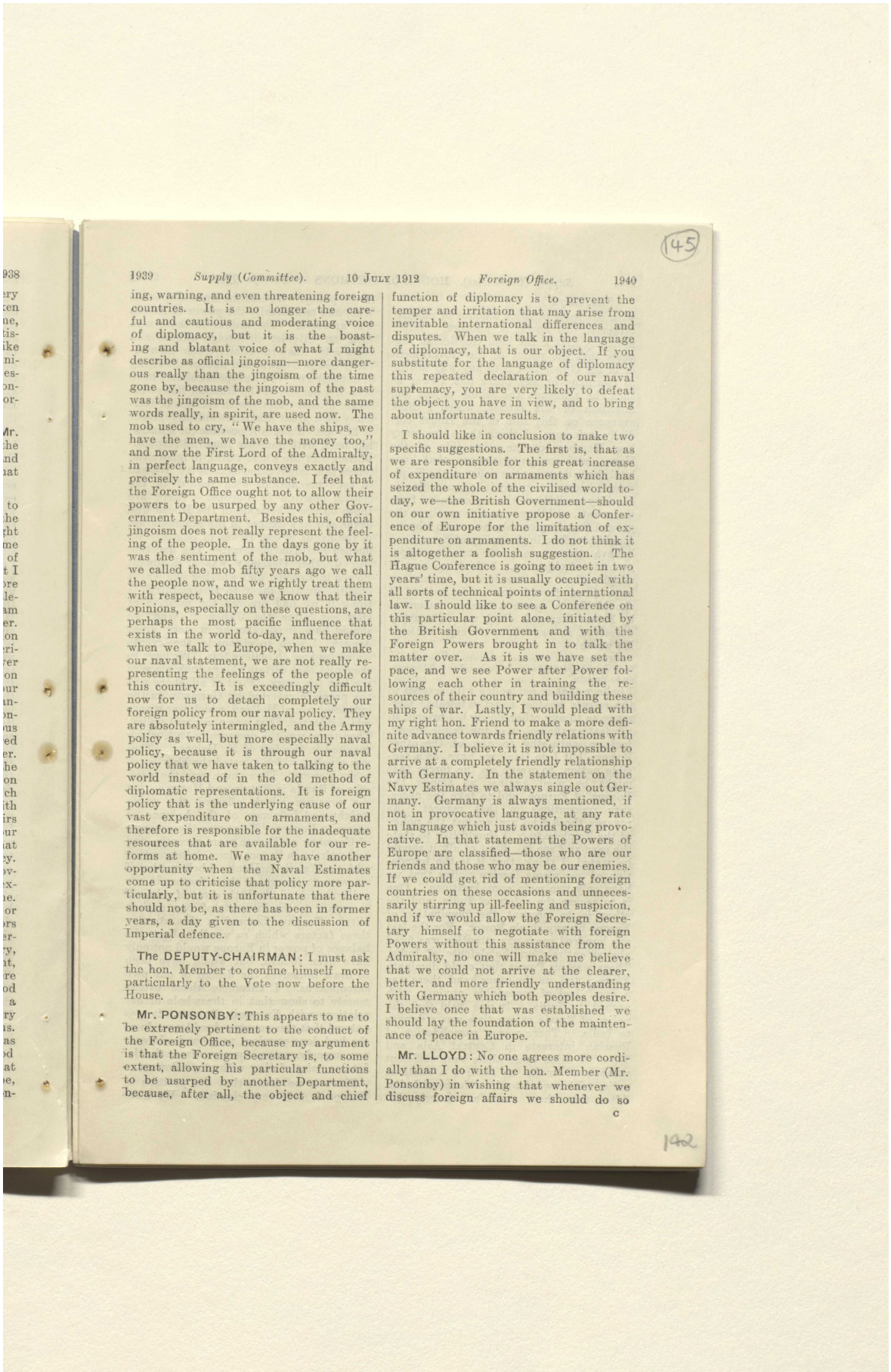

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ing, warning, and even threatening foreign countries. It is no longer the careful and cautious and moderating voice of diplomacy, but it is the boasting and blatant voice of what I might describe as official jingoism—more dangerous really than the jingoism of the time gone by, because the jingoism of the past was the jingoism of the mob, and the same words really, in spirit, are used now. The mob used to cry, "We have the ships, we have the men, we have the money too," and now the First Lord of the Admiralty, in perfect language, conveys exactly and precisely the same substance. I feel that the Foreign Office ought not to allow their powers to be usurped by any other Government Department. Besides this, official jingoism does not really represent the feeling of the people. In the days gone by it was the sentiment of the mob, but what we called the mob fifty years ago we call the people now, and we rightly treat them with respect, because we know that their opinions, especially on these questions, are perhaps the most pacific influence that exists in the world to-day, and therefore when we talk to Europe, when we make our naval statement, we are not really representing the feelings of the people of this country. It is exceedingly difficult now for us to detach completely our foreign policy from our naval policy. They are absolutely intermingled, and the Army policy as well, but more especially naval policy, because it is through our naval policy that we have taken to talking to the world instead of in the old method of diplomatic representations. It is foreign policy that is the underlying cause of our vast expenditure on armaments, and therefore is responsible for the inadequate resources that are available for our reforms at home. We may have another opportunity when the Naval Estimates come up to criticise that policy more particularly, but it is unfortunate that there should not be, as there has been in former years, a day given to the discussion of Imperial defence.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to confine himself more particularly to the Vote now before the House.

Mr. PONSONBY: This appears to me to be extremely pertinent to the conduct of the Foreign Office, because my argument is that the Foreign Secretary is, to some extent, allowing his particular functions to be usurped by another Department, because, after all, the object and chief function of diplomacy is to prevent the temper and irritation that may arise from inevitable international differences and disputes. When we talk in the language of diplomacy, that is our object. If you substitute for the language of diplomacy this repeated declaration of our naval supremacy, you are very likely to defeat the object you have in view, and to bring about unfortunate results.

I should like in conclusion to make two specific suggestions. The first is, that as we are responsible for this great increase of expenditure on armaments which has seized the whole of the civilised world to-day, we—the British Government—should on our own initiative propose a Conference of Europe for the limitation of expenditure on armaments. I do not think it is altogether a foolish suggestion. The Hague Conference is going to meet in two years' time, but it is usually occupied with all sorts of technical points of international law. I should like to see a Conference on this particular point alone, initiated by the British Government and with the Foreign Powers brought in to talk the matter over. As it is we have set the pace, and we see Power after Power following each other in training the resources of their country and building these ships of war. Lastly, I would plead with my right hon. Friend to make a more definite advance towards friendly relations with Germany. I believe it is not impossible to arrive at a completely friendly relationship with Germany. In the statement on the Navy Estimates we always single out Germany. Germany is always mentioned, if not in provocative language, at any rate in language which just avoids being provocative. In that statement the Powers of Europe are classified—those who are our friends and those who may be our enemies. If we could get rid of mentioning foreign countries on these occasions and unnecessarily stirring up ill-feeling and suspicion, and if we would allow the Foreign Secretary himself to negotiate with foreign Powers without this assistance from the Admiralty, no one will make me believe that we could not arrive at the clearer, better, and more friendly understanding with Germany which both peoples desire. I believe once that was established we should lay the foundation of the maintenance of peace in Europe.

Mr. LLOYD: No one agrees more cordially than I do with the hon. Member (Mr. Ponsonby) in wishing that whenever we discuss foreign affairs we should do so

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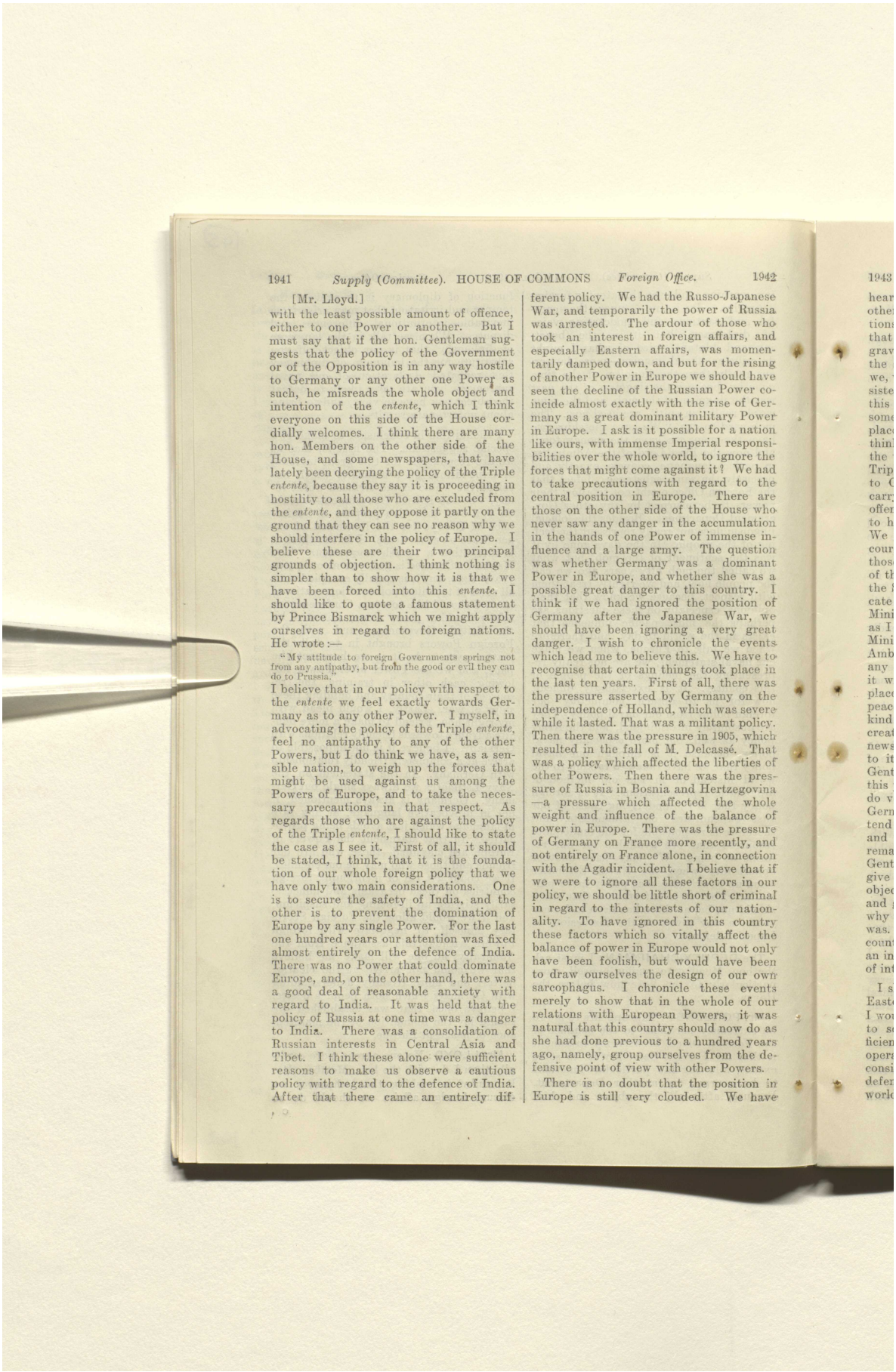
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [145v] (290/442)



1941 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1942

[Mr. Lloyd.]

with the least possible amount of offence, either to one Power or another. But I must say that if the hon. Gentleman suggests that the policy of the Government or of the Opposition is in any way hostile to Germany or any other one Power as such, he misreads the whole object and intention of the *entente*, which I think everyone on this side of the House cordially welcomes. I think there are many hon. Members on the other side of the House, and some newspapers, that have lately been decrying the policy of the Triple *entente*, because they say it is proceeding in hostility to all those who are excluded from the *entente*, and they oppose it partly on the ground that they can see no reason why we should interfere in the policy of Europe. I believe these are their two principal grounds of objection. I think nothing is simpler than to show how it is that we have been forced into this *entente*. I should like to quote a famous statement by Prince Bismarck which we might apply ourselves in regard to foreign nations. He wrote:—

"My attitude to foreign Governments springs not from any antipathy, but from the good or evil they can do to Prussia."

I believe that in our policy with respect to the *entente* we feel exactly towards Germany as to any other Power. I myself, in advocating the policy of the Triple *entente*, feel no antipathy to any of the other Powers, but I do think we have, as a sensible nation, to weigh up the forces that might be used against us among the Powers of Europe, and to take the necessary precautions in that respect. As regards those who are against the policy of the Triple *entente*, I should like to state the case as I see it. First of all, it should be stated, I think, that it is the foundation of our whole foreign policy that we have only two main considerations. One is to secure the safety of India, and the other is to prevent the domination of Europe by any single Power. For the last one hundred years our attention was fixed almost entirely on the defence of India. There was no Power that could dominate Europe, and, on the other hand, there was a good deal of reasonable anxiety with regard to India. It was held that the policy of Russia at one time was a danger to India. There was a consolidation of Russian interests in Central Asia and Tibet. I think these alone were sufficient reasons to make us observe a cautious policy with regard to the defence of India. After that there came an entirely different policy. We had the Russo-Japanese War, and temporarily the power of Russia was arrested. The ardour of those who took an interest in foreign affairs, and especially Eastern affairs, was momentarily damped down, and but for the rising of another Power in Europe we should have seen the decline of the Russian Power coincide almost exactly with the rise of Germany as a great dominant military Power in Europe. I ask is it possible for a nation like ours, with immense Imperial responsibilities over the whole world, to ignore the forces that might come against it? We had to take precautions with regard to the central position in Europe. There are those on the other side of the House who never saw any danger in the accumulation in the hands of one Power of immense influence and a large army. The question was whether Germany was a dominant Power in Europe, and whether she was a possible great danger to this country. I think if we had ignored the position of Germany after the Japanese War, we should have been ignoring a very great danger. I wish to chronicle the events which lead me to believe this. We have to recognise that certain things took place in the last ten years. First of all, there was the pressure asserted by Germany on the independence of Holland, which was severe while it lasted. That was a militant policy. Then there was the pressure in 1905, which resulted in the fall of M. Delcassé. That was a policy which affected the liberties of other Powers. Then there was the pressure of Russia in Bosnia and Hertzegovina—a pressure which affected the whole weight and influence of the balance of power in Europe. There was the pressure of Germany on France more recently, and not entirely on France alone, in connection with the Agadir incident. I believe that if we were to ignore all these factors in our policy, we should be little short of criminal in regard to the interests of our nationality. To have ignored in this country these factors which so vitally affect the balance of power in Europe would not only have been foolish, but would have been to draw ourselves the design of our own sarcophagus. I chronicle these events merely to show that in the whole of our relations with European Powers, it was natural that this country should now do as she had done previous to a hundred years ago, namely, group ourselves from the defensive point of view with other Powers.

There is no doubt that the position in Europe is still very clouded. We have

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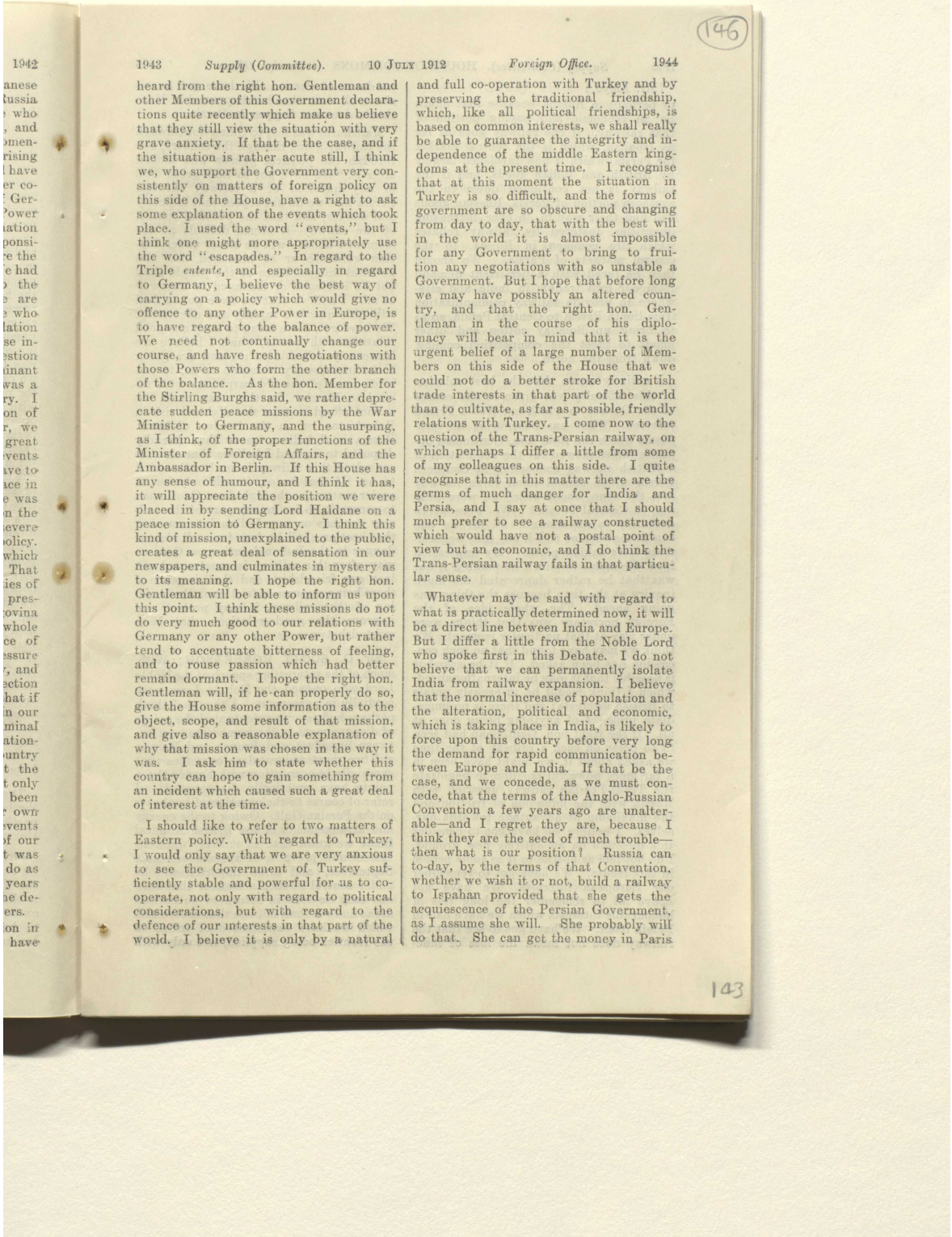

heard from the right hon. Gentleman and other Members of this Government declarations quite recently which make us believe that they still view the situation with very grave anxiety. If that be the case, and if the situation is rather acute still, I think we, who support the Government very consistently on matters of foreign policy on this side of the House, have a right to ask some explanation of the events which took place. I used the word "events," but I think one might more appropriately use the word "escapades." In regard to the Triple *entente*, and especially in regard to Germany, I believe the best way of carrying on a policy which would give no offence to any other Power in Europe, is to have regard to the balance of power. We need not continually change our course, and have fresh negotiations with those Powers who form the other branch of the balance. As the hon. Member for the Stirling Burghs said, we rather deprecate sudden peace missions by the War Minister to Germany, and the usurping, as I think, of the proper functions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Ambassador in Berlin. If this House has any sense of humour, and I think it has, it will appreciate the position we were placed in by sending Lord Haldane on a peace mission to Germany. I think this kind of mission, unexplained to the public, creates a great deal of sensation in our newspapers, and culminates in mystery as to its meaning. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to inform us upon this point. I think these missions do not do very much good to our relations with Germany or any other Power, but rather tend to accentuate bitterness of feeling, and to rouse passion which had better remain dormant. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will, if he can properly do so, give the House some information as to the object, scope, and result of that mission, and give also a reasonable explanation of why that mission was chosen in the way it was. I ask him to state whether this country can hope to gain something from an incident which caused such a great deal of interest at the time.

I should like to refer to two matters of Eastern policy. With regard to Turkey, I would only say that we are very anxious to see the Government of Turkey sufficiently stable and powerful for us to co-operate, not only with regard to political considerations, but with regard to the defence of our interests in that part of the world. I believe it is only by a natural and full co-operation with Turkey and by preserving the traditional friendship, which, like all political friendships, is based on common interests, we shall really be able to guarantee the integrity and independence of the middle Eastern kingdoms at the present time. I recognise that at this moment the situation in Turkey is so difficult, and the forms of government are so obscure and changing from day to day, that with the best will in the world it is almost impossible for any Government to bring to fruition any negotiations with so unstable a Government. But I hope that before long we may have possibly an altered country, and that the right hon. Gentleman in the course of his diplomacy will bear in mind that it is the urgent belief of a large number of Members on this side of the House that we could not do a better stroke for British trade interests in that part of the world than to cultivate, as far as possible, friendly relations with Turkey. I come now to the question of the Trans-Persian railway, on which perhaps I differ a little from some of my colleagues on this side. I quite recognise that in this matter there are the germs of much danger for India and Persia, and I say at once that I should much prefer to see a railway constructed which would have not a postal point of view but an economic, and I do think the Trans-Persian railway fails in that particular sense.

Whatever may be said with regard to what is practically determined now, it will be a direct line between India and Europe. But I differ a little from the Noble Lord who spoke first in this Debate. I do not believe that we can permanently isolate India from railway expansion. I believe that the normal increase of population and the alteration, political and economic, which is taking place in India, is likely to force upon this country before very long the demand for rapid communication between Europe and India. If that be the case, and we concede, as we must concede, that the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention a few years ago are unalterable—and I regret they are, because I think they are the seed of much trouble—then what is our position? Russia can to-day, by the terms of that Convention, whether we wish it or not, build a railway to Ispahan provided that she gets the acquiescence of the Persian Government, as I assume she will. She probably will do that. She can get the money in Paris

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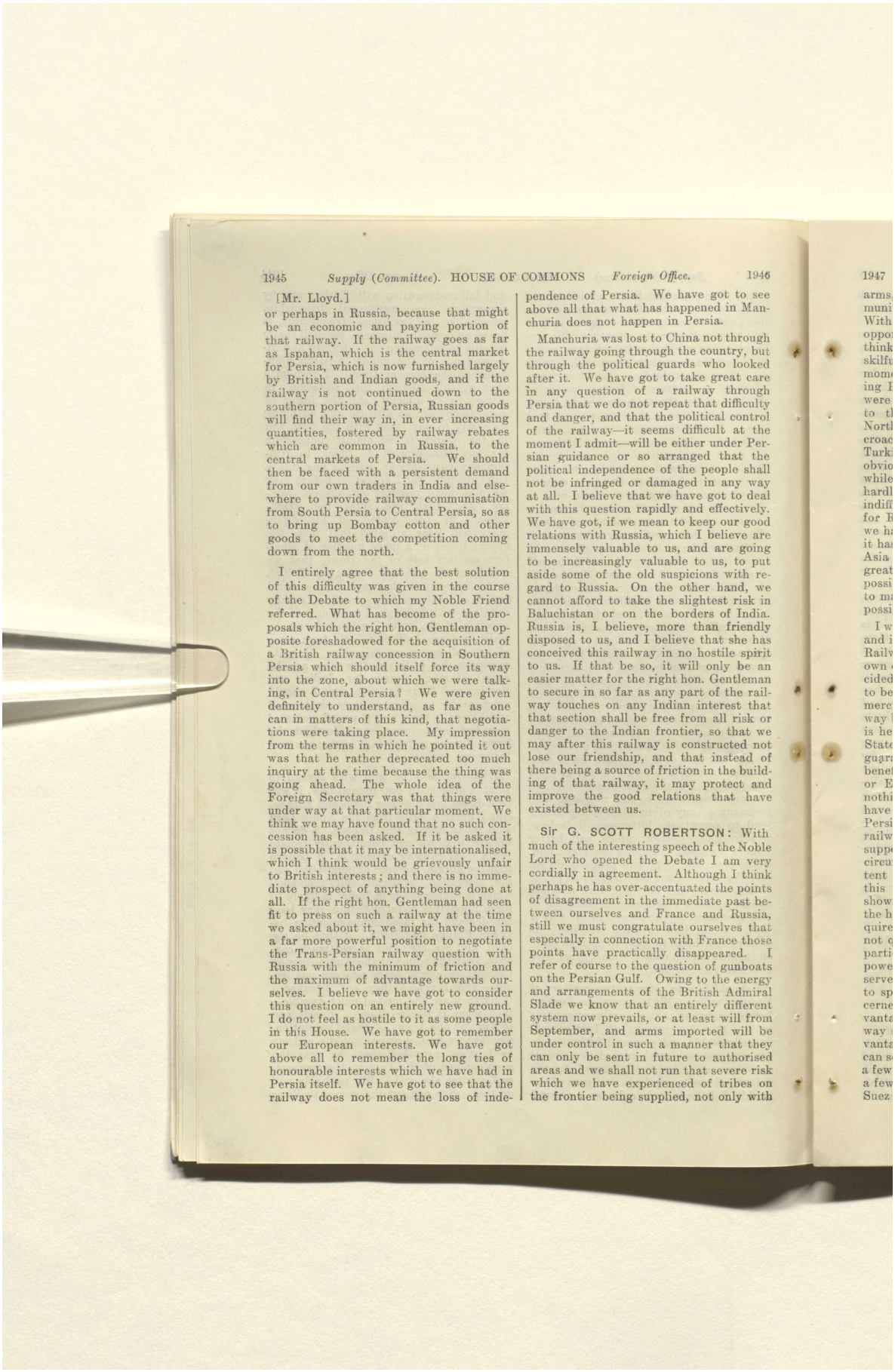

1945 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1946

[Mr. Lloyd.]

or perhaps in Russia, because that might be an economic and paying portion of that railway. If the railway goes as far as Ispahan, which is the central market for Persia, which is now furnished largely by British and Indian goods, and if the railway is not continued down to the southern portion of Persia, Russian goods will find their way in, in ever increasing quantities, fostered by railway rebates which are common in Russia, to the central markets of Persia. We should then be faced with a persistent demand from our own traders in India and elsewhere to provide railway communisation from South Persia to Central Persia, so as to bring up Bombay cotton and other goods to meet the competition coming down from the north.

I entirely agree that the best solution of this difficulty was given in the course of the Debate to which my Noble Friend referred. What has become of the proposals which the right hon. Gentleman opposite foreshadowed for the acquisition of a British railway concession in Southern Persia which should itself force its way into the zone, about which we were talking, in Central Persia? We were given definitely to understand, as far as one can in matters of this kind, that negotiations were taking place. My impression from the terms in which he pointed it out was that he rather deprecated too much inquiry at the time because the thing was going ahead. The whole idea of the Foreign Secretary was that things were under way at that particular moment. We think we may have found that no such concession has been asked. If it be asked it is possible that it may be internationalised, which I think would be grievously unfair to British interests; and there is no immediate prospect of anything being done at all. If the right hon. Gentleman had seen fit to press on such a railway at the time we asked about it, we might have been in a far more powerful position to negotiate the Trans-Persian railway question with Russia with the minimum of friction and the maximum of advantage towards ourselves. I believe we have got to consider this question on an entirely new ground. I do not feel as hostile to it as some people in this House. We have got to remember our European interests. We have got above all to remember the long ties of honourable interests which we have had in Persia itself. We have got to see that the railway does not mean the loss of independence of Persia. We have got to see above all that what has happened in Manchuria does not happen in Persia.

Manchuria was lost to China not through the railway going through the country, but through the political guards who looked after it. We have got to take great care in any question of a railway through Persia that we do not repeat that difficulty and danger, and that the political control of the railway—it seems difficult at the moment I admit—will be either under Persian guidance or so arranged that the political independence of the people shall not be infringed or damaged in any way at all. I believe that we have got to deal with this question rapidly and effectively. We have got, if we mean to keep our good relations with Russia, which I believe are immensely valuable to us, and are going to be increasingly valuable to us, to put aside some of the old suspicions with regard to Russia. On the other hand, we cannot afford to take the slightest risk in Baluchistan or on the borders of India. Russia is, I believe, more than friendly disposed to us, and I believe that she has conceived this railway in no hostile spirit to us. If that be so, it will only be an easier matter for the right hon. Gentleman to secure in so far as any part of the railway touches on any Indian interest that that section shall be free from all risk or danger to the Indian frontier, so that we may after this railway is constructed not lose our friendship, and that instead of there being a source of friction in the building of that railway, it may protect and improve the good relations that have existed between us.

Sir G. SCOTT ROBERTSON: With much of the interesting speech of the Noble Lord who opened the Debate I am very cordially in agreement. Although I think perhaps he has over-accentuated the points of disagreement in the immediate past between ourselves and France and Russia, still we must congratulate ourselves that especially in connection with France those points have practically disappeared. I refer of course to the question of gunboats on the Persian Gulf. Owing to the energy and arrangements of the British Admiral Slade we know that an entirely different system now prevails, or at least will from September, and arms imported will be under control in such a manner that they can only be sent in future to authorised areas and we shall not run that severe risk which we have experienced of tribes on the frontier being supplied, not only with

1947

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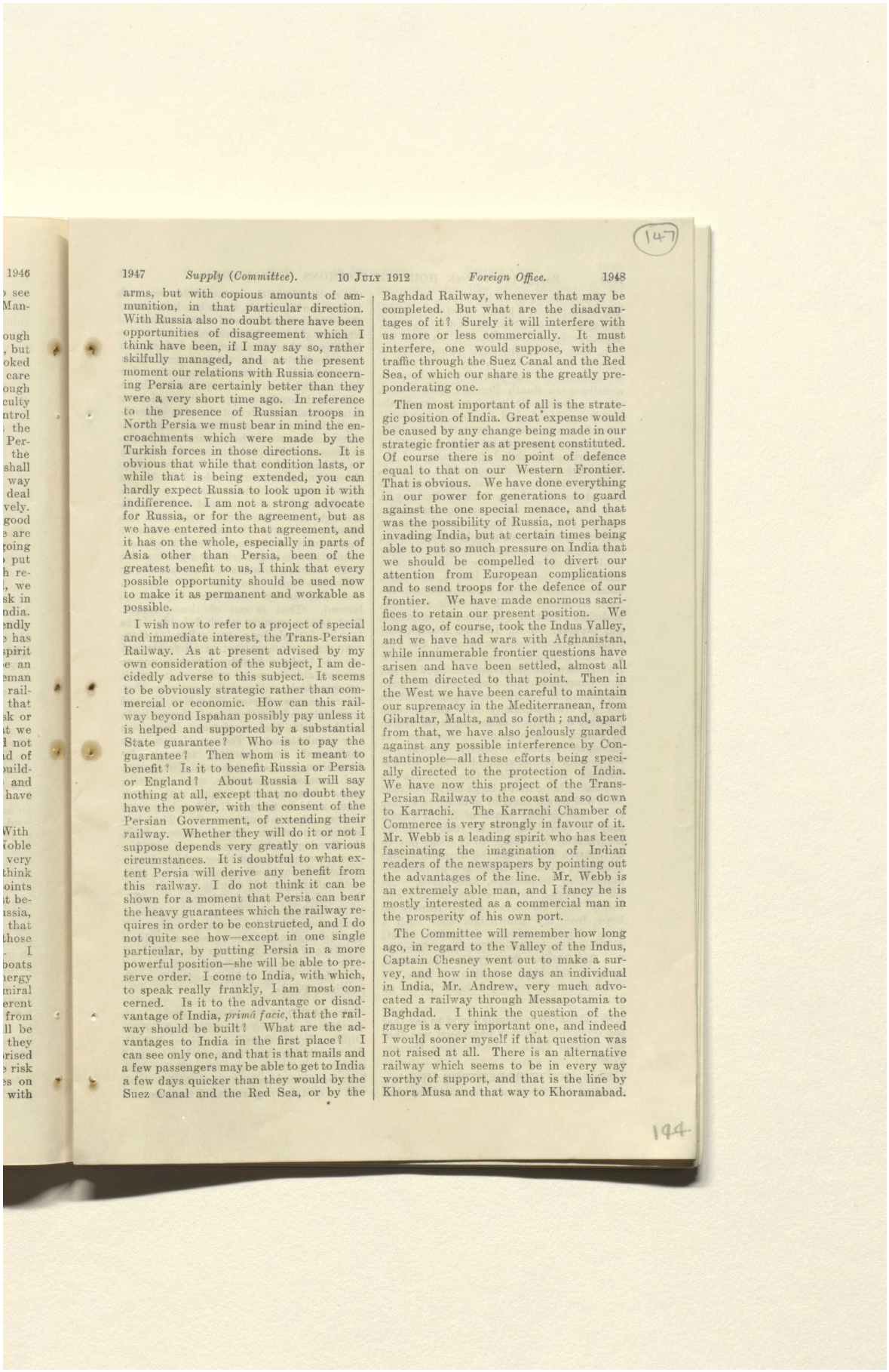

arms, but with copious amounts of ammunition, in that particular direction. With Russia also no doubt there have been opportunities of disagreement which I think have been, if I may say so, rather skilfully managed, and at the present moment our relations with Russia concerning Persia are certainly better than they were a very short time ago. In reference to the presence of Russian troops in North Persia we must bear in mind the encroachments which were made by the Turkish forces in those directions. It is obvious that while that condition lasts, or while that is being extended, you can hardly expect Russia to look upon it with indifference. I am not a strong advocate for Russia, or for the agreement, but as we have entered into that agreement, and it has on the whole, especially in parts of Asia other than Persia, been of the greatest benefit to us, I think that every possible opportunity should be used now to make it as permanent and workable as possible.

I wish now to refer to a project of special and immediate interest, the Trans-Persian Railway. As at present advised by my own consideration of the subject, I am decidedly adverse to this subject. It seems to be obviously strategic rather than commercial or economic. How can this railway beyond Ispahan possibly pay unless it is helped and supported by a substantial State guarantee? Who is to pay the guarantee? Then whom is it meant to benefit? Is it to benefit Russia or Persia or England? About Russia I will say nothing at all, except that no doubt they have the power, with the consent of the Persian Government, of extending their railway. Whether they will do it or not I suppose depends very greatly on various circumstances. It is doubtful to what extent Persia will derive any benefit from this railway. I do not think it can be shown for a moment that Persia can bear the heavy guarantees which the railway requires in order to be constructed, and I do not quite see how—except in one single particular, by putting Persia in a more powerful position—she will be able to preserve order. I come to India, with which, to speak really frankly, I am most concerned. Is it to the advantage or disadvantage of India, *primâ facie*, that the railway should be built? What are the advantages to India in the first place? I can see only one, and that is that mails and a few passengers may be able to get to India a few days quicker than they would by the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, or by the Baghdad Railway, whenever that may be completed. But what are the disadvantages of it? Surely it will interfere with us more or less commercially. It must interfere, one would suppose, with the traffic through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, of which our share is the greatly preponderating one.

Then most important of all is the strategic position of India. Great expense would be caused by any change being made in our strategic frontier as at present constituted. Of course there is no point of defence equal to that on our Western Frontier. That is obvious. We have done everything in our power for generations to guard against the one special menace, and that was the possibility of Russia, not perhaps invading India, but at certain times being able to put so much pressure on India that we should be compelled to divert our attention from European complications and to send troops for the defence of our frontier. We have made enormous sacrifices to retain our present position. We long ago, of course, took the Indus Valley, and we have had wars with Afghanistan, while innumerable frontier questions have arisen and have been settled, almost all of them directed to that point. Then in the West we have been careful to maintain our supremacy in the Mediterranean, from Gibraltar, Malta, and so forth; and, apart from that, we have also jealously guarded against any possible interference by Constantinople—all these efforts being specially directed to the protection of India. We have now this project of the Trans-Persian Railway to the coast and so down to Karrachi. The Karrachi Chamber of Commerce is very strongly in favour of it. Mr. Webb is a leading spirit who has been fascinating the imagination of Indian readers of the newspapers by pointing out the advantages of the line. Mr. Webb is an extremely able man, and I fancy he is mostly interested as a commercial man in the prosperity of his own port.

The Committee will remember how long ago, in regard to the Valley of the Indus, Captain Chesney went out to make a survey, and how in those days an individual in India, Mr. Andrew, very much advocated a railway through Messapotamia to Baghdad. I think the question of the gauge is a very important one, and indeed I would sooner myself if that question was not raised at all. There is an alternative railway which seems to be in every way worthy of support, and that is the line by Khora Musa and that way to Khoramabad.

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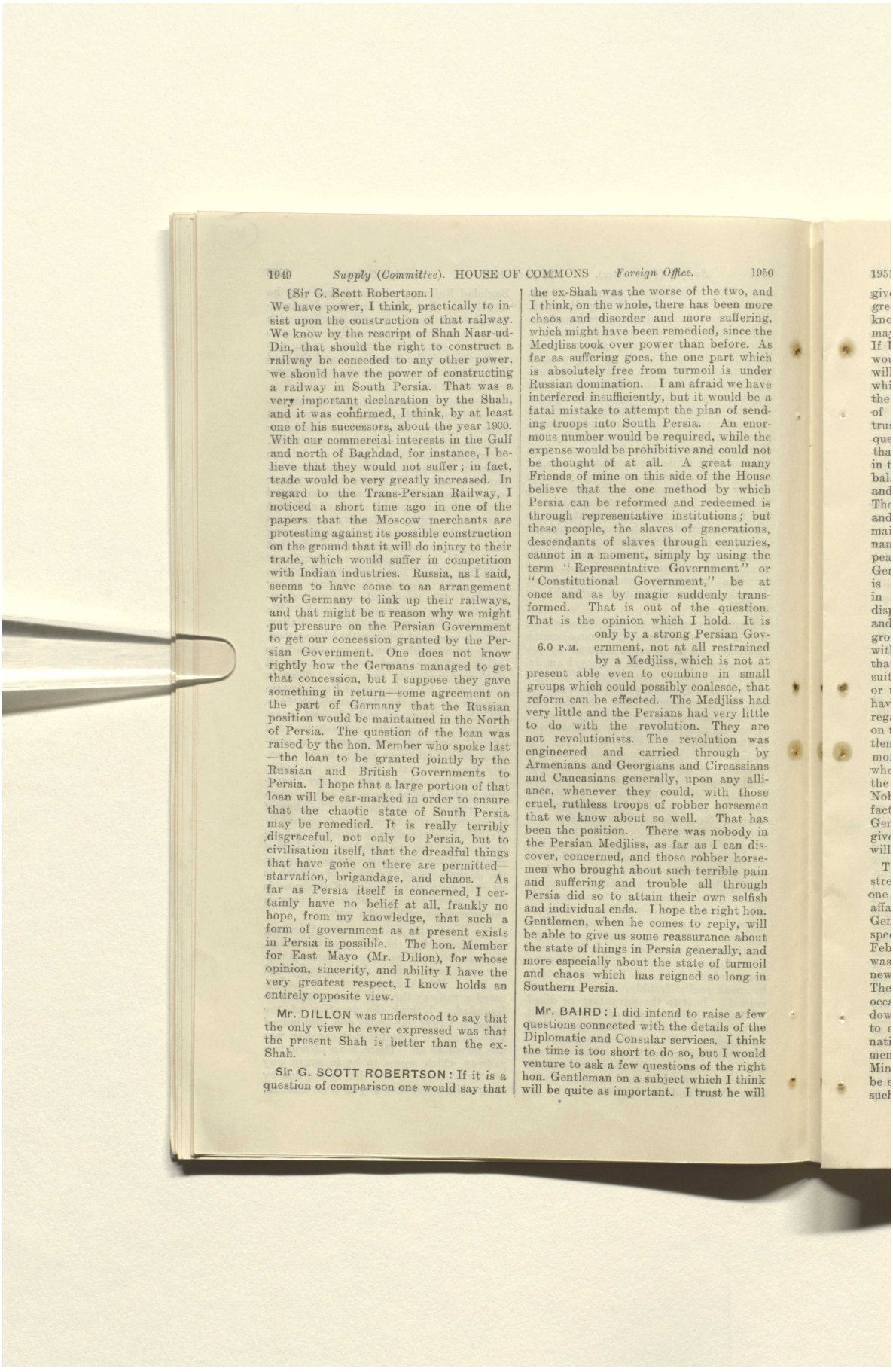

1949 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1950

[Sir G. Scott Robertson.]

We have power, I think, practically to insist upon the construction of that railway. We know by the rescript of Shah Nasr-ud-Din, that should the right to construct a railway be conceded to any other power, we should have the power of constructing a railway in South Persia. That was a very important declaration by the Shah, and it was confirmed, I think, by at least one of his successors, about the year 1900. With our commercial interests in the Gulf and north of Baghdad, for instance, I believe that they would not suffer; in fact, trade would be very greatly increased. In regard to the Trans-Persian Railway, I noticed a short time ago in one of the papers that the Moscow merchants are protesting against its possible construction on the ground that it will do injury to their trade, which would suffer in competition with Indian industries. Russia, as I said, seems to have come to an arrangement with Germany to link up their railways, and that might be a reason why we might put pressure on the Persian Government to get our concession granted by the Persian Government. One does not know rightly how the Germans managed to get that concession, but I suppose they gave something in return—some agreement on the part of Germany that the Russian position would be maintained in the North of Persia. The question of the loan was raised by the hon. Member who spoke last—the loan to be granted jointly by the Russian and British Governments to Persia. I hope that a large portion of that loan will be ear-marked in order to ensure that the chaotic state of South Persia may be remedied. It is really terribly disgraceful, not only to Persia, but to civilisation itself, that the dreadful things that have gone on there are permitted—starvation, brigandage, and chaos. As far as Persia itself is concerned, I certainly have no belief at all, frankly no hope, from my knowledge, that such a form of government as at present exists in Persia is possible. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), for whose opinion, sincerity, and ability I have the very greatest respect, I know holds an entirely opposite view.

Mr. DILLON was understood to say that the only view he ever expressed was that the present Shah is better than the ex-Shah.

Sir G. SCOTT ROBERTSON: If it is a question of comparison one would say that the ex-Shah was the worse of the two, and I think, on the whole, there has been more chaos and disorder and more suffering, which might have been remedied, since the Medjliss took over power than before. As far as suffering goes, the one part which is absolutely free from turmoil is under Russian domination. I am afraid we have interfered insufficiently, but it would be a fatal mistake to attempt the plan of sending troops into South Persia. An enormous number would be required, while the expense would be prohibitive and could not be thought of at all. A great many Friends of mine on this side of the House believe that the one method by which Persia can be reformed and redeemed is through representative institutions; but these people, the slaves of generations, descendants of slaves through centuries, cannot in a moment, simply by using the term "Representative Government" or "Constitutional Government," be at once and as by magic suddenly transformed. That is out of the question. That is the opinion which I hold. It is only by a strong Persian Gov-
6.0 P.M. ernment, not at all restrained by a Medjliss, which is not at present able even to combine in small groups which could possibly coalesce, that reform can be effected. The Medjliss had very little and the Persians had very little to do with the revolution. They are not revolutionists. The revolution was engineered and carried through by Armenians and Georgians and Circassians and Caucasians generally, upon any alliance, whenever they could, with those cruel, ruthless troops of robber horsemen that we know about so well. That has been the position. There was nobody in the Persian Medjliss, as far as I can discover, concerned, and those robber horsemen who brought about such terrible pain and suffering and trouble all through Persia did so to attain their own selfish and individual ends. I hope the right hon. Gentlemen, when he comes to reply, will be able to give us some reassurance about the state of things in Persia generally, and more especially about the state of turmoil and chaos which has reigned so long in Southern Persia.

Mr. BAIRD: I did intend to raise a few questions connected with the details of the Diplomatic and Consular services. I think the time is too short to do so, but I would venture to ask a few questions of the right hon. Gentleman on a subject which I think will be quite as important. I trust he will

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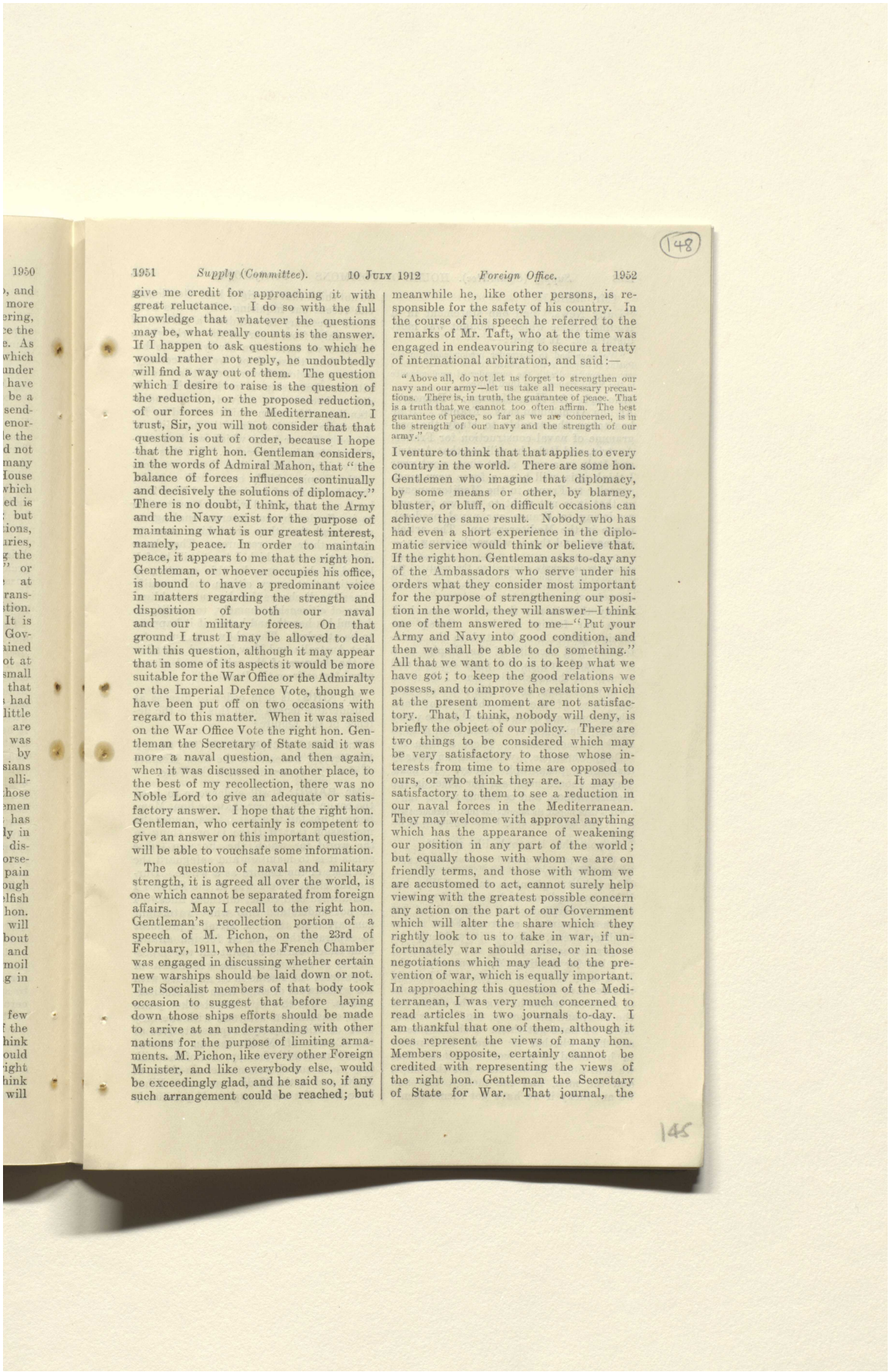

give me credit for approaching it with great reluctance. I do so with the full knowledge that whatever the questions may be, what really counts is the answer. If I happen to ask questions to which he would rather not reply, he undoubtedly will find a way out of them. The question which I desire to raise is the question of the reduction, or the proposed reduction, of our forces in the Mediterranean. I trust, Sir, you will not consider that that question is out of order, because I hope that the right hon. Gentleman considers, in the words of Admiral Mahon, that "the balance of forces influences continually and decisively the solutions of diplomacy." There is no doubt, I think, that the Army and the Navy exist for the purpose of maintaining what is our greatest interest, namely, peace. In order to maintain peace, it appears to me that the right hon. Gentleman, or whoever occupies his office, is bound to have a predominant voice in matters regarding the strength and disposition of both our naval and our military forces. On that ground I trust I may be allowed to deal with this question, although it may appear that in some of its aspects it would be more suitable for the War Office or the Admiralty or the Imperial Defence Vote, though we have been put off on two occasions with regard to this matter. When it was raised on the War Office Vote the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State said it was more a naval question, and then again, when it was discussed in another place, to the best of my recollection, there was no Noble Lord to give an adequate or satisfactory answer. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman, who certainly is competent to give an answer on this important question, will be able to vouchsafe some information.

The question of naval and military strength, it is agreed all over the world, is one which cannot be separated from foreign affairs. May I recall to the right hon. Gentleman's recollection portion of a speech of M. Pichon, on the 23rd of February, 1911, when the French Chamber was engaged in discussing whether certain new warships should be laid down or not. The Socialist members of that body took occasion to suggest that before laying down those ships efforts should be made to arrive at an understanding with other nations for the purpose of limiting armaments. M. Pichon, like every other Foreign Minister, and like everybody else, would be exceedingly glad, and he said so, if any such arrangement could be reached; but meanwhile he, like other persons, is responsible for the safety of his country. In the course of his speech he referred to the remarks of Mr. Taft, who at the time was engaged in endeavouring to secure a treaty of international arbitration, and said:—

"Above all, do not let us forget to strengthen our navy and our army—let us take all necessary precautions. There is, in truth, the guarantee of peace. That is a truth that we cannot too often affirm. The best guarantee of peace, so far as we are concerned, is in the strength of our navy and the strength of our army."

I venture to think that that applies to every country in the world. There are some hon. Gentlemen who imagine that diplomacy, by some means or other, by blarney, bluster, or bluff, on difficult occasions can achieve the same result. Nobody who has had even a short experience in the diplomatic service would think or believe that. If the right hon. Gentleman asks to-day any of the Ambassadors who serve under his orders what they consider most important for the purpose of strengthening our position in the world, they will answer—I think one of them answered to me—"Put your Army and Navy into good condition, and then we shall be able to do something." All that we want to do is to keep what we have got; to keep the good relations we possess, and to improve the relations which at the present moment are not satisfactory. That, I think, nobody will deny, is briefly the object of our policy. There are two things to be considered which may be very satisfactory to those whose interests from time to time are opposed to ours, or who think they are. It may be satisfactory to them to see a reduction in our naval forces in the Mediterranean. They may welcome with approval anything which has the appearance of weakening our position in any part of the world; but equally those with whom we are on friendly terms, and those with whom we are accustomed to act, cannot surely help viewing with the greatest possible concern any action on the part of our Government which will alter the share which they rightly look to us to take in war, if unfortunately war should arise, or in those negotiations which may lead to the prevention of war, which is equally important. In approaching this question of the Mediterranean, I was very much concerned to read articles in two journals to-day. I am thankful that one of them, although it does represent the views of many hon. Members opposite, certainly cannot be credited with representing the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. That journal, the

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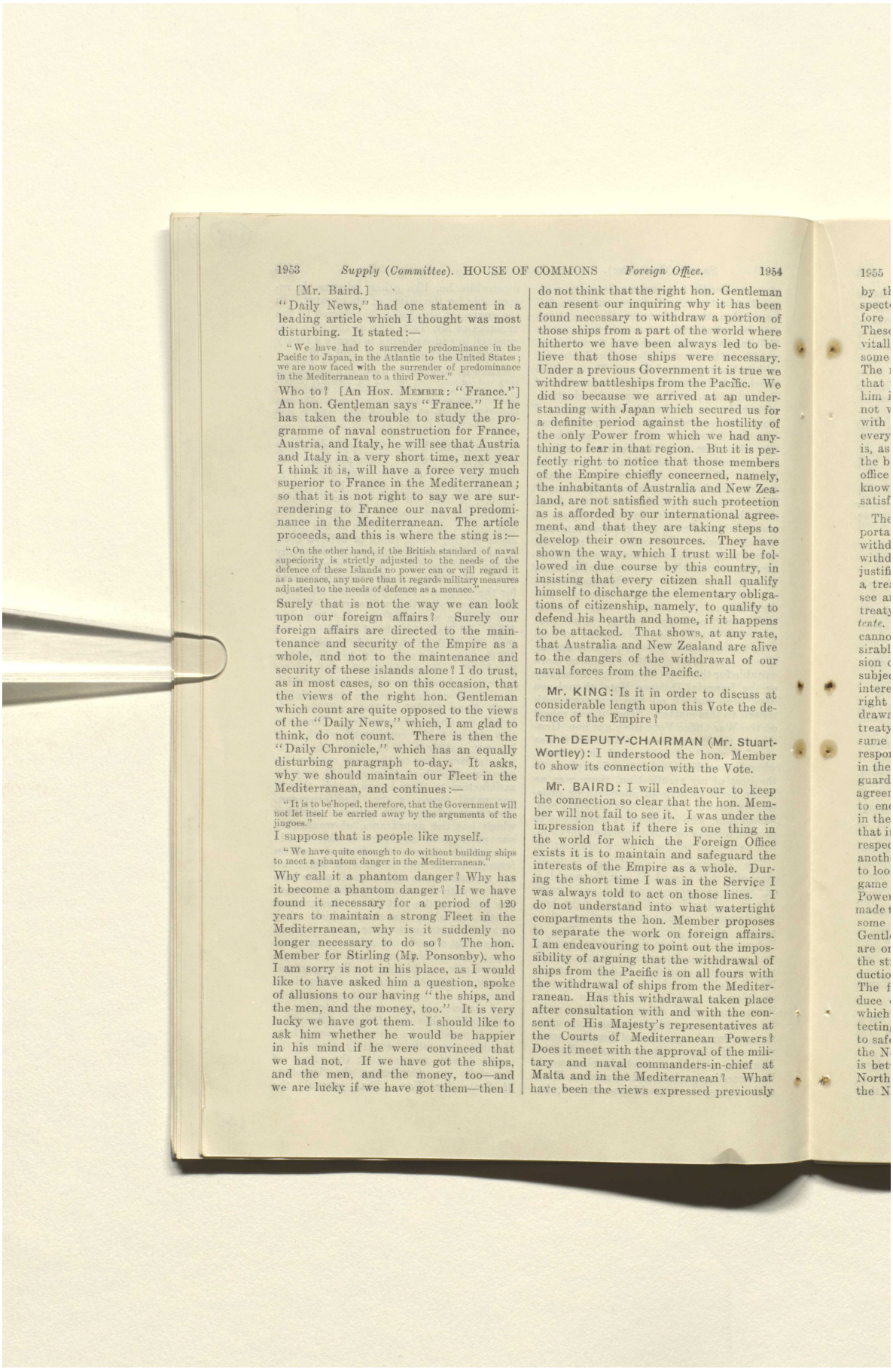

1953 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1954

[Mr. Baird.]

"Daily News," had one statement in a leading article which I thought was most disturbing. It stated:—

"We have had to surrender predominance in the Pacific to Japan, in the Atlantic to the United States; we are now faced with the surrender of predominance in the Mediterranean to a third Power."

Who to? [An Hon. Member: "France."] An hon. Gentleman says "France." If he has taken the trouble to study the programme of naval construction for France, Austria, and Italy, he will see that Austria and Italy in a very short time, next year I think it is, will have a force very much superior to France in the Mediterranean; so that it is not right to say we are surrendering to France our naval predominance in the Mediterranean. The article proceeds, and this is where the sting is:—

"On the other hand, if the British standard of naval superiority is strictly adjusted to the needs of the defence of these Islands no power can or will regard it as a menace, any more than it regards military measures adjusted to the needs of defence as a menace."

Surely that is not the way we can look upon our foreign affairs? Surely our foreign affairs are directed to the maintenance and security of the Empire as a whole, and not to the maintenance and security of these islands alone? I do trust, as in most cases, so on this occasion, that the views of the right hon. Gentleman which count are quite opposed to the views of the "Daily News," which, I am glad to think, do not count. There is then the "Daily Chronicle," which has an equally disturbing paragraph to-day. It asks, why we should maintain our Fleet in the Mediterranean, and continues:—

"It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Government will not let itself be carried away by the arguments of the jingoes."

I suppose that is people like myself.

"We have quite enough to do without building ships to meet a phantom danger in the Mediterranean."

Why call it a phantom danger? Why has it become a phantom danger? If we have found it necessary for a period of 120 years to maintain a strong Fleet in the Mediterranean, why is it suddenly no longer necessary to do so? The hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Ponsonby), who I am sorry is not in his place, as I would like to have asked him a question, spoke of allusions to our having "the ships, and the men, and the money, too." It is very lucky we have got them. I should like to ask him whether he would be happier in his mind if he were convinced that we had not. If we have got the ships, and the men, and the money, too—and we are lucky if we have got them—then I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman can resent our inquiring why it has been found necessary to withdraw a portion of those ships from a part of the world where hitherto we have been always led to believe that those ships were necessary. Under a previous Government it is true we withdrew battleships from the Pacific. We did so because we arrived at an understanding with Japan which secured us for a definite period against the hostility of the only Power from which we had anything to fear in that region. But it is perfectly right to notice that those members of the Empire chiefly concerned, namely, the inhabitants of Australia and New Zealand, are not satisfied with such protection as is afforded by our international agreement, and that they are taking steps to develop their own resources. They have shown the way, which I trust will be followed in due course by this country, in insisting that every citizen shall qualify himself to discharge the elementary obligations of citizenship, namely, to qualify to defend his hearth and home, if it happens to be attacked. That shows, at any rate, that Australia and New Zealand are alive to the dangers of the withdrawal of our naval forces from the Pacific.

Mr. KING: Is it in order to discuss at considerable length upon this Vote the defence of the Empire?

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN (Mr. Stuart-Wortley): I understood the hon. Member to show its connection with the Vote.

Mr. BAIRD: I will endeavour to keep the connection so clear that the hon. Member will not fail to see it. I was under the impression that if there is one thing in the world for which the Foreign Office exists it is to maintain and safeguard the interests of the Empire as a whole. During the short time I was in the Service I was always told to act on those lines. I do not understand into what watertight compartments the hon. Member proposes to separate the work on foreign affairs. I am endeavouring to point out the impossibility of arguing that the withdrawal of ships from the Pacific is on all fours with the withdrawal of ships from the Mediterranean. Has this withdrawal taken place after consultation with and with the consent of His Majesty's representatives at the Courts of Mediterranean Powers? Does it meet with the approval of the military and naval commanders-in-chief at Malta and in the Mediterranean? What have been the views expressed previously

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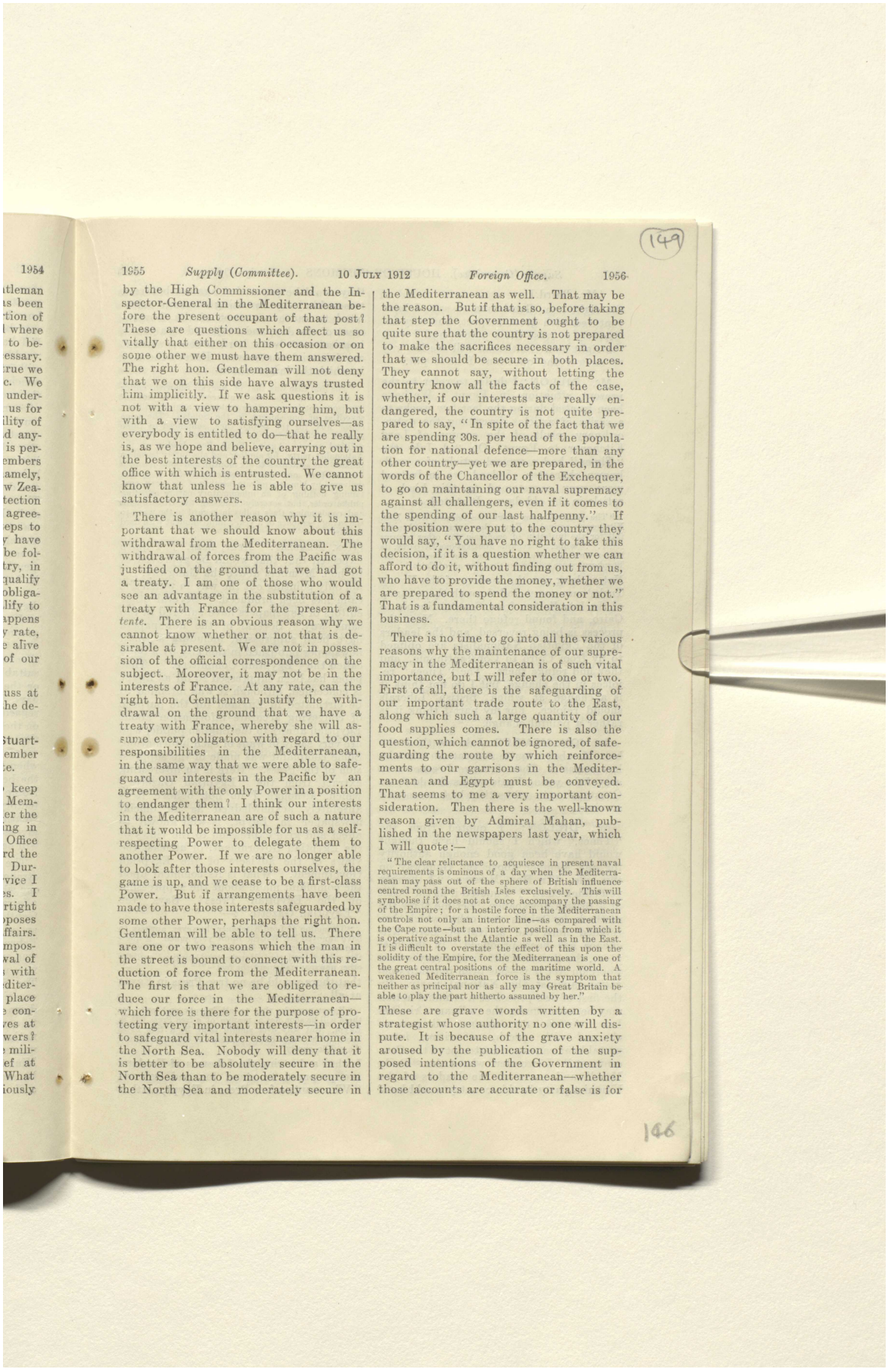

(149)

by the High Commissioner and the Inspector-General in the Mediterranean before the present occupant of that post? These are questions which affect us so vitally that either on this occasion or on some other we must have them answered. The right hon. Gentleman will not deny that we on this side have always trusted him implicitly. If we ask questions it is not with a view to hampering him, but with a view to satisfying ourselves—as everybody is entitled to do—that he really is, as we hope and believe, carrying out in the best interests of the country the great office with which is entrusted. We cannot know that unless he is able to give us satisfactory answers.

There is another reason why it is important that we should know about this withdrawal from the Mediterranean. The withdrawal of forces from the Pacific was justified on the ground that we had got a treaty. I am one of those who would see an advantage in the substitution of a treaty with France for the present *entente*. There is an obvious reason why we cannot know whether or not that is desirable at present. We are not in possession of the official correspondence on the subject. Moreover, it may not be in the interests of France. At any rate, can the right hon. Gentleman justify the withdrawal on the ground that we have a treaty with France, whereby she will assume every obligation with regard to our responsibilities in the Mediterranean, in the same way that we were able to safeguard our interests in the Pacific by an agreement with the only Power in a position to endanger them? I think our interests in the Mediterranean are of such a nature that it would be impossible for us as a self-respecting Power to delegate them to another Power. If we are no longer able to look after those interests ourselves, the game is up, and we cease to be a first-class Power. But if arrangements have been made to have those interests safeguarded by some other Power, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be able to tell us. There are one or two reasons which the man in the street is bound to connect with this reduction of force from the Mediterranean. The first is that we are obliged to reduce our force in the Mediterranean—which force is there for the purpose of protecting very important interests—in order to safeguard vital interests nearer home in the North Sea. Nobody will deny that it is better to be absolutely secure in the North Sea than to be moderately secure in the North Sea and moderately secure in the Mediterranean as well. That may be the reason. But if that is so, before taking that step the Government ought to be quite sure that the country is not prepared to make the sacrifices necessary in order that we should be secure in both places. They cannot say, without letting the country know all the facts of the case, whether, if our interests are really endangered, the country is not quite prepared to say, "In spite of the fact that we are spending 30s. per head of the population for national defence—more than any other country—yet we are prepared, in the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to go on maintaining our naval supremacy against all challengers, even if it comes to the spending of our last halfpenny." If the position were put to the country they would say, "You have no right to take this decision, if it is a question whether we can afford to do it, without finding out from us, who have to provide the money, whether we are prepared to spend the money or not." That is a fundamental consideration in this business.

There is no time to go into all the various reasons why the maintenance of our supremacy in the Mediterranean is of such vital importance, but I will refer to one or two. First of all, there is the safeguarding of our important trade route to the East, along which such a large quantity of our food supplies comes. There is also the question, which cannot be ignored, of safeguarding the route by which reinforcements to our garrisons in the Mediterranean and Egypt must be conveyed. That seems to me a very important consideration. Then there is the well-known reason given by Admiral Mahan, published in the newspapers last year, which I will quote:—

"The clear reluctance to acquiesce in present naval requirements is ominous of a day when the Mediterranean may pass out of the sphere of British influence centred round the British Isles exclusively. This will symbolise if it does not at once accompany the passing of the Empire; for a hostile force in the Mediterranean controls not only an interior line—as compared with the Cape route—but an interior position from which it is operative against the Atlantic as well as in the East. It is difficult to overstate the effect of this upon the solidity of the Empire, for the Mediterranean is one of the great central positions of the maritime world. A weakened Mediterranean force is the symptom that neither as principal nor as ally may Great Britain be able to play the part hitherto assumed by her."

These are grave words written by a strategist whose authority no one will dispute. It is because of the grave anxiety aroused by the publication of the supposed intentions of the Government in regard to the Mediterranean—whether those accounts are accurate or false is for

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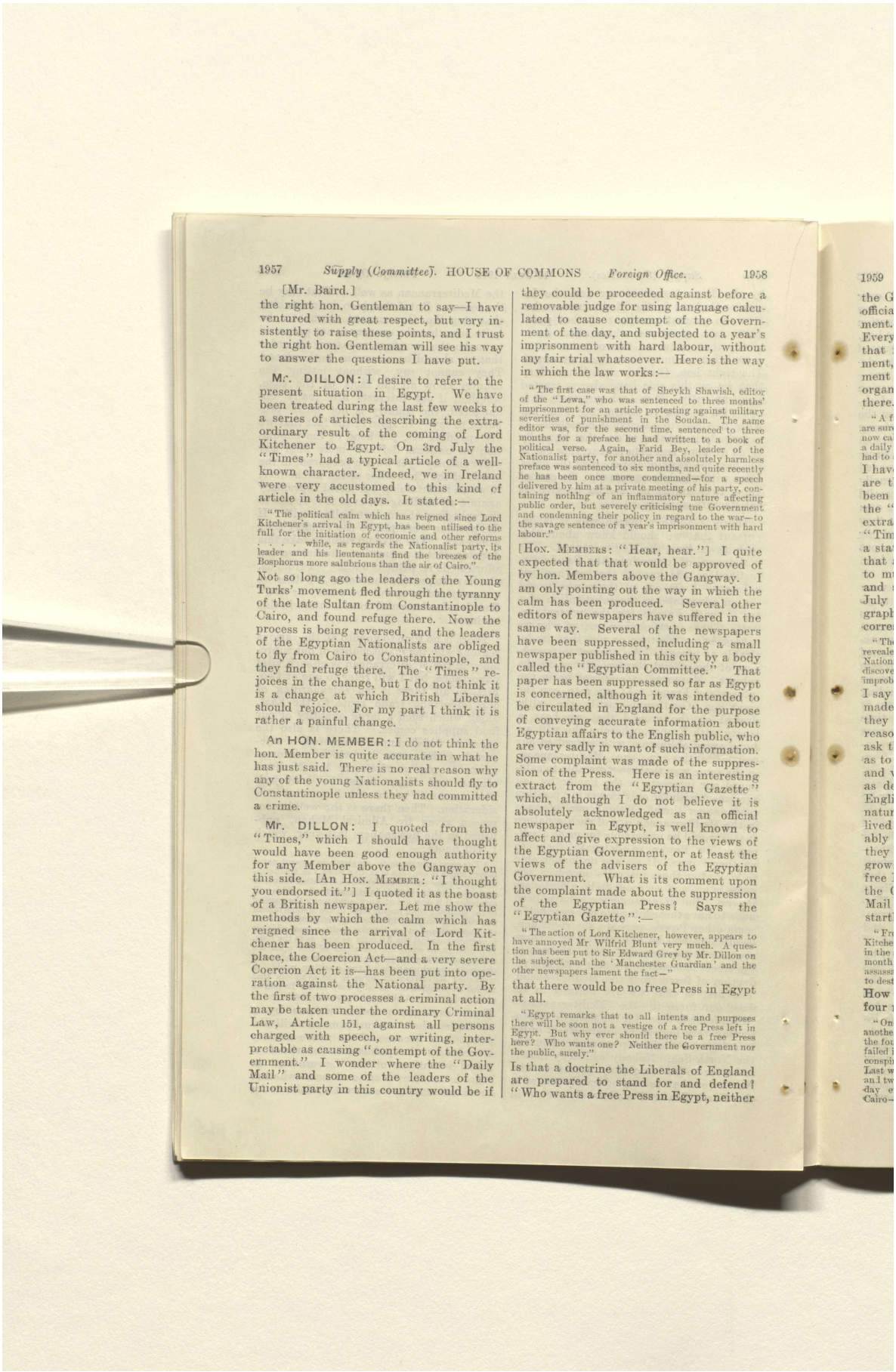

1957 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1958

[Mr. Baird.]

the right hon. Gentleman to say—I have ventured with great respect, but very insistently to raise these points, and I trust the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to answer the questions I have put.

Mr. DILLON: I desire to refer to the present situation in Egypt. We have been treated during the last few weeks to a series of articles describing the extraordinary result of the coming of Lord Kitchener to Egypt. On 3rd July the "Times" had a typical article of a well-known character. Indeed, we in Ireland were very accustomed to this kind of article in the old days. It stated:—

"The political calm which has reigned since Lord Kitchener's arrival in Egypt, has been utilised to the full for the initiation of economic and other reforms . . . . while, as regards the Nationalist party, its leader and his lieutenants find the breezes of the Bosphorus more salubrious than the air of Cairo."

Not so long ago the leaders of the Young Turks' movement fled through the tyranny of the late Sultan from Constantinople to Cairo, and found refuge there. Now the process is being reversed, and the leaders of the Egyptian Nationalists are obliged to fly from Cairo to Constantinople, and they find refuge there. The "Times" rejoices in the change, but I do not think it is a change at which British Liberals should rejoice. For my part I think it is rather a painful change.

An HON. MEMBER: I do not think the hon. Member is quite accurate in what he has just said. There is no real reason why any of the young Nationalists should fly to Constantinople unless they had committed a crime.

Mr. DILLON: I quoted from the "Times," which I should have thought would have been good enough authority for any Member above the Gangway on this side. [An HON. MEMBER: "I thought you endorsed it."] I quoted it as the boast of a British newspaper. Let me show the methods by which the calm which has reigned since the arrival of Lord Kitchener has been produced. In the first place, the Coercion Act—and a very severe Coercion Act it is—has been put into operation against the National party. By the first of two processes a criminal action may be taken under the ordinary Criminal Law, Article 151, against all persons charged with speech, or writing, interpretable as causing "contempt of the Government." I wonder where the "Daily Mail" and some of the leaders of the Unionist party in this country would be if they could be proceeded against before a removable judge for using language calculated to cause contempt of the Government of the day, and subjected to a year's imprisonment with hard labour, without any fair trial whatsoever. Here is the way in which the law works:—

"The first case was that of Sheykh Shawish, editor of the "Lewa," who was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for an article protesting against military severities of punishment in the Soudan. The same editor was, for the second time, sentenced to three months for a preface he had written to a book of political verse. Again, Farid Bey, leader of the Nationalist party, for another and absolutely harmless preface was sentenced to six months, and quite recently he has been once more condemned—for a speech delivered by him at a private meeting of his party, containing nothing of an inflammatory nature affecting public order, but severely criticising the Government and condemning their policy in regard to the war—to the savage sentence of a year's imprisonment with hard labour."

[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I quite expected that that would be approved of by hon. Members above the Gangway. I am only pointing out the way in which the calm has been produced. Several other editors of newspapers have suffered in the same way. Several of the newspapers have been suppressed, including a small newspaper published in this city by a body called the "Egyptian Committee." That paper has been suppressed so far as Egypt is concerned, although it was intended to be circulated in England for the purpose of conveying accurate information about Egyptian affairs to the English public, who are very sadly in want of such information. Some complaint was made of the suppression of the Press. Here is an interesting extract from the "Egyptian Gazette" which, although I do not believe it is absolutely acknowledged as an official newspaper in Egypt, is well known to affect and give expression to the views of the Egyptian Government, or at least the views of the advisers of the Egyptian Government. What is its comment upon the complaint made about the suppression of the Egyptian Press? Says the "Egyptian Gazette":—

"The action of Lord Kitchener, however, appears to have annoyed Mr. Wilfrid Blunt very much. A question has been put to Sir Edward Grey by Mr. Dillon on the subject, and the 'Manchester Guardian' and the other newspapers lament the fact—"

that there would be no free Press in Egypt at all.

"Egypt remarks that to all intents and purposes there will be soon not a vestige of a free Press left in Egypt. But why ever should there be a free Press here? Who wants one? Neither the Government nor the public, surely."

Is that a doctrine the Liberals of England are prepared to stand for and defend? "Who wants a free Press in Egypt, neither

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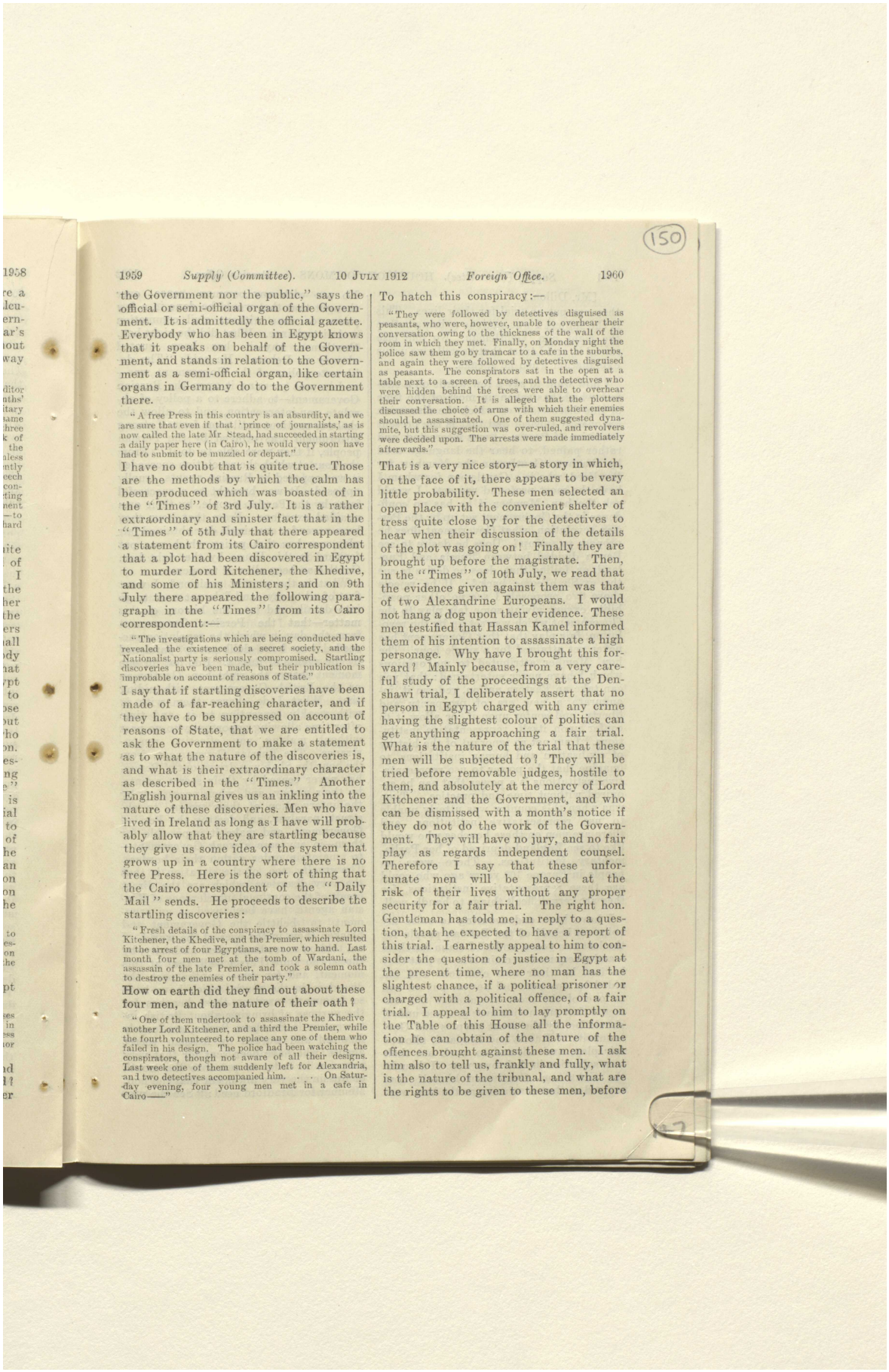

the Government nor the public," says the official or semi-official organ of the Government. It is admittedly the official gazette. Everybody who has been in Egypt knows that it speaks on behalf of the Government, and stands in relation to the Government as a semi-official organ, like certain organs in Germany do to the Government there.

"A free Press in this country is an absurdity, and we are sure that even if that 'prince of journalists,' as is now called the late Mr Stead, had succeeded in starting a daily paper here (in Cairo), he would very soon have had to submit to be muzzled or depart."

I have no doubt that is quite true. Those are the methods by which the calm has been produced which was boasted of in the "Times" of 3rd July. It is a rather extraordinary and sinister fact that in the "Times" of 5th July that there appeared a statement from its Cairo correspondent that a plot had been discovered in Egypt to murder Lord Kitchener, the Khedive, and some of his Ministers; and on 9th July there appeared the following paragraph in the "Times" from its Cairo correspondent:—

"The investigations which are being conducted have revealed the existence of a secret society, and the Nationalist party is seriously compromised. Startling discoveries have been made, but their publication is improbable on account of reasons of State."

I say that if startling discoveries have been made of a far-reaching character, and if they have to be suppressed on account of reasons of State, that we are entitled to ask the Government to make a statement as to what the nature of the discoveries is, and what is their extraordinary character as described in the "Times." Another English journal gives us an inkling into the nature of these discoveries. Men who have lived in Ireland as long as I have will probably allow that they are startling because they give us some idea of the system that grows up in a country where there is no free Press. Here is the sort of thing that the Cairo correspondent of the "Daily Mail" sends. He proceeds to describe the startling discoveries:

"Fresh details of the conspiracy to assassinate Lord Kitchener, the Khedive, and the Premier, which resulted in the arrest of four Egyptians, are now to hand. Last month four men met at the tomb of Wardani, the assassain of the late Premier, and took a solemn oath to destroy the enemies of their party."

How on earth did they find out about these four men, and the nature of their oath?

"One of them undertook to assassinate the Khedive another Lord Kitchener, and a third the Premier, while the fourth volunteered to replace any one of them who failed in his design. The police had been watching the conspirators, though not aware of all their designs. Last week one of them suddenly left for Alexandria, and two detectives accompanied him. . . . On Saturday evening, four young men met in a cafe in Cairo——"

To hatch this conspiracy:—

"They were followed by detectives disguised as peasants, who were, however, unable to overhear their conversation owing to the thickness of the wall of the room in which they met. Finally, on Monday night the police saw them go by tramcar to a cafe in the suburbs, and again they were followed by detectives disguised as peasants. The conspirators sat in the open at a table next to a screen of trees, and the detectives who were hidden behind the trees were able to overhear their conversation. It is alleged that the plotters discussed the choice of arms with which their enemies should be assassinated. One of them suggested dynamite, but this suggestion was over-ruled, and revolvers were decided upon. The arrests were made immediately afterwards."

That is a very nice story—a story in which, on the face of it, there appears to be very little probability. These men selected an open place with the convenient shelter of tress quite close by for the detectives to hear when their discussion of the details of the plot was going on! Finally they are brought up before the magistrate. Then, in the "Times" of 10th July, we read that the evidence given against them was that of two Alexandrine Europeans. I would not hang a dog upon their evidence. These men testified that Hassan Kamel informed them of his intention to assassinate a high personage. Why have I brought this forward? Mainly because, from a very careful study of the proceedings at the Denshawi trial, I deliberately assert that no person in Egypt charged with any crime having the slightest colour of politics can get anything approaching a fair trial. What is the nature of the trial that these men will be subjected to? They will be tried before removable judges, hostile to them, and absolutely at the mercy of Lord Kitchener and the Government, and who can be dismissed with a month's notice if they do not do the work of the Government. They will have no jury, and no fair play as regards independent counsel. Therefore I say that these unfortunate men will be placed at the risk of their lives without any proper security for a fair trial. The right hon. Gentleman has told me, in reply to a question, that he expected to have a report of this trial. I earnestly appeal to him to consider the question of justice in Egypt at the present time, where no man has the slightest chance, if a political prisoner or charged with a political offence, of a fair trial. I appeal to him to lay promptly on the Table of this House all the information he can obtain of the nature of the offences brought against these men. I ask him also to tell us, frankly and fully, what is the nature of the tribunal, and what are the rights to be given to these men, before

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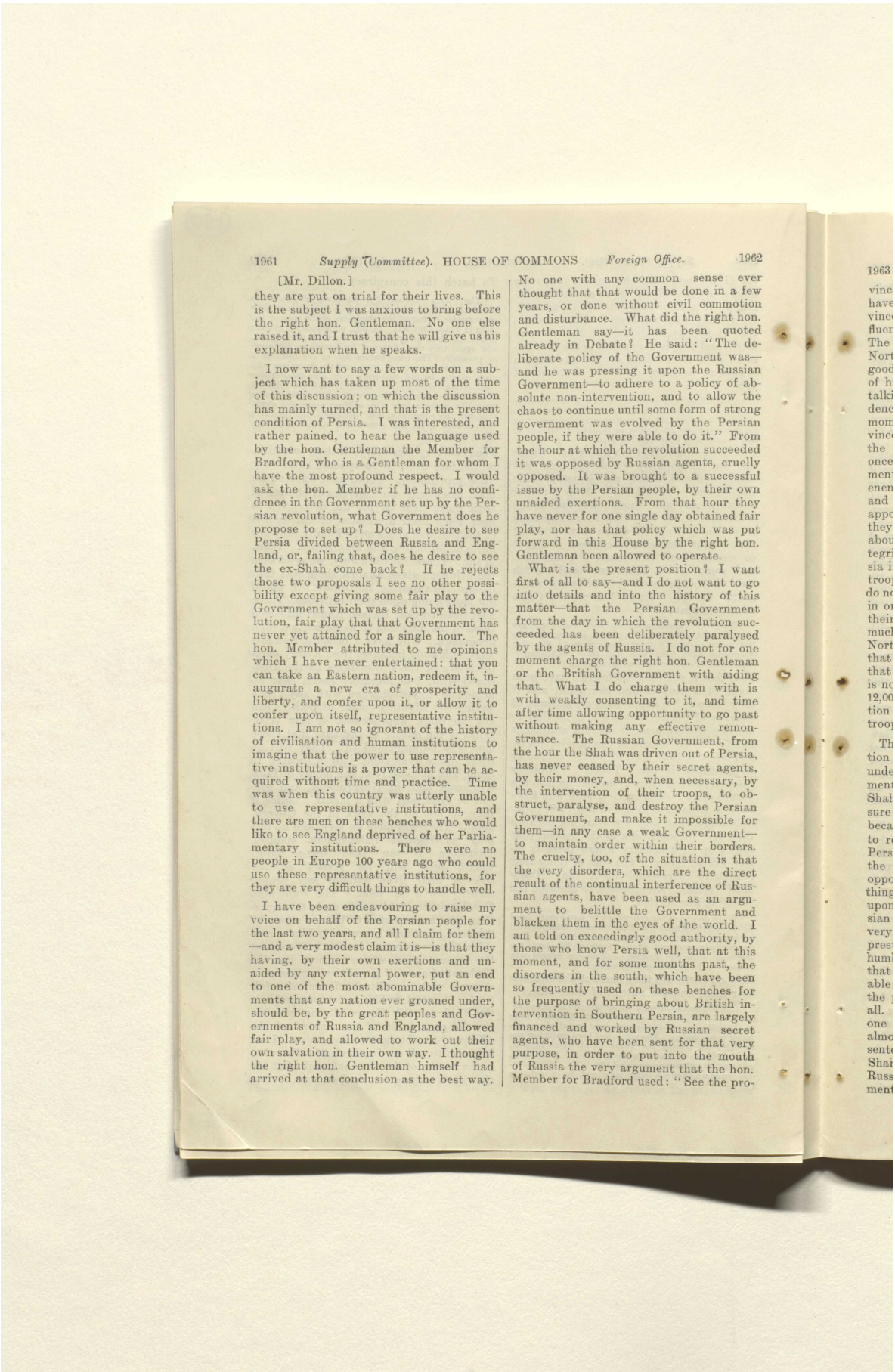

1961 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1962

[Mr. Dillon.]

they are put on trial for their lives. This is the subject I was anxious to bring before the right hon. Gentleman. No one else raised it, and I trust that he will give us his explanation when he speaks.

I now want to say a few words on a subject which has taken up most of the time of this discussion; on which the discussion has mainly turned, and that is the present condition of Persia. I was interested, and rather pained, to hear the language used by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford, who is a Gentleman for whom I have the most profound respect. I would ask the hon. Member if he has no confidence in the Government set up by the Persian revolution, what Government does he propose to set up? Does he desire to see Persia divided between Russia and England, or, failing that, does he desire to see the ex-Shah come back? If he rejects those two proposals I see no other possibility except giving some fair play to the Government which was set up by the revolution, fair play that that Government has never yet attained for a single hour. The hon. Member attributed to me opinions which I have never entertained: that you can take an Eastern nation, redeem it, inaugurate a new era of prosperity and liberty, and confer upon it, or allow it to confer upon itself, representative institutions. I am not so ignorant of the history of civilisation and human institutions to imagine that the power to use representative institutions is a power that can be acquired without time and practice. Time was when this country was utterly unable to use representative institutions, and there are men on these benches who would like to see England deprived of her Parliamentary institutions. There were no people in Europe 100 years ago who could use these representative institutions, for they are very difficult things to handle well.

I have been endeavouring to raise my voice on behalf of the Persian people for the last two years, and all I claim for them —and a very modest claim it is—is that they having, by their own exertions and unaided by any external power, put an end to one of the most abominable Governments that any nation ever groaned under, should be, by the great peoples and Governments of Russia and England, allowed fair play, and allowed to work out their own salvation in their own way. I thought the right hon. Gentleman himself had arrived at that conclusion as the best way. No one with any common sense ever thought that that would be done in a few years, or done without civil commotion and disturbance. What did the right hon. Gentleman say—it has been quoted already in Debate? He said: "The deliberate policy of the Government was—and he was pressing it upon the Russian Government—to adhere to a policy of absolute non-intervention, and to allow the chaos to continue until some form of strong government was evolved by the Persian people, if they were able to do it." From the hour at which the revolution succeeded it was opposed by Russian agents, cruelly opposed. It was brought to a successful issue by the Persian people, by their own unaided exertions. From that hour they have never for one single day obtained fair play, nor has that policy which was put forward in this House by the right hon. Gentleman been allowed to operate.

What is the present position? I want first of all to say—and I do not want to go into details and into the history of this matter—that the Persian Government from the day in which the revolution succeeded has been deliberately paralysed by the agents of Russia. I do not for one moment charge the right hon. Gentleman or the British Government with aiding that. What I do charge them with is with weakly consenting to it, and time after time allowing opportunity to go past without making any effective remonstrance. The Russian Government, from the hour the Shah was driven out of Persia, has never ceased by their secret agents, by their money, and, when necessary, by the intervention of their troops, to obstruct, paralyse, and destroy the Persian Government, and make it impossible for them—in any case a weak Government—to maintain order within their borders. The cruelty, too, of the situation is that the very disorders, which are the direct result of the continual interference of Russian agents, have been used as an argument to belittle the Government and blacken them in the eyes of the world. I am told on exceedingly good authority, by those who know Persia well, that at this moment, and for some months past, the disorders in the south, which have been so frequently used on these benches for the purpose of bringing about British intervention in Southern Persia, are largely financed and worked by Russian secret agents, who have been sent for that very purpose, in order to put into the mouth of Russia the very argument that the hon. Member for Bradford used: "See the pro-

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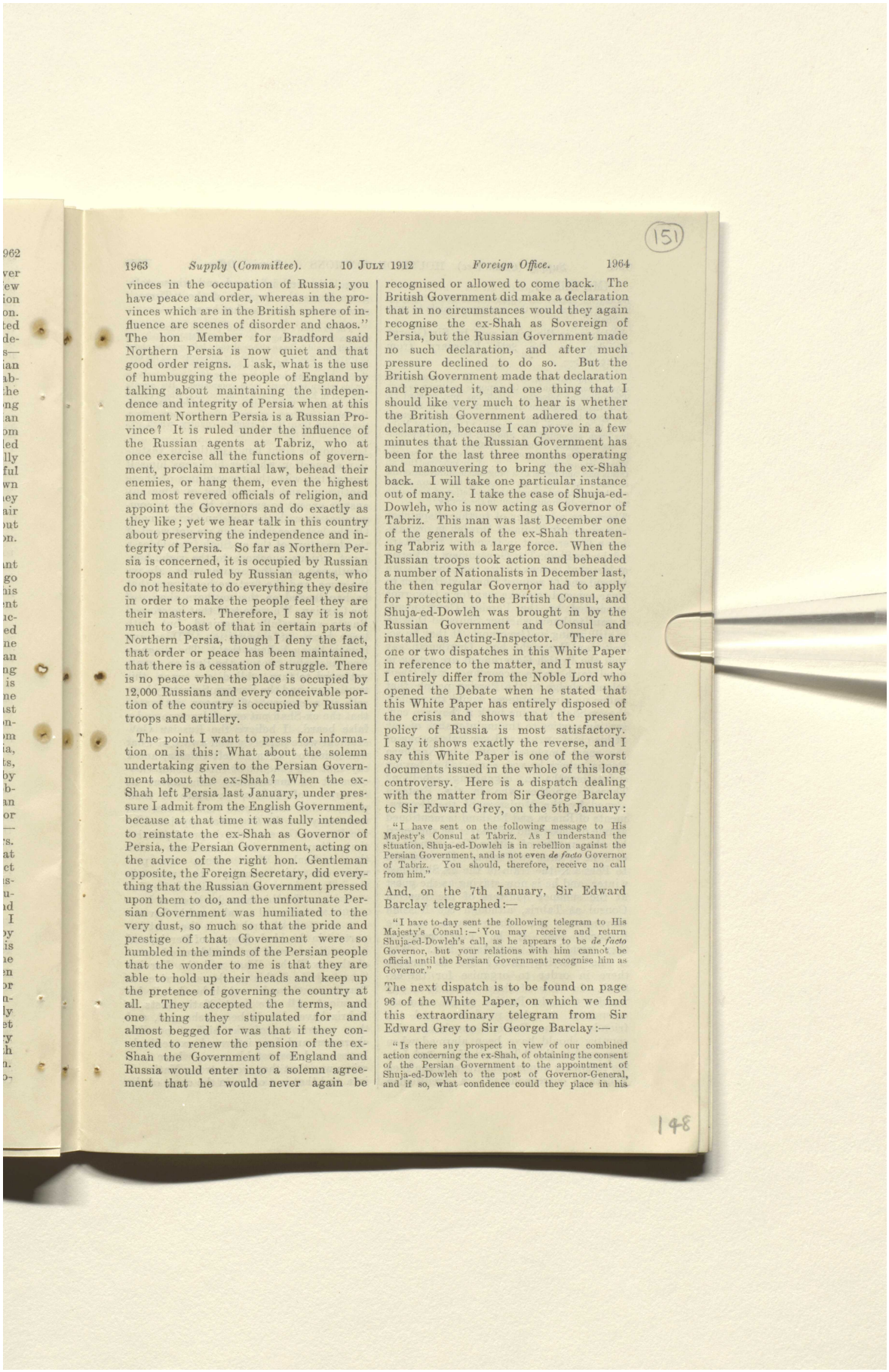

vinces in the occupation of Russia; you have peace and order, whereas in the provinces which are in the British sphere of influence are scenes of disorder and chaos." The hon Member for Bradford said Northern Persia is now quiet and that good order reigns. I ask, what is the use of humbugging the people of England by talking about maintaining the independence and integrity of Persia when at this moment Northern Persia is a Russian Province? It is ruled under the influence of the Russian agents at Tabriz, who at once exercise all the functions of government, proclaim martial law, behead their enemies, or hang them, even the highest and most revered officials of religion, and appoint the Governors and do exactly as they like; yet we hear talk in this country about preserving the independence and integrity of Persia. So far as Northern Persia is concerned, it is occupied by Russian troops and ruled by Russian agents, who do not hesitate to do everything they desire in order to make the people feel they are their masters. Therefore, I say it is not much to boast of that in certain parts of Northern Persia, though I deny the fact, that order or peace has been maintained, that there is a cessation of struggle. There is no peace when the place is occupied by 12,000 Russians and every conceivable portion of the country is occupied by Russian troops and artillery.

The point I want to press for information on is this: What about the solemn undertaking given to the Persian Government about the ex-Shah? When the ex-Shah left Persia last January, under pressure I admit from the English Government, because at that time it was fully intended to reinstate the ex-Shah as Governor of Persia, the Persian Government, acting on the advice of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Foreign Secretary, did everything that the Russian Government pressed upon them to do, and the unfortunate Persian Government was humiliated to the very dust, so much so that the pride and prestige of that Government were so humbled in the minds of the Persian people that the wonder to me is that they are able to hold up their heads and keep up the pretence of governing the country at all. They accepted the terms, and one thing they stipulated for and almost begged for was that if they consented to renew the pension of the ex-Shah the Government of England and Russia would enter into a solemn agreement that he would never again be recognised or allowed to come back. The British Government did make a declaration that in no circumstances would they again recognise the ex-Shah as Sovereign of Persia, but the Russian Government made no such declaration, and after much pressure declined to do so. But the British Government made that declaration and repeated it, and one thing that I should like very much to hear is whether the British Government adhered to that declaration, because I can prove in a few minutes that the Russian Government has been for the last three months operating and manœuvering to bring the ex-Shah back. I will take one particular instance out of many. I take the case of Shuja-ed-Dowleh, who is now acting as Governor of Tabriz. This man was last December one of the generals of the ex-Shah threatening Tabriz with a large force. When the Russian troops took action and beheaded a number of Nationalists in December last, the then regular Governor had to apply for protection to the British Consul, and Shuja-ed-Dowleh was brought in by the Russian Government and Consul and installed as Acting-Inspector. There are one or two dispatches in this White Paper in reference to the matter, and I must say I entirely differ from the Noble Lord who opened the Debate when he stated that this White Paper has entirely disposed of the crisis and shows that the present policy of Russia is most satisfactory. I say it shows exactly the reverse, and I say this White Paper is one of the worst documents issued in the whole of this long controversy. Here is a dispatch dealing with the matter from Sir George Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, on the 5th January:

"I have sent on the following message to His Majesty's Consul at Tabriz. As I understand the situation, Shuja-ed-Dowleh is in rebellion against the Persian Government, and is not even *de facto* Governor of Tabriz. You should, therefore, receive no call from him."

And, on the 7th January, Sir Edward Barclay telegraphed:—

"I have to-day sent the following telegram to His Majesty's Consul:—'You may receive and return Shuja-ed-Dowleh's call, as he appears to be *de facto* Governor, but your relations with him cannot be official until the Persian Government recognise him as Governor."

The next dispatch is to be found on page 96 of the White Paper, on which we find this extraordinary telegram from Sir Edward Grey to Sir George Barclay:—

"Is there any prospect in view of our combined action concerning the ex-Shah, of obtaining the consent of the Persian Government to the appointment of Shuja-ed-Dowleh to the post of Governor-General, and if so, what confidence could they place in his

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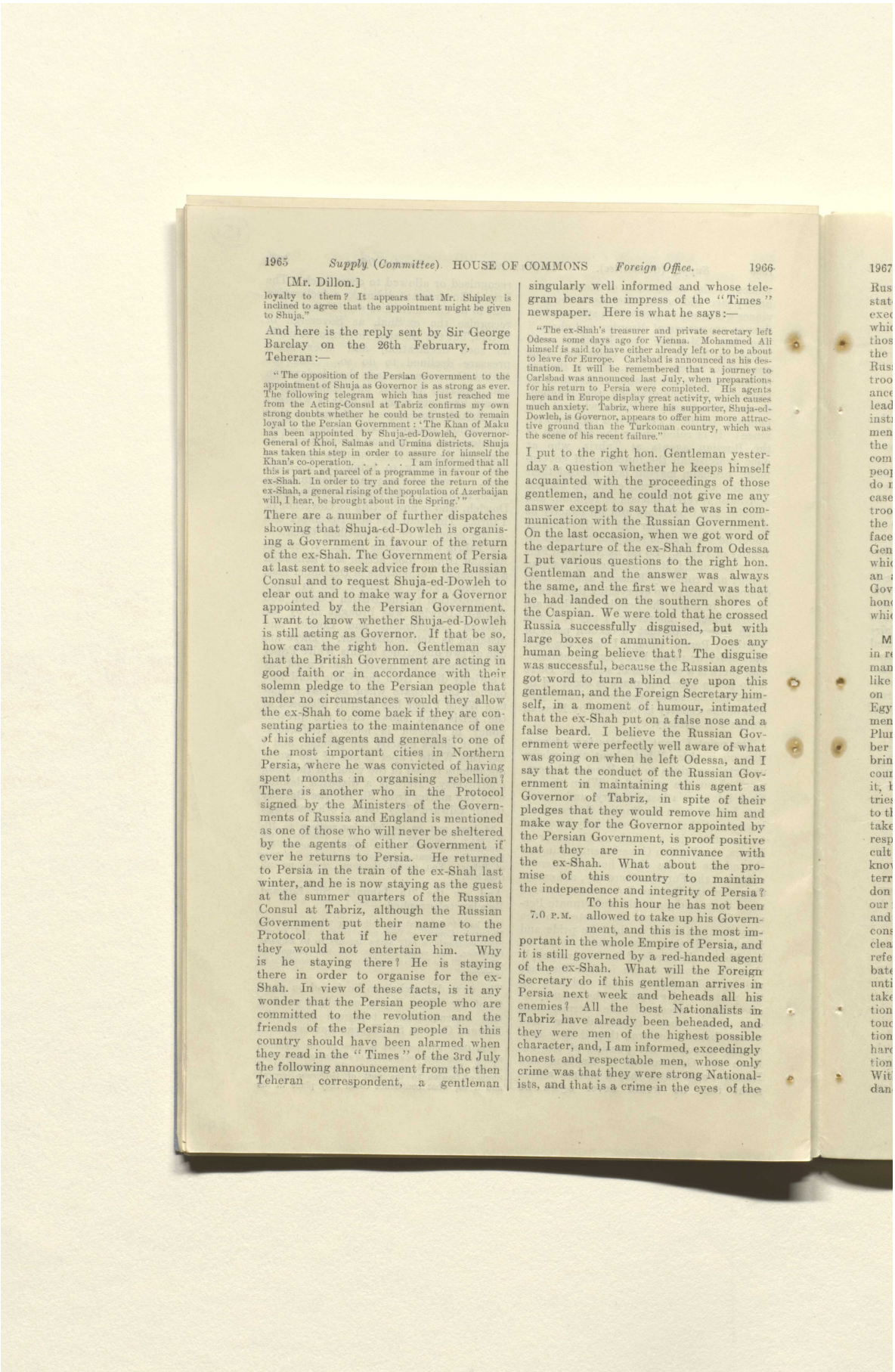

[Mr. Dillon.]

loyalty to them? It appears that Mr. Shipley is inclined to agree that the appointment might be given to Shuja."

And here is the reply sent by Sir George Barclay on the 26th February, from Teheran:—

"The opposition of the Persian Government to the appointment of Shuja as Governor is as strong as ever. The following telegram which has just reached me from the Acting-Consul at Tabriz confirms my own strong doubts whether he could be trusted to remain loyal to the Persian Government: 'The Khan of Maku has been appointed by Shuja-ed-Dowleh, Governor-General of Khoi, Salmas and Urmina districts. Shuja has taken this step in order to assure for himself the Khan's co-operation. . . . . I am informed that all this is part and parcel of a programme in favour of the ex-Shah. In order to try and force the return of the ex-Shah, a general rising of the population of Azerbaijan will, I hear, be brought about in the Spring.'"

There are a number of further dispatches showing that Shuja-ed-Dowleh is organising a Government in favour of the return of the ex-Shah. The Government of Persia at last sent to seek advice from the Russian Consul and to request Shuja-ed-Dowleh to clear out and to make way for a Governor appointed by the Persian Government. I want to know whether Shuja-ed-Dowleh is still acting as Governor. If that be so, how can the right hon. Gentleman say that the British Government are acting in good faith or in accordance with their solemn pledge to the Persian people that under no circumstances would they allow the ex-Shah to come back if they are consenting parties to the maintenance of one of his chief agents and generals to one of the most important cities in Northern Persia, where he was convicted of having spent months in organising rebellion? There is another who in the Protocol signed by the Ministers of the Governments of Russia and England is mentioned as one of those who will never be sheltered by the agents of either Government if ever he returns to Persia. He returned to Persia in the train of the ex-Shah last winter, and he is now staying as the guest at the summer quarters of the Russian Consul at Tabriz, although the Russian Government put their name to the Protocol that if he ever returned they would not entertain him. Why is he staying there? He is staying there in order to organise for the ex-Shah. In view of these facts, is it any wonder that the Persian people who are committed to the revolution and the friends of the Persian people in this country should have been alarmed when they read in the "Times" of the 3rd July the following announcement from the then Teheran correspondent, a gentleman singularly well informed and whose telegram bears the impress of the "Times" newspaper. Here is what he says:—

"The ex-Shah's treasurer and private secretary left Odessa some days ago for Vienna. Mohammed Ali himself is said to have either already left or to be about to leave for Europe. Carlsbad is announced as his destination. It will be remembered that a journey to Carlsbad was announced last July, when preparations for his return to Persia were completed. His agents here and in Europe display great activity, which causes much anxiety. Tabriz, where his supporter, Shuja-ed-Dowleh, is Governor, appears to offer him more attractive ground than the Turkoman country, which was the scene of his recent failure."

I put to the right hon. Gentleman yesterday a question whether he keeps himself acquainted with the proceedings of those gentlemen, and he could not give me any answer except to say that he was in communication with the Russian Government. On the last occasion, when we got word of the departure of the ex-Shah from Odessa I put various questions to the right hon. Gentleman and the answer was always the same, and the first we heard was that he had landed on the southern shores of the Caspian. We were told that he crossed Russia successfully disguised, but with large boxes of ammunition. Does any human being believe that? The disguise was successful, because the Russian agents got word to turn a blind eye upon this gentleman, and the Foreign Secretary himself, in a moment of humour, intimated that the ex-Shah put on a false nose and a false beard. I believe the Russian Government were perfectly well aware of what was going on when he left Odessa, and I say that the conduct of the Russian Government in maintaining this agent as Governor of Tabriz, in spite of their pledges that they would remove him and make way for the Governor appointed by the Persian Government, is proof positive that they are in connivance with the ex-Shah. What about the promise of this country to maintain the independence and integrity of Persia?

7.0 P.M. To this hour he has not been allowed to take up his Government, and this is the most important in the whole Empire of Persia, and it is still governed by a red-handed agent of the ex-Shah. What will the Foreign Secretary do if this gentleman arrives in Persia next week and beheads all his enemies? All the best Nationalists in Tabriz have already been beheaded, and they were men of the highest possible character, and, I am informed, exceedingly honest and respectable men, whose only crime was that they were strong Nationalists, and that is a crime in the eyes of the

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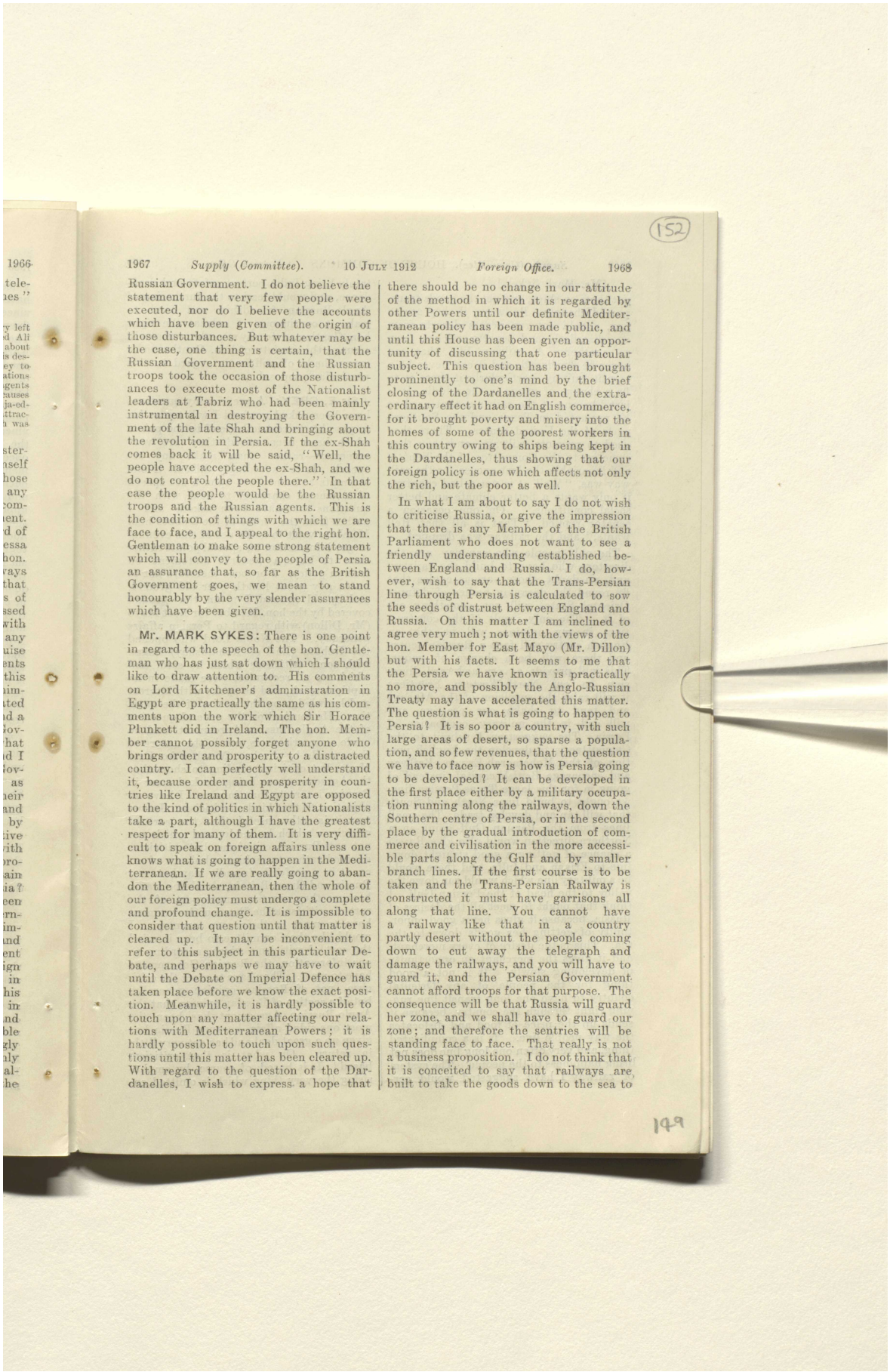

Russian Government. I do not believe the statement that very few people were executed, nor do I believe the accounts which have been given of the origin of those disturbances. But whatever may be the case, one thing is certain, that the Russian Government and the Russian troops took the occasion of those disturbances to execute most of the Nationalist leaders at Tabriz who had been mainly instrumental in destroying the Government of the late Shah and bringing about the revolution in Persia. If the ex-Shah comes back it will be said, "Well, the people have accepted the ex-Shah, and we do not control the people there." In that case the people would be the Russian troops and the Russian agents. This is the condition of things with which we are face to face, and I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to make some strong statement which will convey to the people of Persia an assurance that, so far as the British Government goes, we mean to stand honourably by the very slender assurances which have been given.

Mr. MARK SYKES: There is one point in regard to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down which I should like to draw attention to. His comments on Lord Kitchener's administration in Egypt are practically the same as his comments upon the work which Sir Horace Plunkett did in Ireland. The hon. Member cannot possibly forget anyone who brings order and prosperity to a distracted country. I can perfectly well understand it, because order and prosperity in countries like Ireland and Egypt are opposed to the kind of politics in which Nationalists take a part, although I have the greatest respect for many of them. It is very difficult to speak on foreign affairs unless one knows what is going to happen in the Mediterranean. If we are really going to abandon the Mediterranean, then the whole of our foreign policy must undergo a complete and profound change. It is impossible to consider that question until that matter is cleared up. It may be inconvenient to refer to this subject in this particular Debate, and perhaps we may have to wait until the Debate on Imperial Defence has taken place before we know the exact position. Meanwhile, it is hardly possible to touch upon any matter affecting our relations with Mediterranean Powers; it is hardly possible to touch upon such questions until this matter has been cleared up. With regard to the question of the Dardanelles, I wish to express a hope that there should be no change in our attitude of the method in which it is regarded by other Powers until our definite Mediterranean policy has been made public, and until this House has been given an opportunity of discussing that one particular subject. This question has been brought prominently to one's mind by the brief closing of the Dardanelles and the extraordinary effect it had on English commerce, for it brought poverty and misery into the homes of some of the poorest workers in this country owing to ships being kept in the Dardanelles, thus showing that our foreign policy is one which affects not only the rich, but the poor as well.

In what I am about to say I do not wish to criticise Russia, or give the impression that there is any Member of the British Parliament who does not want to see a friendly understanding established between England and Russia. I do, however, wish to say that the Trans-Persian line through Persia is calculated to sow the seeds of distrust between England and Russia. On this matter I am inclined to agree very much; not with the views of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) but with his facts. It seems to me that the Persia we have known is practically no more, and possibly the Anglo-Russian Treaty may have accelerated this matter. The question is what is going to happen to Persia? It is so poor a country, with such large areas of desert, so sparse a population, and so few revenues, that the question we have to face now is how is Persia going to be developed? It can be developed in the first place either by a military occupation running along the railways, down the Southern centre of Persia, or in the second place by the gradual introduction of commerce and civilisation in the more accessible parts along the Gulf and by smaller branch lines. If the first course is to be taken and the Trans-Persian Railway is constructed it must have garrisons all along that line. You cannot have a railway like that in a country partly desert without the people coming down to cut away the telegraph and damage the railways, and you will have to guard it, and the Persian Government cannot afford troops for that purpose. The consequence will be that Russia will guard her zone, and we shall have to guard our zone; and therefore the sentries will be standing face to face. That really is not a business proposition. I do not think that it is conceited to say that railways are built to take the goods down to the sea to

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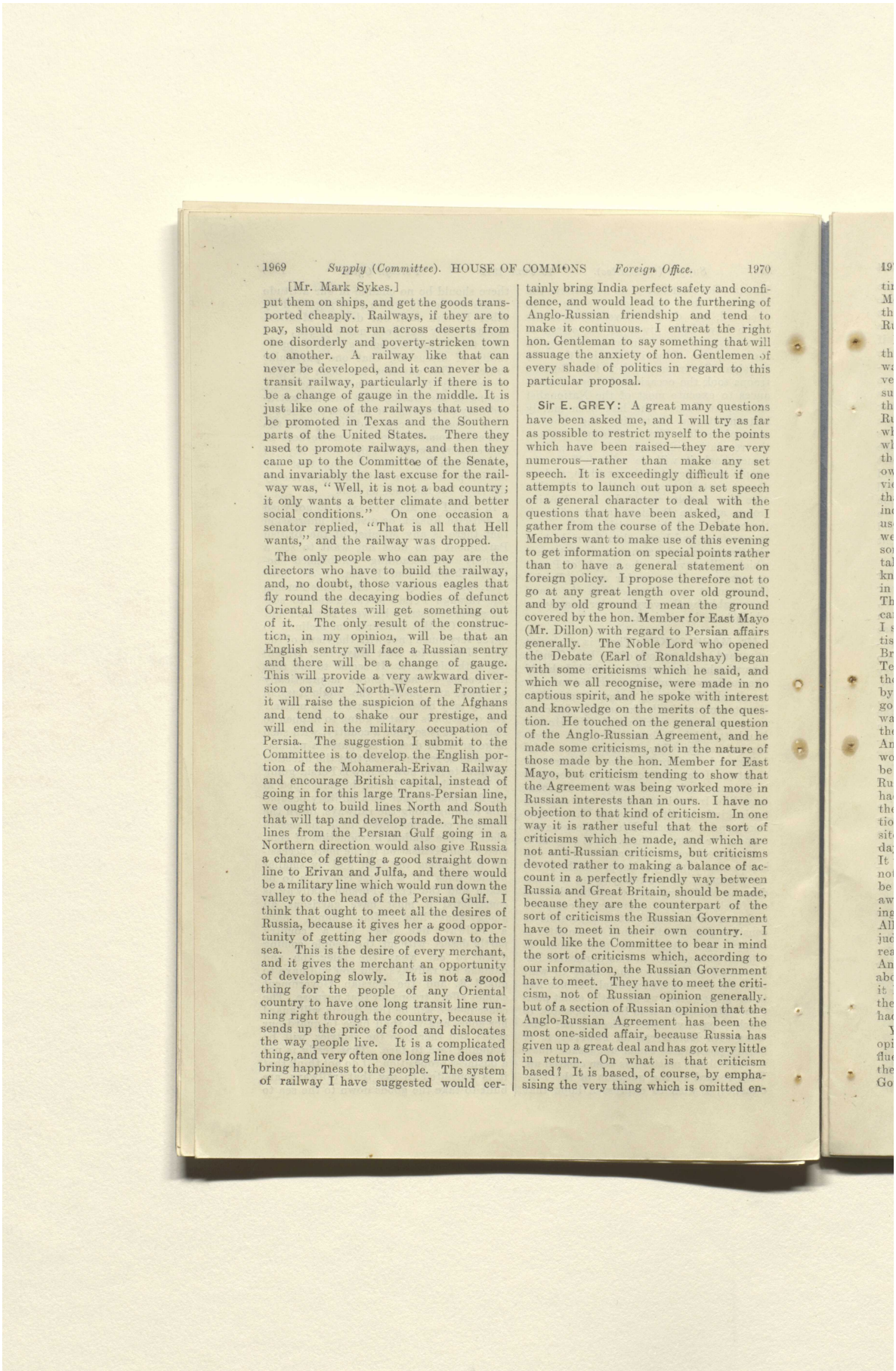

[Mr. Mark Sykes.]

put them on ships, and get the goods transported cheaply. Railways, if they are to pay, should not run across deserts from one disorderly and poverty-stricken town to another. A railway like that can never be developed, and it can never be a transit railway, particularly if there is to be a change of gauge in the middle. It is just like one of the railways that used to be promoted in Texas and the Southern parts of the United States. There they used to promote railways, and then they came up to the Committee of the Senate, and invariably the last excuse for the railway was, "Well, it is not a bad country; it only wants a better climate and better social conditions." On one occasion a senator replied, "That is all that Hell wants," and the railway was dropped.

The only people who can pay are the directors who have to build the railway, and, no doubt, those various eagles that fly round the decaying bodies of defunct Oriental States will get something out of it. The only result of the construction, in my opinion, will be that an English sentry will face a Russian sentry and there will be a change of gauge. This will provide a very awkward diversion on our North-Western Frontier; it will raise the suspicion of the Afghans and tend to shake our prestige, and will end in the military occupation of Persia. The suggestion I submit to the Committee is to develop the English portion of the Mohamerah-Erivan Railway and encourage British capital, instead of going in for this large Trans-Persian line, we ought to build lines North and South that will tap and develop trade. The small lines from the Persian Gulf going in a Northern direction would also give Russia a chance of getting a good straight down line to Erivan and Julfa, and there would be a military line which would run down the valley to the head of the Persian Gulf. I think that ought to meet all the desires of Russia, because it gives her a good opportunity of getting her goods down to the sea. This is the desire of every merchant, and it gives the merchant an opportunity of developing slowly. It is not a good thing for the people of any Oriental country to have one long transit line running right through the country, because it sends up the price of food and dislocates the way people live. It is a complicated thing, and very often one long line does not bring happiness to the people. The system of railway I have suggested would certainly bring India perfect safety and confidence, and would lead to the furthering of Anglo-Russian friendship and tend to make it continuous. I entreat the right hon. Gentleman to say something that will assuage the anxiety of hon. Gentlemen of every shade of politics in regard to this particular proposal.

Sir E. GREY: A great many questions have been asked me, and I will try as far as possible to restrict myself to the points which have been raised—they are very numerous—rather than make any set speech. It is exceedingly difficult if one attempts to launch out upon a set speech of a general character to deal with the questions that have been asked, and I gather from the course of the Debate hon. Members want to make use of this evening to get information on special points rather than to have a general statement on foreign policy. I propose therefore not to go at any great length over old ground, and by old ground I mean the ground covered by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) with regard to Persian affairs generally. The Noble Lord who opened the Debate (Earl of Ronaldshay) began with some criticisms which he said, and which we all recognise, were made in no captious spirit, and he spoke with interest and knowledge on the merits of the question. He touched on the general question of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and he made some criticisms, not in the nature of those made by the hon. Member for East Mayo, but criticism tending to show that the Agreement was being worked more in Russian interests than in ours. I have no objection to that kind of criticism. In one way it is rather useful that the sort of criticisms which he made, and which are not anti-Russian criticisms, but criticisms devoted rather to making a balance of account in a perfectly friendly way between Russia and Great Britain, should be made, because they are the counterpart of the sort of criticisms the Russian Government have to meet in their own country. I would like the Committee to bear in mind the sort of criticisms which, according to our information, the Russian Government have to meet. They have to meet the criticism, not of Russian opinion generally, but of a section of Russian opinion that the Anglo-Russian Agreement has been the most one-sided affair, because Russia has given up a great deal and has got very little in return. On what is that criticism based? It is based, of course, by emphasising the very thing which is omitted en-

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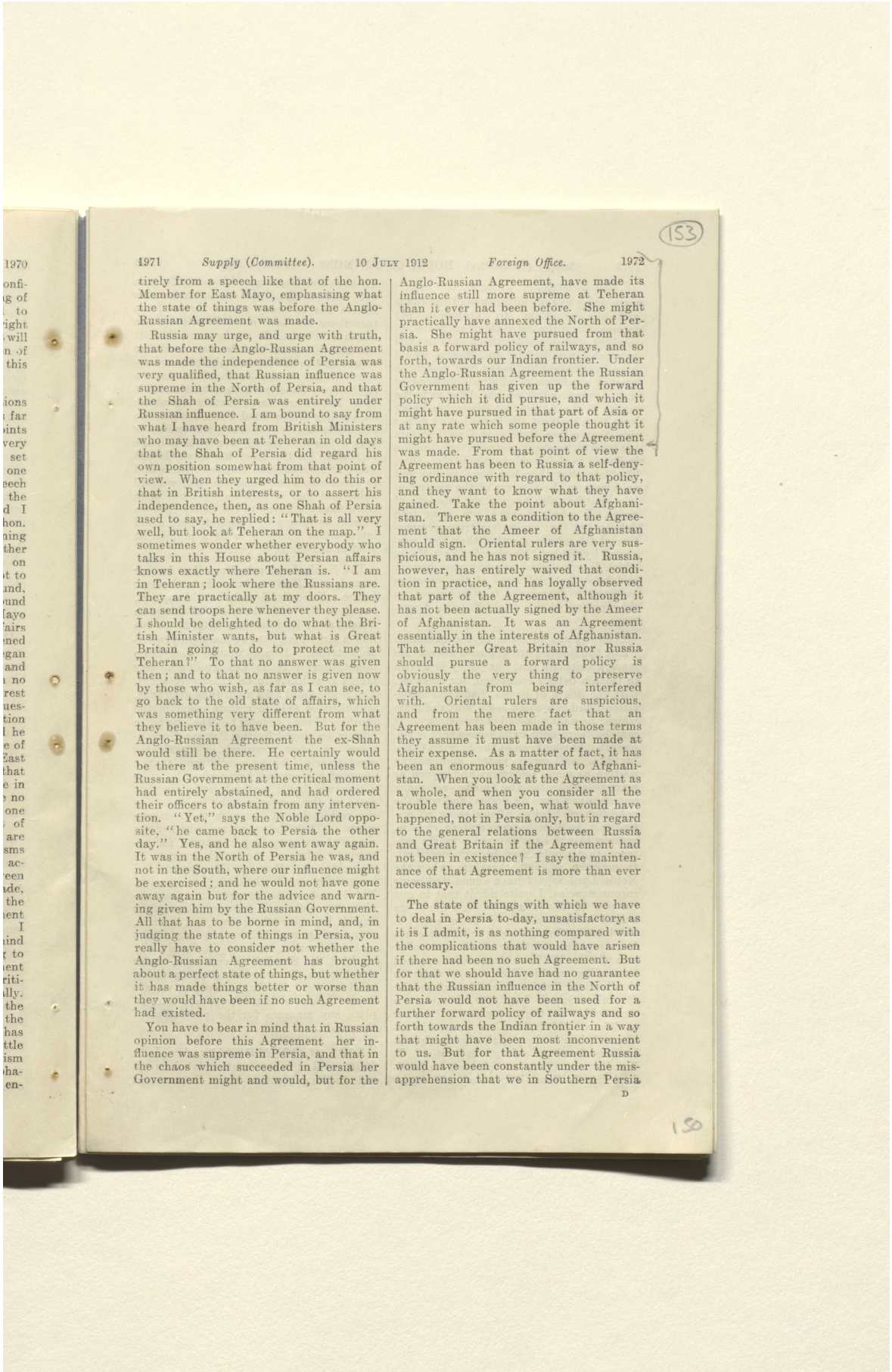

tirely from a speech like that of the hon. Member for East Mayo, emphasising what the state of things was before the Anglo-Russian Agreement was made.

Russia may urge, and urge with truth, that before the Anglo-Russian Agreement was made the independence of Persia was very qualified, that Russian influence was supreme in the North of Persia, and that the Shah of Persia was entirely under Russian influence. I am bound to say from what I have heard from British Ministers who may have been at Teheran in old days that the Shah of Persia did regard his own position somewhat from that point of view. When they urged him to do this or that in British interests, or to assert his independence, then, as one Shah of Persia used to say, he replied: "That is all very well, but look at Teheran on the map." I sometimes wonder whether everybody who talks in this House about Persian affairs knows exactly where Teheran is. "I am in Teheran; look where the Russians are. They are practically at my doors. They can send troops here whenever they please. I should be delighted to do what the British Minister wants, but what is Great Britain going to do to protect me at Teheran?" To that no answer was given then; and to that no answer is given now by those who wish, as far as I can see, to go back to the old state of affairs, which was something very different from what they believe it to have been. But for the Anglo-Russian Agreement the ex-Shah would still be there. He certainly would be there at the present time, unless the Russian Government at the critical moment had entirely abstained, and had ordered their officers to abstain from any intervention. "Yet," says the Noble Lord opposite, "he came back to Persia the other day." Yes, and he also went away again. It was in the North of Persia he was, and not in the South, where our influence might be exercised; and he would not have gone away again but for the advice and warning given him by the Russian Government. All that has to be borne in mind, and, in judging the state of things in Persia, you really have to consider not whether the Anglo-Russian Agreement has brought about a perfect state of things, but whether it has made things better or worse than they would have been if no such Agreement had existed.

You have to bear in mind that in Russian opinion before this Agreement her influence was supreme in Persia, and that in the chaos which succeeded in Persia her Government might and would, but for the Anglo-Russian Agreement, have made its influence still more supreme at Teheran than it ever had been before. She might practically have annexed the North of Persia. She might have pursued from that basis a forward policy of railways, and so forth, towards our Indian frontier. Under the Anglo-Russian Agreement the Russian Government has given up the forward policy which it did pursue, and which it might have pursued in that part of Asia or at any rate which some people thought it might have pursued before the Agreement was made. From that point of view the Agreement has been to Russia a self-denying ordinance with regard to that policy, and they want to know what they have gained. Take the point about Afghanistan. There was a condition to the Agreement that the Ameer of Afghanistan should sign. Oriental rulers are very suspicious, and he has not signed it. Russia, however, has entirely waived that condition in practice, and has loyally observed that part of the Agreement, although it has not been actually signed by the Ameer of Afghanistan. It was an Agreement essentially in the interests of Afghanistan. That neither Great Britain nor Russia should pursue a forward policy is obviously the very thing to preserve Afghanistan from being interfered with. Oriental rulers are suspicious, and from the mere fact that an Agreement has been made in those terms they assume it must have been made at their expense. As a matter of fact, it has been an enormous safeguard to Afghanistan. When you look at the Agreement as a whole, and when you consider all the trouble there has been, what would have happened, not in Persia only, but in regard to the general relations between Russia and Great Britain if the Agreement had not been in existence? I say the maintenance of that Agreement is more than ever necessary.

The state of things with which we have to deal in Persia to-day, unsatisfactory as it is I admit, is as nothing compared with the complications that would have arisen if there had been no such Agreement. But for that we should have had no guarantee that the Russian influence in the North of Persia would not have been used for a further forward policy of railways and so forth towards the Indian frontier in a way that might have been most inconvenient to us. But for that Agreement Russia would have been constantly under the misapprehension that we in Southern Persia

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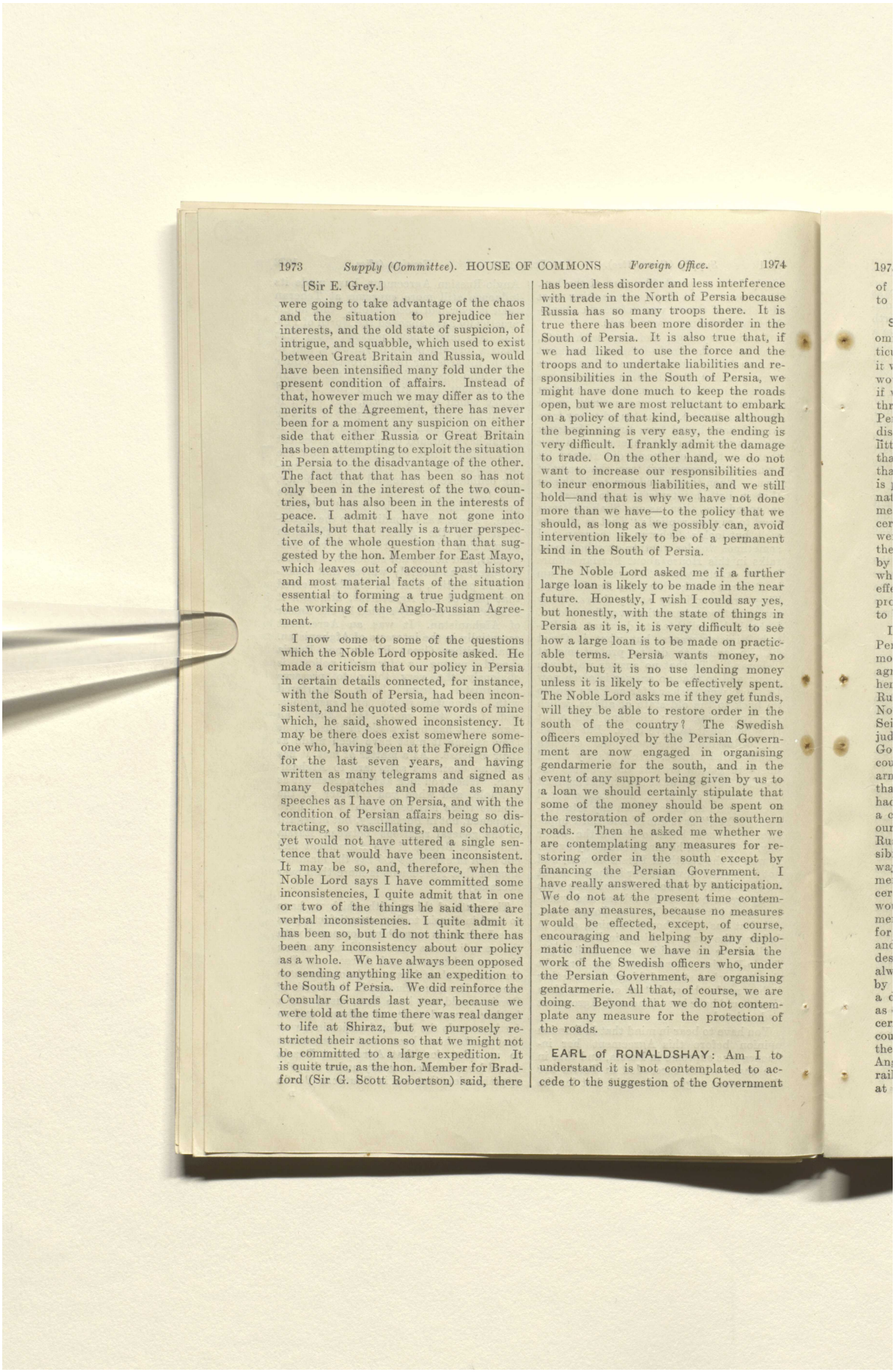

[Sir E. Grey.]

were going to take advantage of the chaos and the situation to prejudice her interests, and the old state of suspicion, of intrigue, and squabble, which used to exist between Great Britain and Russia, would have been intensified many fold under the present condition of affairs. Instead of that, however much we may differ as to the merits of the Agreement, there has never been for a moment any suspicion on either side that either Russia or Great Britain has been attempting to exploit the situation in Persia to the disadvantage of the other. The fact that that has been so has not only been in the interest of the two countries, but has also been in the interests of peace. I admit I have not gone into details, but that really is a truer perspective of the whole question than that suggested by the hon. Member for East Mayo, which leaves out of account past history and most material facts of the situation essential to forming a true judgment on the working of the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

I now come to some of the questions which the Noble Lord opposite asked. He made a criticism that our policy in Persia in certain details connected, for instance, with the South of Persia, had been inconsistent, and he quoted some words of mine which, he said, showed inconsistency. It may be there does exist somewhere someone who, having been at the Foreign Office for the last seven years, and having written as many telegrams and signed as many despatches and made as many speeches as I have on Persia, and with the condition of Persian affairs being so distracting, so vascillating, and so chaotic, yet would not have uttered a single sentence that would have been inconsistent. It may be so, and, therefore, when the Noble Lord says I have committed some inconsistencies, I quite admit that in one or two of the things he said there are verbal inconsistencies. I quite admit it has been so, but I do not think there has been any inconsistency about our policy as a whole. We have always been opposed to sending anything like an expedition to the South of Persia. We did reinforce the Consular Guards last year, because we were told at the time there was real danger to life at Shiraz, but we purposely restricted their actions so that we might not be committed to a large expedition. It is quite true, as the hon. Member for Bradford (Sir G. Scott Robertson) said, there has been less disorder and less interference with trade in the North of Persia because Russia has so many troops there. It is true there has been more disorder in the South of Persia. It is also true that, if we had liked to use the force and the troops and to undertake liabilities and responsibilities in the South of Persia, we might have done much to keep the roads open, but we are most reluctant to embark on a policy of that kind, because although the beginning is very easy, the ending is very difficult. I frankly admit the damage to trade. On the other hand, we do not want to increase our responsibilities and to incur enormous liabilities, and we still hold—and that is why we have not done more than we have—to the policy that we should, as long as we possibly can, avoid intervention likely to be of a permanent kind in the South of Persia.

The Noble Lord asked me if a further large loan is likely to be made in the near future. Honestly, I wish I could say yes, but honestly, with the state of things in Persia as it is, it is very difficult to see how a large loan is to be made on practicable terms. Persia wants money, no doubt, but it is no use lending money unless it is likely to be effectively spent. The Noble Lord asks me if they get funds, will they be able to restore order in the south of the country? The Swedish officers employed by the Persian Government are now engaged in organising gendarmerie for the south, and in the event of any support being given by us to a loan we should certainly stipulate that some of the money should be spent on the restoration of order on the southern roads. Then he asked me whether we are contemplating any measures for restoring order in the south except by financing the Persian Government. I have really answered that by anticipation. We do not at the present time contemplate any measures, because no measures would be effected, except, of course, encouraging and helping by any diplomatic influence we have in Persia the work of the Swedish officers who, under the Persian Government, are organising gendarmerie. All that, of course, we are doing. Beyond that we do not contemplate any measure for the protection of the roads.

EARL of RONALDSHAY: Am I to understand it is not contemplated to accede to the suggestion of the Government

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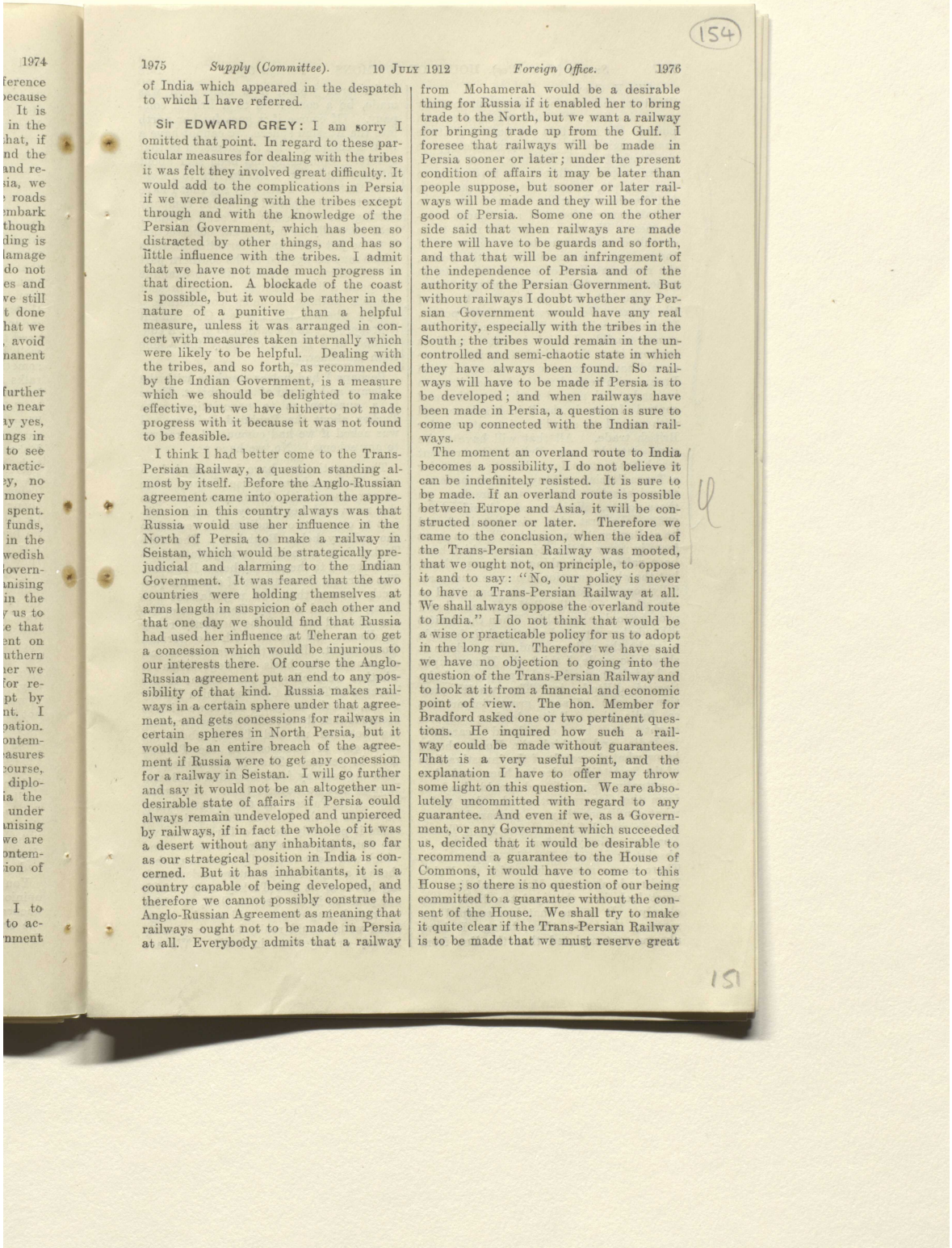

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of India which appeared in the despatch to which I have referred.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I am sorry I omitted that point. In regard to these particular measures for dealing with the tribes it was felt they involved great difficulty. It would add to the complications in Persia if we were dealing with the tribes except through and with the knowledge of the Persian Government, which has been so distracted by other things, and has so little influence with the tribes. I admit that we have not made much progress in that direction. A blockade of the coast is possible, but it would be rather in the nature of a punitive than a helpful measure, unless it was arranged in concert with measures taken internally which were likely to be helpful. Dealing with the tribes, and so forth, as recommended by the Indian Government, is a measure which we should be delighted to make effective, but we have hitherto not made progress with it because it was not found to be feasible.

I think I had better come to the Trans-Persian Railway, a question standing almost by itself. Before the Anglo-Russian agreement came into operation the apprehension in this country always was that Russia would use her influence in the North of Persia to make a railway in Seistan, which would be strategically prejudicial and alarming to the Indian Government. It was feared that the two countries were holding themselves at arms length in suspicion of each other and that one day we should find that Russia had used her influence at Teheran to get a concession which would be injurious to our interests there. Of course the Anglo-Russian agreement put an end to any possibility of that kind. Russia makes railways in a certain sphere under that agreement, and gets concessions for railways in certain spheres in North Persia, but it would be an entire breach of the agreement if Russia were to get any concession for a railway in Seistan. I will go further and say it would not be an altogether undesirable state of affairs if Persia could always remain undeveloped and unpierced by railways, if in fact the whole of it was a desert without any inhabitants, so far as our strategical position in India is concerned. But it has inhabitants, it is a country capable of being developed, and therefore we cannot possibly construe the Anglo-Russian Agreement as meaning that railways ought not to be made in Persia at all. Everybody admits that a railway from Mohamerah would be a desirable thing for Russia if it enabled her to bring trade to the North, but we want a railway for bringing trade up from the Gulf. I foresee that railways will be made in Persia sooner or later; under the present condition of affairs it may be later than people suppose, but sooner or later railways will be made and they will be for the good of Persia. Some one on the other side said that when railways are made there will have to be guards and so forth, and that that will be an infringement of the independence of Persia and of the authority of the Persian Government. But without railways I doubt whether any Persian Government would have any real authority, especially with the tribes in the South; the tribes would remain in the uncontrolled and semi-chaotic state in which they have always been found. So railways will have to be made if Persia is to be developed; and when railways have been made in Persia, a question is sure to come up connected with the Indian railways.

The moment an overland route to India becomes a possibility, I do not believe it can be indefinitely resisted. It is sure to be made. If an overland route is possible between Europe and Asia, it will be constructed sooner or later. Therefore we came to the conclusion, when the idea of the Trans-Persian Railway was mooted, that we ought not, on principle, to oppose it and to say: "No, our policy is never to have a Trans-Persian Railway at all. We shall always oppose the overland route to India." I do not think that would be a wise or practicable policy for us to adopt in the long run. Therefore we have said we have no objection to going into the question of the Trans-Persian Railway and to look at it from a financial and economic point of view. The hon. Member for Bradford asked one or two pertinent questions. He inquired how such a railway could be made without guarantees. That is a very useful point, and the explanation I have to offer may throw some light on this question. We are absolutely uncommitted with regard to any guarantee. And even if we, as a Government, or any Government which succeeded us, decided that it would be desirable to recommend a guarantee to the House of Commons, it would have to come to this House; so there is no question of our being committed to a guarantee without the consent of the House. We shall try to make it quite clear if the Trans-Persian Railway is to be made that we must reserve great

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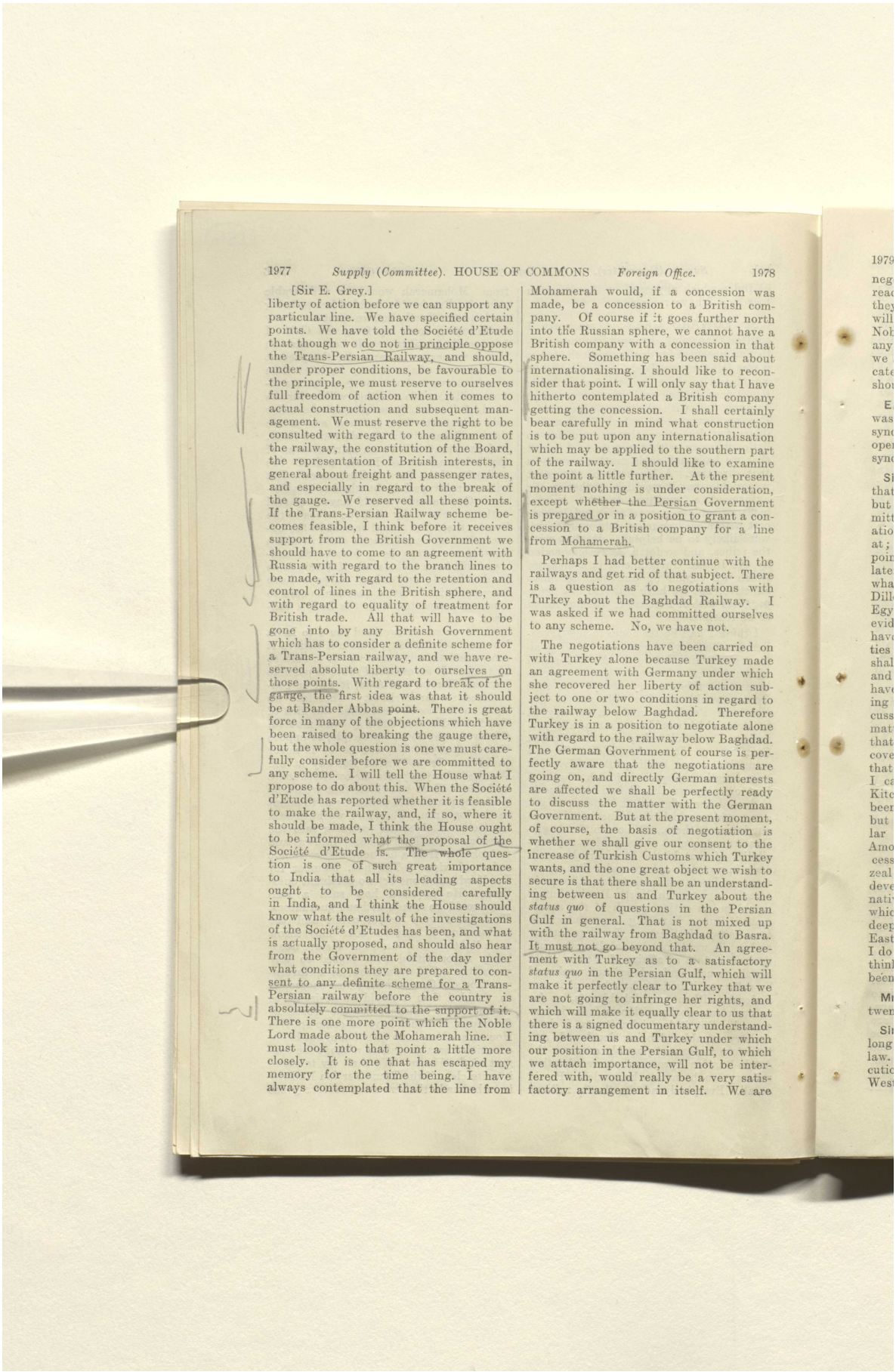

[Sir E. Grey.]

liberty of action before we can support any particular line. We have specified certain points. We have told the Société d'Etude that though we do not in principle oppose the Trans-Persian Railway, and should, under proper conditions, be favourable to the principle, we must reserve to ourselves full freedom of action when it comes to actual construction and subsequent management. We must reserve the right to be consulted with regard to the alignment of the railway, the constitution of the Board, the representation of British interests, in general about freight and passenger rates, and especially in regard to the break of the gauge. We reserved all these points. If the Trans-Persian Railway scheme becomes feasible, I think before it receives support from the British Government we should have to come to an agreement with Russia with regard to the branch lines to be made, with regard to the retention and control of lines in the British sphere, and with regard to equality of treatment for British trade. All that will have to be gone into by any British Government which has to consider a definite scheme for a Trans-Persian railway, and we have reserved absolute liberty to ourselves on those points. With regard to break of the gauge, the first idea was that it should be at Bander Abbas point. There is great force in many of the objections which have been raised to breaking the gauge there, but the whole question is one we must carefully consider before we are committed to any scheme. I will tell the House what I propose to do about this. When the Société d'Etude has reported whether it is feasible to make the railway, and, if so, where it should be made, I think the House ought to be informed what the proposal of the Société d'Etude is. The whole question is one of such great importance to India that all its leading aspects ought to be considered carefully in India, and I think the House should know what the result of the investigations of the Société d'Etudes has been, and what is actually proposed, and should also hear from the Government of the day under what conditions they are prepared to consent to any definite scheme for a Trans-Persian railway before the country is absolutely committed to the support of it. There is one more point which the Noble Lord made about the Mohamerah line. I must look into that point a little more closely. It is one that has escaped my memory for the time being. I have always contemplated that the line from Mohamerah would, if a concession was made, be a concession to a British company. Of course if it goes further north into the Russian sphere, we cannot have a British company with a concession in that sphere. Something has been said about internationalising. I should like to reconsider that point. I will only say that I have hitherto contemplated a British company getting the concession. I shall certainly bear carefully in mind what construction is to be put upon any internationalisation which may be applied to the southern part of the railway. I should like to examine the point a little further. At the present moment nothing is under consideration, except whether the Persian Government is prepared or in a position to grant a concession to a British company for a line from Mohamerah.

Perhaps I had better continue with the railways and get rid of that subject. There is a question as to negotiations with Turkey about the Baghdad Railway. I was asked if we had committed ourselves to any scheme. No, we have not.

The negotiations have been carried on with Turkey alone because Turkey made an agreement with Germany under which she recovered her liberty of action subject to one or two conditions in regard to the railway below Baghdad. Therefore Turkey is in a position to negotiate alone with regard to the railway below Baghdad. The German Government of course is perfectly aware that the negotiations are going on, and directly German interests are affected we shall be perfectly ready to discuss the matter with the German Government. But at the present moment, of course, the basis of negotiation is whether we shall give our consent to the increase of Turkish Customs which Turkey wants, and the one great object we wish to secure is that there shall be an understanding between us and Turkey about the *status quo* of questions in the Persian Gulf in general. That is not mixed up with the railway from Baghdad to Basra. It must not go beyond that. An agreement with Turkey as to a satisfactory *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, which will make it perfectly clear to Turkey that we are not going to infringe her rights, and which will make it equally clear to us that there is a signed documentary understanding between us and Turkey under which our position in the Persian Gulf, to which we attach importance, will not be interfered with, would really be a very satisfactory arrangement in itself. We are

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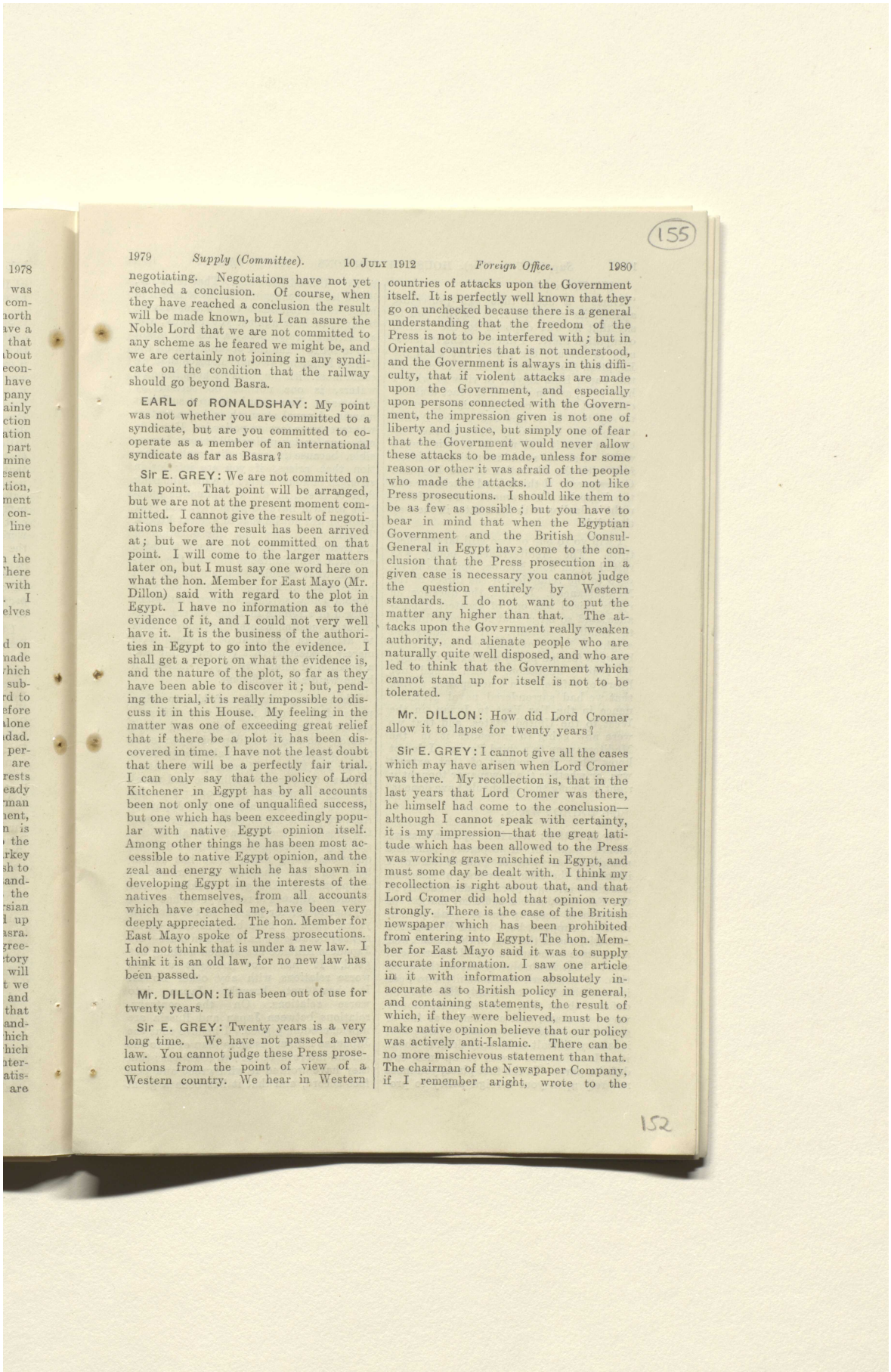

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negotiating. Negotiations have not yet reached a conclusion. Of course, when they have reached a conclusion the result will be made known, but I can assure the Noble Lord that we are not committed to any scheme as he feared we might be, and we are certainly not joining in any syndicate on the condition that the railway should go beyond Basra.

EARL of RONALDSHAY: My point was not whether you are committed to a syndicate, but are you committed to co-operate as a member of an international syndicate as far as Basra?

Sir E. GREY: We are not committed on that point. That point will be arranged, but we are not at the present moment committed. I cannot give the result of negotiations before the result has been arrived at; but we are not committed on that point. I will come to the larger matters later on, but I must say one word here on what the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) said with regard to the plot in Egypt. I have no information as to the evidence of it, and I could not very well have it. It is the business of the authorities in Egypt to go into the evidence. I shall get a report on what the evidence is, and the nature of the plot, so far as they have been able to discover it; but, pending the trial, it is really impossible to discuss it in this House. My feeling in the matter was one of exceeding great relief that if there be a plot it has been discovered in time. I have not the least doubt that there will be a perfectly fair trial. I can only say that the policy of Lord Kitchener in Egypt has by all accounts been not only one of unqualified success, but one which has been exceedingly popular with native Egypt opinion itself. Among other things he has been most accessible to native Egypt opinion, and the zeal and energy which he has shown in developing Egypt in the interests of the natives themselves, from all accounts which have reached me, have been very deeply appreciated. The hon. Member for East Mayo spoke of Press prosecutions. I do not think that is under a new law. I think it is an old law, for no new law has been passed.

Mr. DILLON: It has been out of use for twenty years.

Sir E. GREY: Twenty years is a very long time. We have not passed a new law. You cannot judge these Press prosecutions from the point of view of a Western country. We hear in Western countries of attacks upon the Government itself. It is perfectly well known that they go on unchecked because there is a general understanding that the freedom of the Press is not to be interfered with; but in Oriental countries that is not understood, and the Government is always in this difficulty, that if violent attacks are made upon the Government, and especially upon persons connected with the Government, the impression given is not one of liberty and justice, but simply one of fear that the Government would never allow these attacks to be made, unless for some reason or other it was afraid of the people who made the attacks. I do not like Press prosecutions. I should like them to be as few as possible; but you have to bear in mind that when the Egyptian Government and the British Consul-General in Egypt have come to the conclusion that the Press prosecution in a given case is necessary you cannot judge the question entirely by Western standards. I do not want to put the matter any higher than that. The attacks upon the Government really weaken authority, and alienate people who are naturally quite well disposed, and who are led to think that the Government which cannot stand up for itself is not to be tolerated.

Mr. DILLON: How did Lord Cromer allow it to lapse for twenty years?

Sir E. GREY: I cannot give all the cases which may have arisen when Lord Cromer was there. My recollection is, that in the last years that Lord Cromer was there, he himself had come to the conclusion—although I cannot speak with certainty, it is my impression—that the great latitude which has been allowed to the Press was working grave mischief in Egypt, and must some day be dealt with. I think my recollection is right about that, and that Lord Cromer did hold that opinion very strongly. There is the case of the British newspaper which has been prohibited from entering into Egypt. The hon. Member for East Mayo said it was to supply accurate information. I saw one article in it with information absolutely inaccurate as to British policy in general, and containing statements, the result of which, if they were believed, must be to make native opinion believe that our policy was actively anti-Islamic. There can be no more mischievous statement than that. The chairman of the Newspaper Company, if I remember aright, wrote to the

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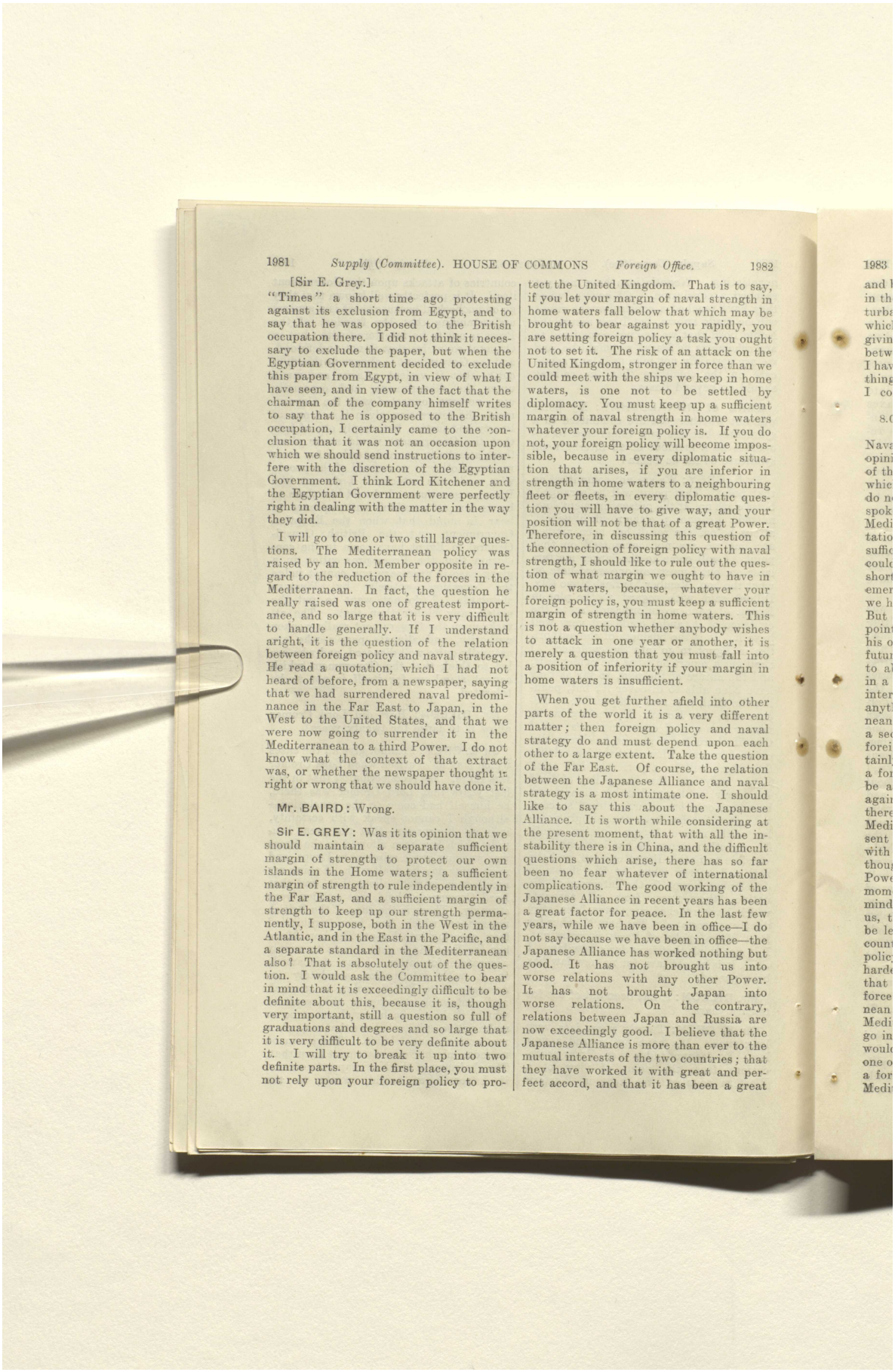

1981 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1982

[Sir E. Grey.]

"Times" a short time ago protesting against its exclusion from Egypt, and to say that he was opposed to the British occupation there. I did not think it necessary to exclude the paper, but when the Egyptian Government decided to exclude this paper from Egypt, in view of what I have seen, and in view of the fact that the chairman of the company himself writes to say that he is opposed to the British occupation, I certainly came to the conclusion that it was not an occasion upon which we should send instructions to interfere with the discretion of the Egyptian Government. I think Lord Kitchener and the Egyptian Government were perfectly right in dealing with the matter in the way they did.

I will go to one or two still larger questions. The Mediterranean policy was raised by an hon. Member opposite in regard to the reduction of the forces in the Mediterranean. In fact, the question he really raised was one of greatest importance, and so large that it is very difficult to handle generally. If I understand aright, it is the question of the relation between foreign policy and naval strategy. He read a quotation, which I had not heard of before, from a newspaper, saying that we had surrendered naval predominance in the Far East to Japan, in the West to the United States, and that we were now going to surrender it in the Mediterranean to a third Power. I do not know what the context of that extract was, or whether the newspaper thought it right or wrong that we should have done it.

Mr. BAIRD: Wrong.

Sir E. GREY: Was it its opinion that we should maintain a separate sufficient margin of strength to protect our own islands in the Home waters; a sufficient margin of strength to rule independently in the Far East, and a sufficient margin of strength to keep up our strength permanently, I suppose, both in the West in the Atlantic, and in the East in the Pacific, and a separate standard in the Mediterranean also? That is absolutely out of the question. I would ask the Committee to bear in mind that it is exceedingly difficult to be definite about this, because it is, though very important, still a question so full of graduations and degrees and so large that it is very difficult to be very definite about it. I will try to break it up into two definite parts. In the first place, you must not rely upon your foreign policy to protect the United Kingdom. That is to say, if you let your margin of naval strength in home waters fall below that which may be brought to bear against you rapidly, you are setting foreign policy a task you ought not to set it. The risk of an attack on the United Kingdom, stronger in force than we could meet with the ships we keep in home waters, is one not to be settled by diplomacy. You must keep up a sufficient margin of naval strength in home waters whatever your foreign policy is. If you do not, your foreign policy will become impossible, because in every diplomatic situation that arises, if you are inferior in strength in home waters to a neighbouring fleet or fleets, in every diplomatic question you will have to give way, and your position will not be that of a great Power. Therefore, in discussing this question of the connection of foreign policy with naval strength, I should like to rule out the question of what margin we ought to have in home waters, because, whatever your foreign policy is, you must keep a sufficient margin of strength in home waters. This is not a question whether anybody wishes to attack in one year or another, it is merely a question that you must fall into a position of inferiority if your margin in home waters is insufficient.

When you get further afield into other parts of the world it is a very different matter; then foreign policy and naval strategy do and must depend upon each other to a large extent. Take the question of the Far East. Of course, the relation between the Japanese Alliance and naval strategy is a most intimate one. I should like to say this about the Japanese Alliance. It is worth while considering at the present moment, that with all the instability there is in China, and the difficult questions which arise, there has so far been no fear whatever of international complications. The good working of the Japanese Alliance in recent years has been a great factor for peace. In the last few years, while we have been in office—I do not say because we have been in office—the Japanese Alliance has worked nothing but good. It has not brought us into worse relations with any other Power. It has not brought Japan into worse relations. On the contrary, relations between Japan and Russia are now exceedingly good. I believe that the Japanese Alliance is more than ever to the mutual interests of the two countries; that they have worked it with great and perfect accord, and that it has been a great

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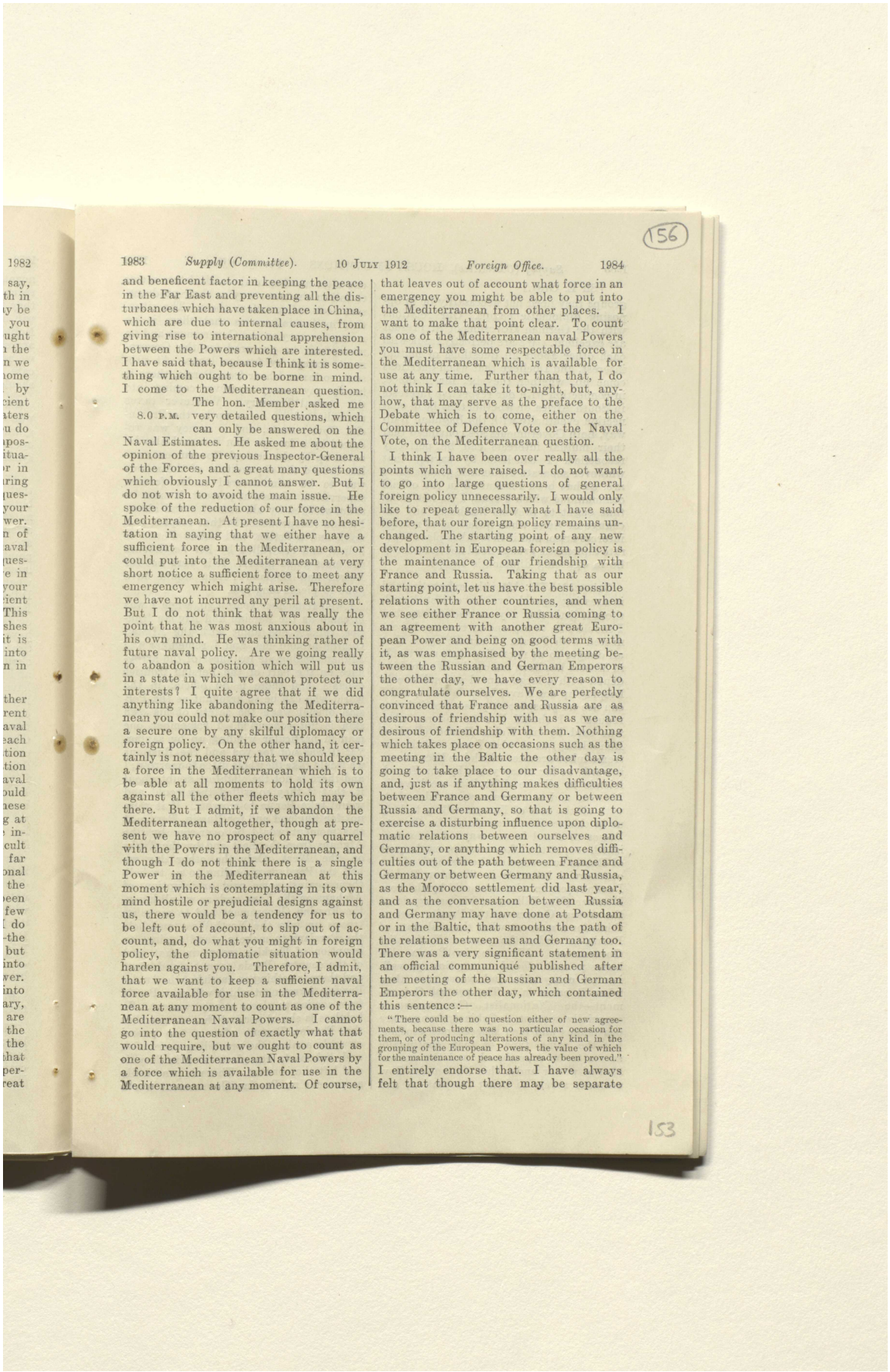

(156)

and beneficent factor in keeping the peace in the Far East and preventing all the disturbances which have taken place in China, which are due to internal causes, from giving rise to international apprehension between the Powers which are interested. I have said that, because I think it is something which ought to be borne in mind. I come to the Mediterranean question. The hon. Member asked me very detailed questions, which can only be answered on the Naval Estimates. He asked me about the opinion of the previous Inspector-General of the Forces, and a great many questions which obviously I cannot answer. But I do not wish to avoid the main issue. He spoke of the reduction of our force in the Mediterranean. At present I have no hesitation in saying that we either have a sufficient force in the Mediterranean, or could put into the Mediterranean at very short notice a sufficient force to meet any emergency which might arise. Therefore we have not incurred any peril at present. But I do not think that was really the point that he was most anxious about in his own mind. He was thinking rather of future naval policy. Are we going really to abandon a position which will put us in a state in which we cannot protect our interests? I quite agree that if we did anything like abandoning the Mediterranean you could not make our position there a secure one by any skilful diplomacy or foreign policy. On the other hand, it certainly is not necessary that we should keep a force in the Mediterranean which is to be able at all moments to hold its own against all the other fleets which may be there. But I admit, if we abandon the Mediterranean altogether, though at present we have no prospect of any quarrel with the Powers in the Mediterranean, and though I do not think there is a single Power in the Mediterranean at this moment which is contemplating in its own mind hostile or prejudicial designs against us, there would be a tendency for us to be left out of account, to slip out of account, and, do what you might in foreign policy, the diplomatic situation would harden against you. Therefore, I admit, that we want to keep a sufficient naval force available for use in the Mediterranean at any moment to count as one of the Mediterranean Naval Powers. I cannot go into the question of exactly what that would require, but we ought to count as one of the Mediterranean Naval Powers by a force which is available for use in the Mediterranean at any moment. Of course, that leaves out of account what force in an emergency you might be able to put into the Mediterranean from other places. I want to make that point clear. To count as one of the Mediterranean naval Powers you must have some respectable force in the Mediterranean which is available for use at any time. Further than that, I do not think I can take it to-night, but, anyhow, that may serve as the preface to the Debate which is to come, either on the Committee of Defence Vote or the Naval Vote, on the Mediterranean question.

8.0 P.M.

I think I have been over really all the points which were raised. I do not want to go into large questions of general foreign policy unnecessarily. I would only like to repeat generally what I have said before, that our foreign policy remains unchanged. The starting point of any new development in European foreign policy is the maintenance of our friendship with France and Russia. Taking that as our starting point, let us have the best possible relations with other countries, and when we see either France or Russia coming to an agreement with another great European Power and being on good terms with it, as was emphasised by the meeting between the Russian and German Emperors the other day, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. We are perfectly convinced that France and Russia are as desirous of friendship with us as we are desirous of friendship with them. Nothing which takes place on occasions such as the meeting in the Baltic the other day is going to take place to our disadvantage, and, just as if anything makes difficulties between France and Germany or between Russia and Germany, so that is going to exercise a disturbing influence upon diplomatic relations between ourselves and Germany, or anything which removes difficulties out of the path between France and Germany or between Germany and Russia, as the Morocco settlement did last year, and as the conversation between Russia and Germany may have done at Potsdam or in the Baltic, that smooths the path of the relations between us and Germany too. There was a very significant statement in an official communiqué published after the meeting of the Russian and German Emperors the other day, which contained this sentence:—

"There could be no question either of new agreements, because there was no particular occasion for them, or of producing alterations of any kind in the grouping of the European Powers, the value of which for the maintenance of peace has already been proved."

I entirely endorse that. I have always felt that though there may be separate

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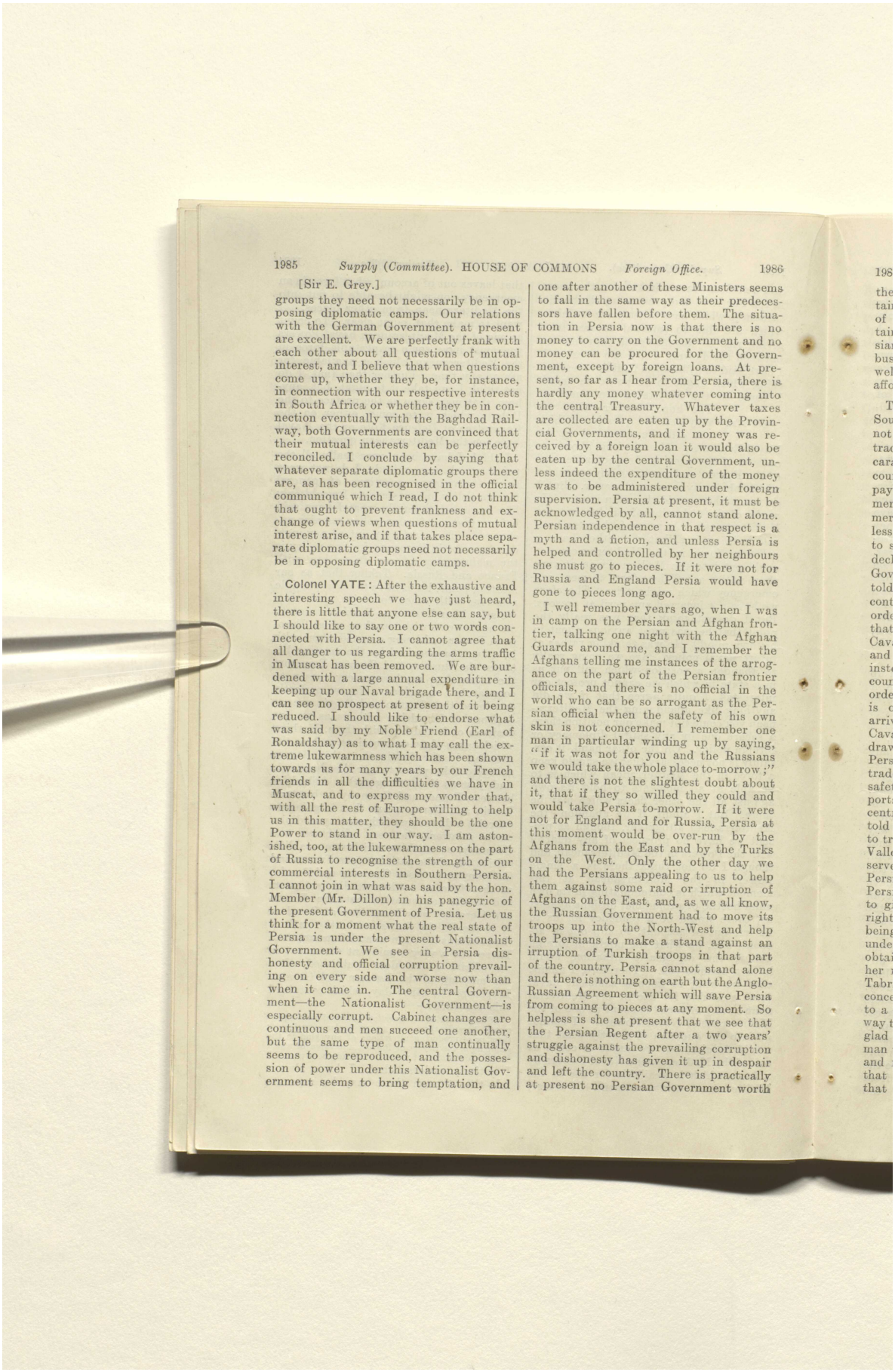

1985 *Supply (Committee).* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Foreign Office.* 1986

[Sir E. Grey.]

groups they need not necessarily be in opposing diplomatic camps. Our relations with the German Government at present are excellent. We are perfectly frank with each other about all questions of mutual interest, and I believe that when questions come up, whether they be, for instance, in connection with our respective interests in South Africa or whether they be in connection eventually with the Baghdad Railway, both Governments are convinced that their mutual interests can be perfectly reconciled. I conclude by saying that whatever separate diplomatic groups there are, as has been recognised in the official communiqué which I read, I do not think that ought to prevent frankness and exchange of views when questions of mutual interest arise, and if that takes place separate diplomatic groups need not necessarily be in opposing diplomatic camps.

Colonel YATE: After the exhaustive and interesting speech we have just heard, there is little that anyone else can say, but I should like to say one or two words connected with Persia. I cannot agree that all danger to us regarding the arms traffic in Muscat has been removed. We are burdened with a large annual expenditure in keeping up our Naval brigade there, and I can see no prospect at present of it being reduced. I should like to endorse what was said by my Noble Friend (Earl of Ronaldshay) as to what I may call the extreme lukewarmness which has been shown towards us for many years by our French friends in all the difficulties we have in Muscat, and to express my wonder that, with all the rest of Europe willing to help us in this matter, they should be the one Power to stand in our way. I am astonished, too, at the lukewarmness on the part of Russia to recognise the strength of our commercial interests in Southern Persia. I cannot join in what was said by the hon. Member (Mr. Dillon) in his panegyric of the present Government of Presia. Let us think for a moment what the real state of Persia is under the present Nationalist Government. We see in Persia dishonesty and official corruption prevailing on every side and worse now than when it came in. The central Government—the Nationalist Government—is especially corrupt. Cabinet changes are continuous and men succeed one another, but the same type of man continually seems to be reproduced, and the possession of power under this Nationalist Government seems to bring temptation, and one after another of these Ministers seems to fall in the same way as their predecessors have fallen before them. The situation in Persia now is that there is no money to carry on the Government and no money can be procured for the Government, except by foreign loans. At present, so far as I hear from Persia, there is hardly any money whatever coming into the central Treasury. Whatever taxes are collected are eaten up by the Provincial Governments, and if money was received by a foreign loan it would also be eaten up by the central Government, unless indeed the expenditure of the money was to be administered under foreign supervision. Persia at present, it must be acknowledged by all, cannot stand alone. Persian independence in that respect is a myth and a fiction, and unless Persia is helped and controlled by her neighbours she must go to pieces. If it were not for Russia and England Persia would have gone to pieces long ago.

I well remember years ago, when I was in camp on the Persian and Afghan frontier, talking one night with the Afghan Guards around me, and I remember the Afghans telling me instances of the arrogance on the part of the Persian frontier officials, and there is no official in the world who can be so arrogant as the Persian official when the safety of his own skin is not concerned. I remember one man in particular winding up by saying, "if it was not for you and the Russians we would take the whole place to-morrow;" and there is not the slightest doubt about it, that if they so willed they could and would take Persia to-morrow. If it were not for England and for Russia, Persia at this moment would be over-run by the Afghans from the East and by the Turks on the West. Only the other day we had the Persians appealing to us to help them against some raid or irruption of Afghans on the East, and, as we all know, the Russian Government had to move its troops up into the North-West and help the Persians to make a stand against an irruption of Turkish troops in that part of the country. Persia cannot stand alone and there is nothing on earth but the Anglo-Russian Agreement which will save Persia from coming to pieces at any moment. So helpless is she at present that we see that the Persian Regent after a two years' struggle against the prevailing corruption and dishonesty has given it up in despair and left the country. There is practically at present no Persian Government worth

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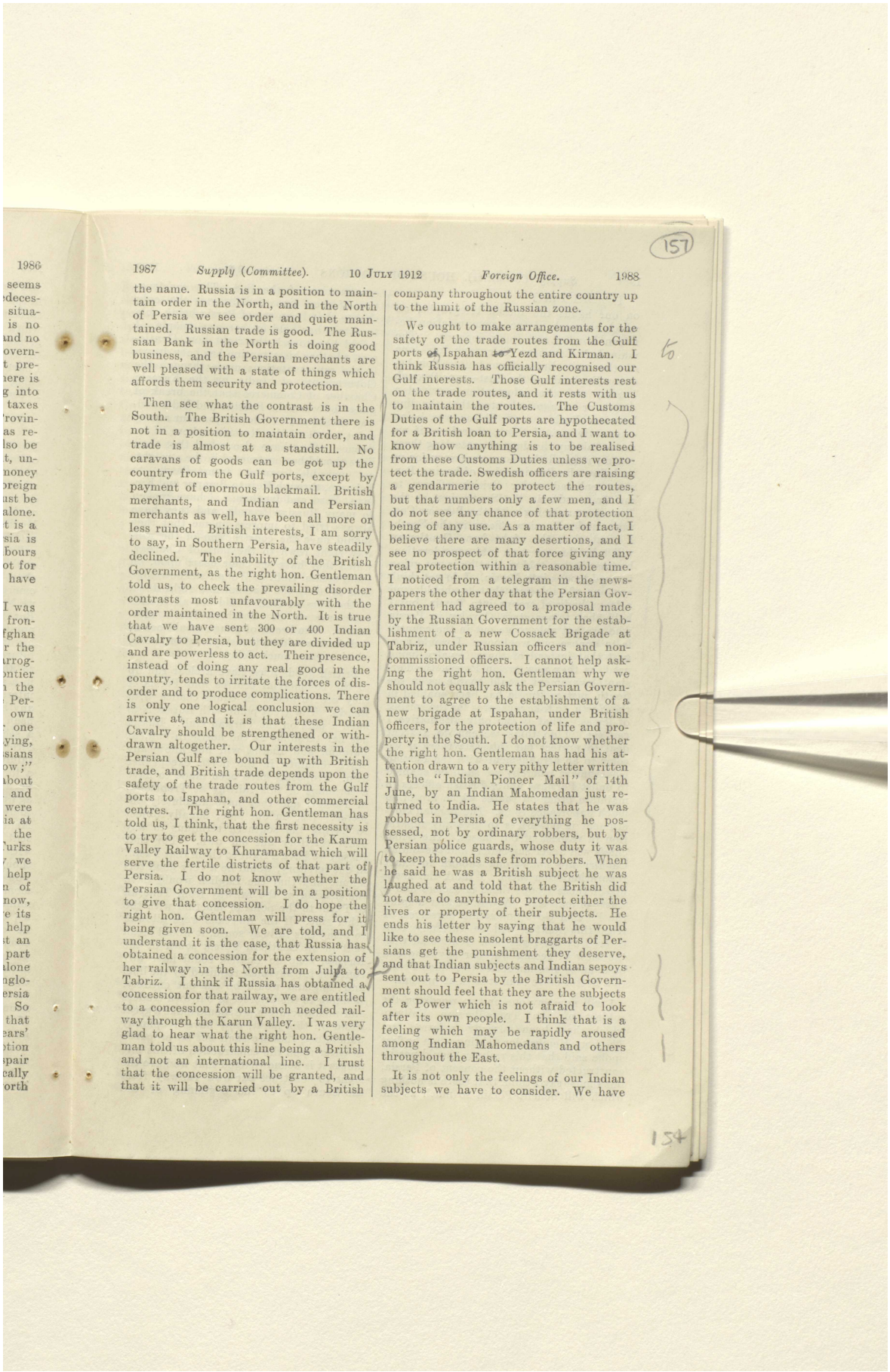

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1987 *Supply (Committee).* 10 JULY 1912 *Foreign Office.* 1988

the name. Russia is in a position to maintain order in the North, and in the North of Persia we see order and quiet maintained. Russian trade is good. The Russian Bank in the North is doing good business, and the Persian merchants are well pleased with a state of things which affords them security and protection.

Then see what the contrast is in the South. The British Government there is not in a position to maintain order, and trade is almost at a standstill. No caravans of goods can be got up the country from the Gulf ports, except by payment of enormous blackmail. British merchants, and Indian and Persian merchants as well, have been all more or less ruined. British interests, I am sorry to say, in Southern Persia, have steadily declined. The inability of the British Government, as the right hon. Gentleman told us, to check the prevailing disorder contrasts most unfavourably with the order maintained in the North. It is true that we have sent 300 or 400 Indian Cavalry to Persia, but they are divided up and are powerless to act. Their presence, instead of doing any real good in the country, tends to irritate the forces of disorder and to produce complications. There is only one logical conclusion we can arrive at, and it is that these Indian Cavalry should be strengthened or withdrawn altogether. Our interests in the Persian Gulf are bound up with British trade, and British trade depends upon the safety of the trade routes from the Gulf ports to Ispahan, and other commercial centres. The right hon. Gentleman has told us, I think, that the first necessity is to try to get the concession for the Karum Valley Railway to Khuramabad which will serve the fertile districts of that part of Persia. I do not know whether the Persian Government will be in a position to give that concession. I do hope the right hon. Gentleman will press for it being given soon. We are told, and I understand it is the case, that Russia has obtained a concession for the extension of her railway in the North from Julpa to Tabriz. I think if Russia has obtained a concession for that railway, we are entitled to a concession for our much needed railway through the Karun Valley. I was very glad to hear what the right hon. Gentleman told us about this line being a British and not an international line. I trust that the concession will be granted, and that it will be carried out by a British company throughout the entire country up to the limit of the Russian zone.

We ought to make arrangements for the safety of the trade routes from the Gulf ports of Ispahan ~~to~~ Yezd and Kirman. I think Russia has officially recognised our Gulf interests. Those Gulf interests rest on the trade routes, and it rests with us to maintain the routes. The Customs Duties of the Gulf ports are hypothecated for a British loan to Persia, and I want to know how anything is to be realised from these Customs Duties unless we protect the trade. Swedish officers are raising a gendarmerie to protect the routes, but that numbers only a few men, and I do not see any chance of that protection being of any use. As a matter of fact, I believe there are many desertions, and I see no prospect of that force giving any real protection within a reasonable time. I noticed from a telegram in the newspapers the other day that the Persian Government had agreed to a proposal made by the Russian Government for the establishment of a new Cossack Brigade at Tabriz, under Russian officers and non-commissioned officers. I cannot help asking the right hon. Gentleman why we should not equally ask the Persian Government to agree to the establishment of a new brigade at Ispahan, under British officers, for the protection of life and property in the South. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has had his attention drawn to a very pithy letter written in the "Indian Pioneer Mail" of 14th June, by an Indian Mahomedan just returned to India. He states that he was robbed in Persia of everything he possessed, not by ordinary robbers, but by Persian police guards, whose duty it was to keep the roads safe from robbers. When he said he was a British subject he was laughed at and told that the British did not dare do anything to protect either the lives or property of their subjects. He ends his letter by saying that he would like to see these insolent braggarts of Persians get the punishment they deserve, and that Indian subjects and Indian sepoys sent out to Persia by the British Government should feel that they are the subjects of a Power which is not afraid to look after its own people. I think that is a feeling which may be rapidly aroused among Indian Mahomedans and others throughout the East.

It is not only the feelings of our Indian subjects we have to consider. We have

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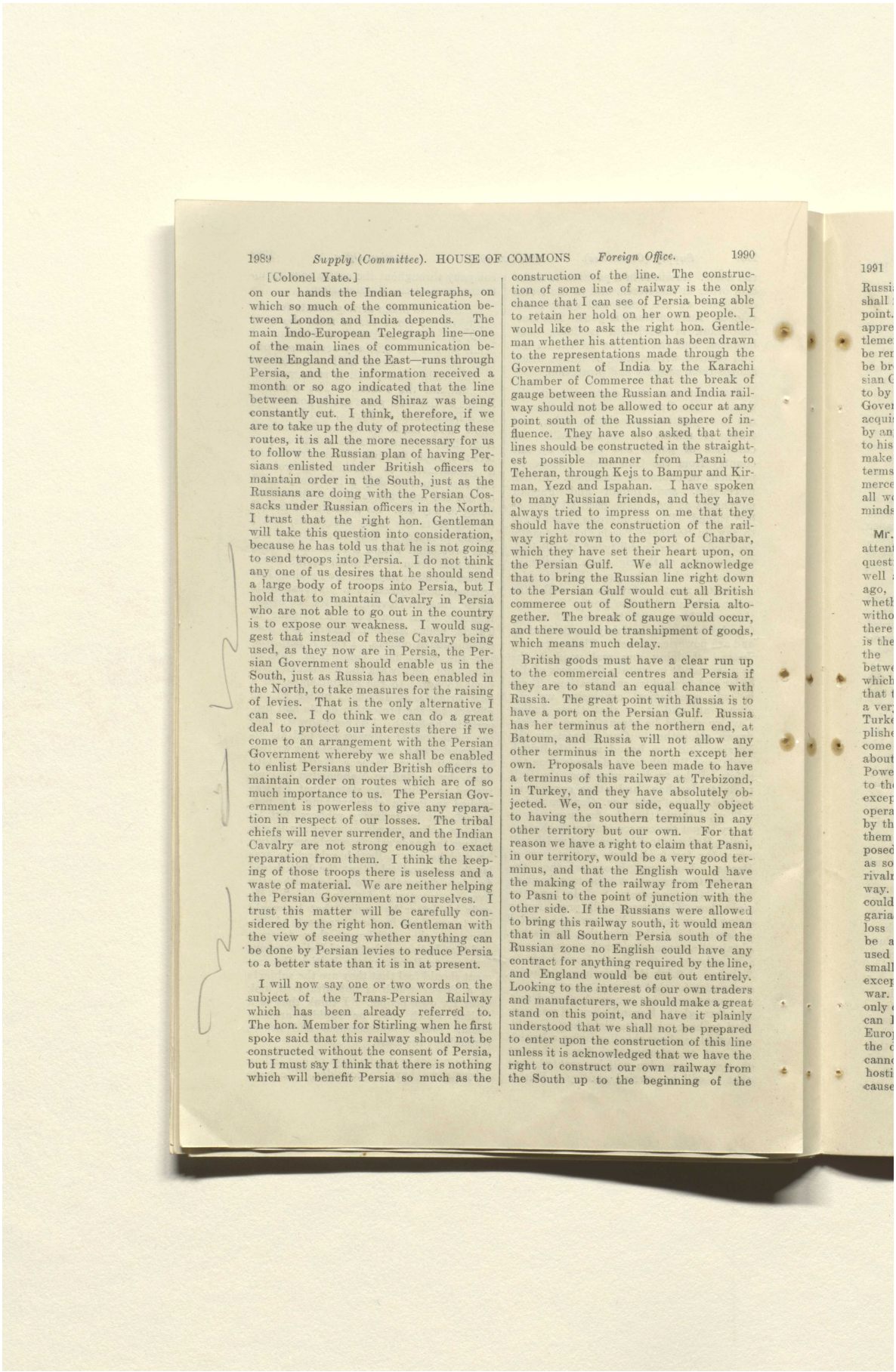

[Colonel Yate.]

on our hands the Indian telegraphs, on which so much of the communication between London and India depends. The main Indo-European Telegraph line—one of the main lines of communication between England and the East—runs through Persia, and the information received a month or so ago indicated that the line between Bushire and Shiraz was being constantly cut. I think, therefore, if we are to take up the duty of protecting these routes, it is all the more necessary for us to follow the Russian plan of having Persians enlisted under British officers to maintain order in the South, just as the Russians are doing with the Persian Cossacks under Russian officers in the North. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman will take this question into consideration, because he has told us that he is not going to send troops into Persia. I do not think any one of us desires that he should send a large body of troops into Persia, but I hold that to maintain Cavalry in Persia who are not able to go out in the country is to expose our weakness. I would suggest that instead of these Cavalry being used, as they now are in Persia, the Persian Government should enable us in the South, just as Russia has been enabled in the North, to take measures for the raising of levies. That is the only alternative I can see. I do think we can do a great deal to protect our interests there if we come to an arrangement with the Persian Government whereby we shall be enabled to enlist Persians under British officers to maintain order on routes which are of so much importance to us. The Persian Government is powerless to give any reparation in respect of our losses. The tribal chiefs will never surrender, and the Indian Cavalry are not strong enough to exact reparation from them. I think the keeping of those troops there is useless and a waste of material. We are neither helping the Persian Government nor ourselves. I trust this matter will be carefully considered by the right hon. Gentleman with the view of seeing whether anything can be done by Persian levies to reduce Persia to a better state than it is in at present.

I will now say one or two words on the subject of the Trans-Persian Railway which has been already referred to. The hon. Member for Stirling when he first spoke said that this railway should not be constructed without the consent of Persia, but I must say I think that there is nothing which will benefit Persia so much as the construction of the line. The construction of some line of railway is the only chance that I can see of Persia being able to retain her hold on her own people. I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been drawn to the representations made through the Government of India by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce that the break of gauge between the Russian and India railway should not be allowed to occur at any point south of the Russian sphere of influence. They have also asked that their lines should be constructed in the straightest possible manner from Pasni to Teheran, through Kejs to Bampur and Kirman, Yezd and Ispahan. I have spoken to many Russian friends, and they have always tried to impress on me that they should have the construction of the railway right rown to the port of Charbar, which they have set their heart upon, on the Persian Gulf. We all acknowledge that to bring the Russian line right down to the Persian Gulf would cut all British commerce out of Southern Persia altogether. The break of gauge would occur, and there would be transhipment of goods, which means much delay.

British goods must have a clear run up to the commercial centres and Persia if they are to stand an equal chance with Russia. The great point with Russia is to have a port on the Persian Gulf. Russia has her terminus at the northern end, at Batoum, and Russia will not allow any other terminus in the north except her own. Proposals have been made to have a terminus of this railway at Trebizond, in Turkey, and they have absolutely objected. We, on our side, equally object to having the southern terminus in any other territory but our own. For that reason we have a right to claim that Pasni, in our territory, would be a very good terminus, and that the English would have the making of the railway from Teheran to Pasni to the point of junction with the other side. If the Russians were allowed to bring this railway south, it would mean that in all Southern Persia south of the Russian zone no English could have any contract for anything required by the line, and England would be cut out entirely. Looking to the interest of our own traders and manufacturers, we should make a great stand on this point, and have it plainly understood that we shall not be prepared to enter upon the construction of this line unless it is acknowledged that we have the right to construct our own railway from the South up to the beginning of the

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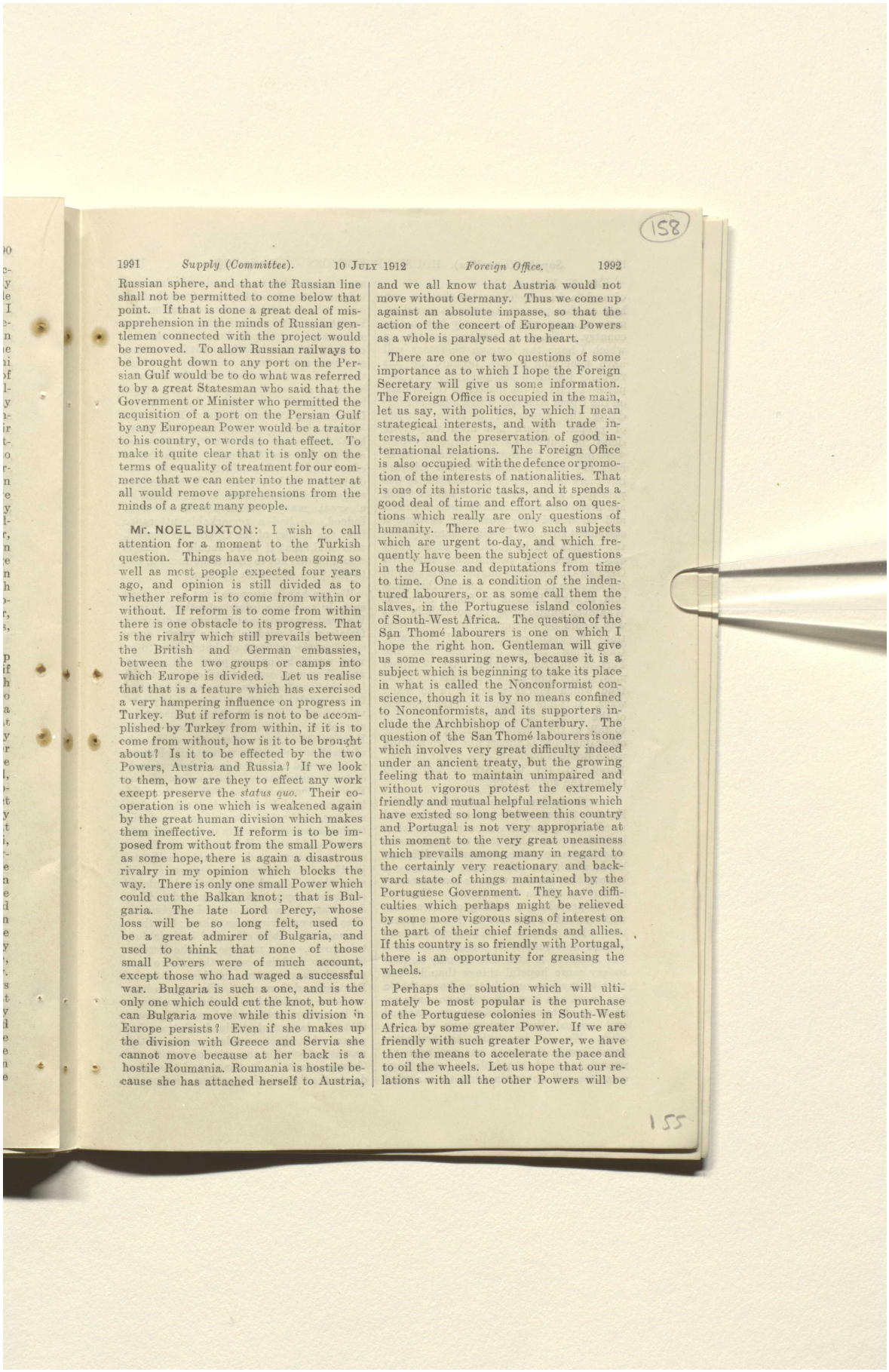

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Russian sphere, and that the Russian line shall not be permitted to come below that point. If that is done a great deal of misapprehension in the minds of Russian gentlemen connected with the project would be removed. To allow Russian railways to be brought down to any port on the Persian Gulf would be to do what was referred to by a great Statesman who said that the Government or Minister who permitted the acquisition of a port on the Persian Gulf by any European Power would be a traitor to his country, or words to that effect. To make it quite clear that it is only on the terms of equality of treatment for our commerce that we can enter into the matter at all would remove apprehensions from the minds of a great many people.

Mr. NOEL BUXTON: I wish to call attention for a moment to the Turkish question. Things have not been going so well as most people expected four years ago, and opinion is still divided as to whether reform is to come from within or without. If reform is to come from within there is one obstacle to its progress. That is the rivalry which still prevails between the British and German embassies, between the two groups or camps into which Europe is divided. Let us realise that that is a feature which has exercised a very hampering influence on progress in Turkey. But if reform is not to be accomplished by Turkey from within, if it is to come from without, how is it to be brought about? Is it to be effected by the two Powers, Austria and Russia? If we look to them, how are they to effect any work except preserve the *status quo*. Their co-operation is one which is weakened again by the great human division which makes them ineffective. If reform is to be imposed from without from the small Powers as some hope, there is again a disastrous rivalry in my opinion which blocks the way. There is only one small Power which could cut the Balkan knot; that is Bulgaria. The late Lord Percy, whose loss will be so long felt, used to be a great admirer of Bulgaria, and used to think that none of those small Powers were of much account, except those who had waged a successful war. Bulgaria is such a one, and is the only one which could cut the knot, but how can Bulgaria move while this division in Europe persists? Even if she makes up the division with Greece and Servia she cannot move because at her back is a hostile Roumania. Roumania is hostile because she has attached herself to Austria, and we all know that Austria would not move without Germany. Thus we come up against an absolute impasse, so that the action of the concert of European Powers as a whole is paralysed at the heart.

There are one or two questions of some importance as to which I hope the Foreign Secretary will give us some information. The Foreign Office is occupied in the main, let us say, with politics, by which I mean strategical interests, and with trade interests, and the preservation of good international relations. The Foreign Office is also occupied with the defence or promotion of the interests of nationalities. That is one of its historic tasks, and it spends a good deal of time and effort also on questions which really are only questions of humanity. There are two such subjects which are urgent to-day, and which frequently have been the subject of questions in the House and deputations from time to time. One is a condition of the indentured labourers, or as some call them the slaves, in the Portuguese island colonies of South-West Africa. The question of the San Thomé labourers is one on which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give us some reassuring news, because it is a subject which is beginning to take its place in what is called the Nonconformist conscience, though it is by no means confined to Nonconformists, and its supporters include the Archbishop of Canterbury. The question of the San Thomé labourers is one which involves very great difficulty indeed under an ancient treaty, but the growing feeling that to maintain unimpaired and without vigorous protest the extremely friendly and mutual helpful relations which have existed so long between this country and Portugal is not very appropriate at this moment to the very great uneasiness which prevails among many in regard to the certainly very reactionary and backward state of things maintained by the Portuguese Government. They have difficulties which perhaps might be relieved by some more vigorous signs of interest on the part of their chief friends and allies. If this country is so friendly with Portugal, there is an opportunity for greasing the wheels.

Perhaps the solution which will ultimately be most popular is the purchase of the Portuguese colonies in South-West Africa by some greater Power. If we are friendly with such greater Power, we have then the means to accelerate the pace and to oil the wheels. Let us hope that our relations with all the other Powers will be

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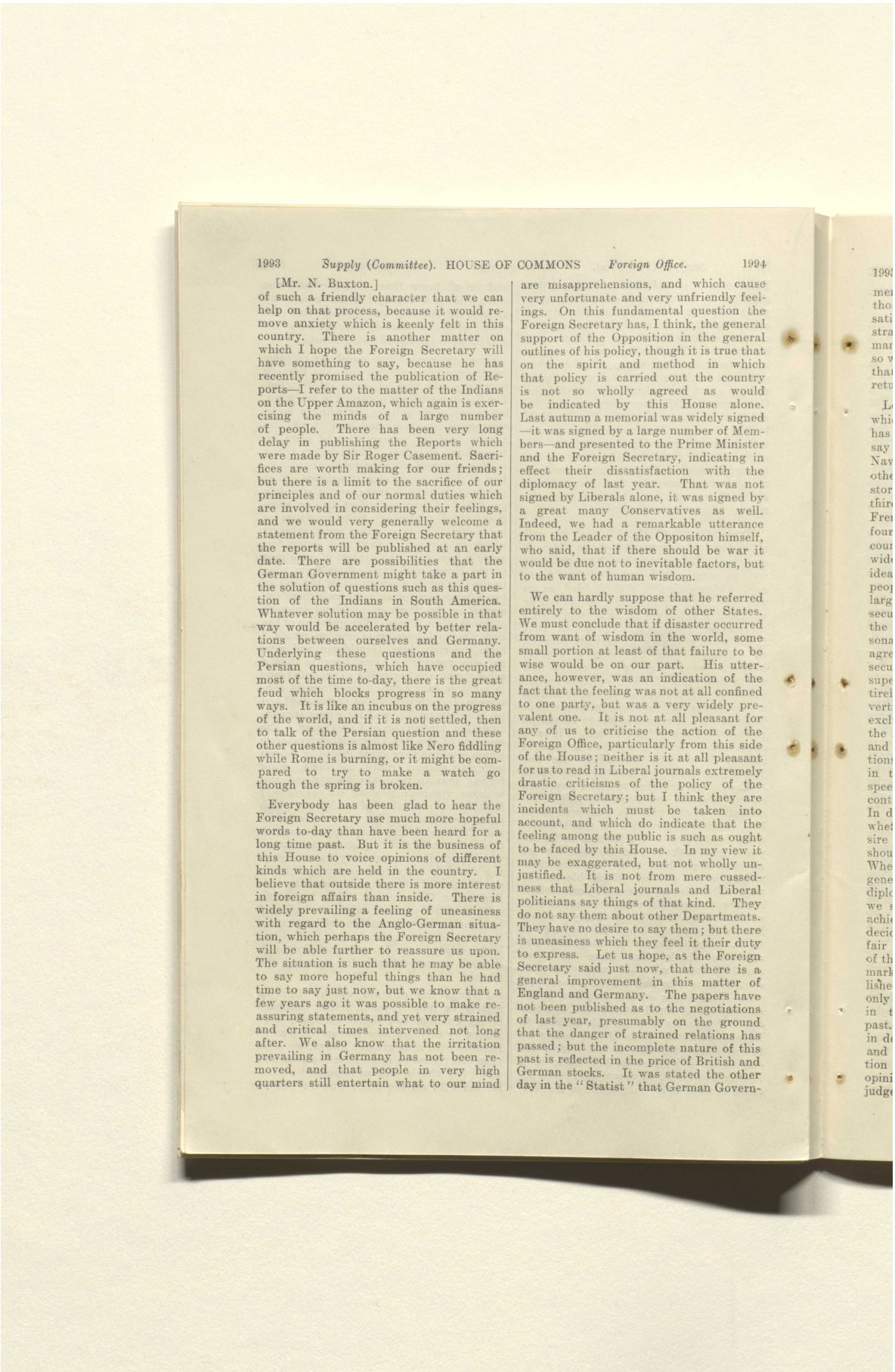

[Mr. N. Buxton.]

of such a friendly character that we can help on that process, because it would remove anxiety which is keenly felt in this country. There is another matter on which I hope the Foreign Secretary will have something to say, because he has recently promised the publication of Reports—I refer to the matter of the Indians on the Upper Amazon, which again is exercising the minds of a large number of people. There has been very long delay in publishing the Reports which were made by Sir Roger Casement. Sacrifices are worth making for our friends; but there is a limit to the sacrifice of our principles and of our normal duties which are involved in considering their feelings, and we would very generally welcome a statement from the Foreign Secretary that the reports will be published at an early date. There are possibilities that the German Government might take a part in the solution of questions such as this question of the Indians in South America. Whatever solution may be possible in that way would be accelerated by better relations between ourselves and Germany. Underlying these questions and the Persian questions, which have occupied most of the time to-day, there is the great feud which blocks progress in so many ways. It is like an incubus on the progress of the world, and if it is not settled, then to talk of the Persian question and these other questions is almost like Nero fiddling while Rome is burning, or it might be compared to try to make a watch go though the spring is broken.

Everybody has been glad to hear the Foreign Secretary use much more hopeful words to-day than have been heard for a long time past. But it is the business of this House to voice opinions of different kinds which are held in the country. I believe that outside there is more interest in foreign affairs than inside. There is widely prevailing a feeling of uneasiness with regard to the Anglo-German situation, which perhaps the Foreign Secretary will be able further to reassure us upon. The situation is such that he may be able to say more hopeful things than he had time to say just now, but we know that a few years ago it was possible to make reassuring statements, and yet very strained and critical times intervened not long after. We also know that the irritation prevailing in Germany has not been removed, and that people in very high quarters still entertain what to our mind are misapprehensions, and which cause very unfortunate and very unfriendly feelings. On this fundamental question the Foreign Secretary has, I think, the general support of the Opposition in the general outlines of his policy, though it is true that on the spirit and method in which that policy is carried out the country is not so wholly agreed as would be indicated by this House alone. Last autumn a memorial was widely signed —it was signed by a large number of Members—and presented to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, indicating in effect their dissatisfaction with the diplomacy of last year. That was not signed by Liberals alone, it was signed by a great many Conservatives as well. Indeed, we had a remarkable utterance from the Leader of the Oppositon himself, who said, that if there should be war it would be due not to inevitable factors, but to the want of human wisdom.

We can hardly suppose that he referred entirely to the wisdom of other States. We must conclude that if disaster occurred from want of wisdom in the world, some small portion at least of that failure to be wise would be on our part. His utterance, however, was an indication of the fact that the feeling was not at all confined to one party, but was a very widely prevalent one. It is not at all pleasant for any of us to criticise the action of the Foreign Office, particularly from this side of the House; neither is it at all pleasant for us to read in Liberal journals extremely drastic criticisms of the policy of the Foreign Secretary; but I think they are incidents which must be taken into account, and which do indicate that the feeling among the public is such as ought to be faced by this House. In my view it may be exaggerated, but not wholly unjustified. It is not from mere cussedness that Liberal journals and Liberal politicians say things of that kind. They do not say them about other Departments. They have no desire to say them; but there is uneasiness which they feel it their duty to express. Let us hope, as the Foreign Secretary said just now, that there is a general improvement in this matter of England and Germany. The papers have not been published as to the negotiations of last year, presumably on the ground that the danger of strained relations has passed; but the incomplete nature of this past is reflected in the price of British and German stocks. It was stated the other day in the "Statist" that German Govern-

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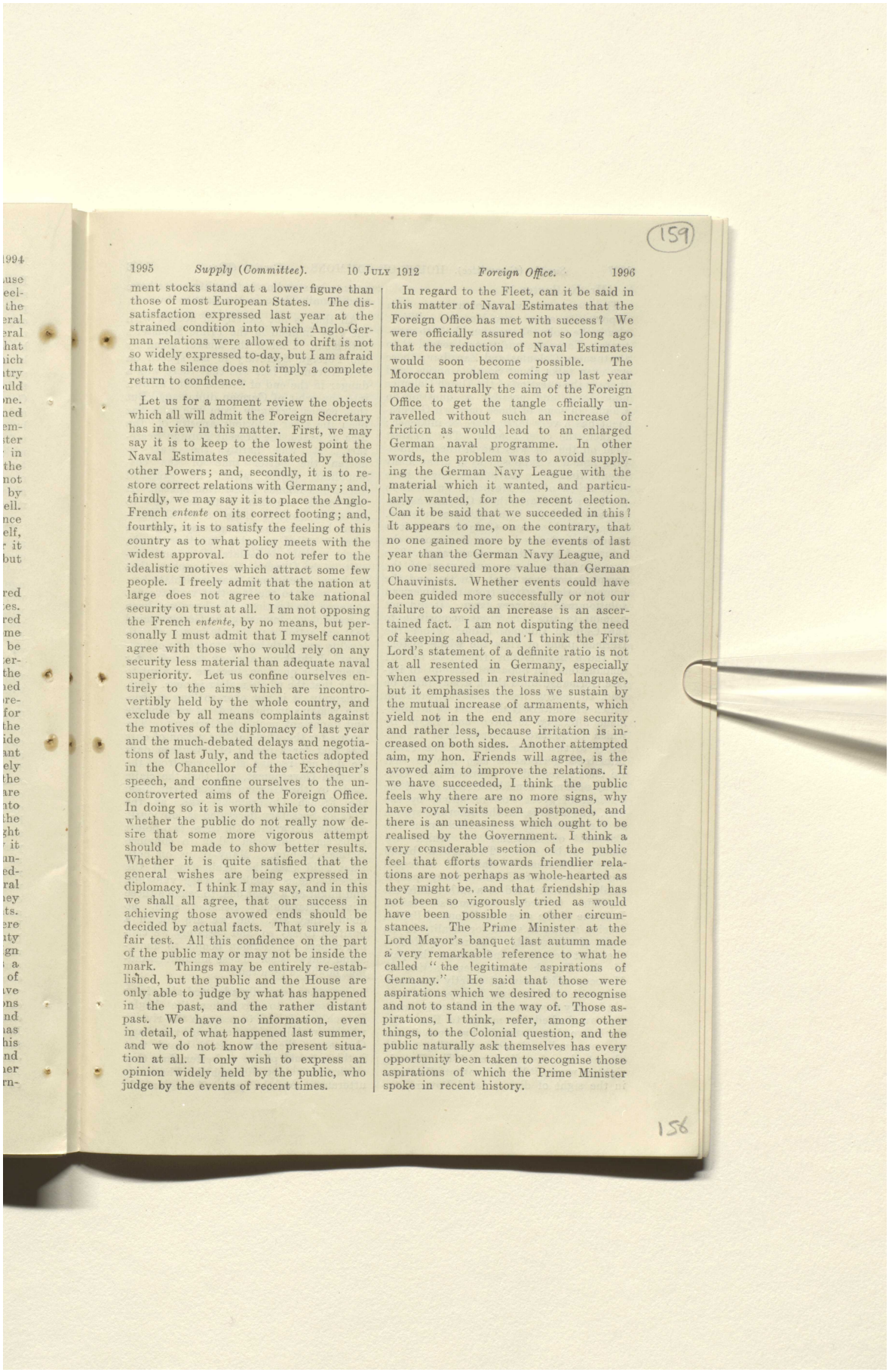

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ment stocks stand at a lower figure than those of most European States. The dissatisfaction expressed last year at the strained condition into which Anglo-German relations were allowed to drift is not so widely expressed to-day, but I am afraid that the silence does not imply a complete return to confidence.

Let us for a moment review the objects which all will admit the Foreign Secretary has in view in this matter. First, we may say it is to keep to the lowest point the Naval Estimates necessitated by those other Powers; and, secondly, it is to restore correct relations with Germany; and, thirdly, we may say it is to place the Anglo-French *entente* on its correct footing; and, fourthly, it is to satisfy the feeling of this country as to what policy meets with the widest approval. I do not refer to the idealistic motives which attract some few people. I freely admit that the nation at large does not agree to take national security on trust at all. I am not opposing the French *entente*, by no means, but personally I must admit that I myself cannot agree with those who would rely on any security less material than adequate naval superiority. Let us confine ourselves entirely to the aims which are incontrovertibly held by the whole country, and exclude by all means complaints against the motives of the diplomacy of last year and the much-debated delays and negotiations of last July, and the tactics adopted in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, and confine ourselves to the uncontroverted aims of the Foreign Office. In doing so it is worth while to consider whether the public do not really now desire that some more vigorous attempt should be made to show better results. Whether it is quite satisfied that the general wishes are being expressed in diplomacy. I think I may say, and in this we shall all agree, that our success in achieving those avowed ends should be decided by actual facts. That surely is a fair test. All this confidence on the part of the public may or may not be inside the mark. Things may be entirely re-established, but the public and the House are only able to judge by what has happened in the past, and the rather distant past. We have no information, even in detail, of what happened last summer, and we do not know the present situation at all. I only wish to express an opinion widely held by the public, who judge by the events of recent times.

In regard to the Fleet, can it be said in this matter of Naval Estimates that the Foreign Office has met with success? We were officially assured not so long ago that the reduction of Naval Estimates would soon become possible. The Moroccan problem coming up last year made it naturally the aim of the Foreign Office to get the tangle officially unravelled without such an increase of friction as would lead to an enlarged German naval programme. In other words, the problem was to avoid supplying the German Navy League with the material which it wanted, and particularly wanted, for the recent election. Can it be said that we succeeded in this? It appears to me, on the contrary, that no one gained more by the events of last year than the German Navy League, and no one secured more value than German Chauvinists. Whether events could have been guided more successfully or not our failure to avoid an increase is an ascertained fact. I am not disputing the need of keeping ahead, and I think the First Lord's statement of a definite ratio is not at all resented in Germany, especially when expressed in restrained language, but it emphasises the loss we sustain by the mutual increase of armaments, which yield not in the end any more security and rather less, because irritation is increased on both sides. Another attempted aim, my hon. Friends will agree, is the avowed aim to improve the relations. If we have succeeded, I think the public feels why there are no more signs, why have royal visits been postponed, and there is an uneasiness which ought to be realised by the Government. I think a very considerable section of the public feel that efforts towards friendlier relations are not perhaps as whole-hearted as they might be, and that friendship has not been so vigorously tried as would have been possible in other circumstances. The Prime Minister at the Lord Mayor's banquet last autumn made a very remarkable reference to what he called "the legitimate aspirations of Germany." He said that those were aspirations which we desired to recognise and not to stand in the way of. Those aspirations, I think, refer, among other things, to the Colonial question, and the public naturally ask themselves has every opportunity been taken to recognise those aspirations of which the Prime Minister spoke in recent history.

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Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [159v] (318/442)

[Mr. N. Buxton.]

There are certain opportunities. An opportunity arose over Morocco. Where else is the Colonial question likely to eventuate? There are questions discussd as to Portuguese Colonies and Zanzibar; there are even talks about South America, and there is the question of the Dutch Colonies and Java, and possibly a question in China. In some of those our own Government has a very large share of influence; in fact, the chief control. The greatest item on the list was the Moroccan question, and it is supposed by a great many people that more advantage might have been taken of the Moroccan question to meet in some degree those Colonial aspirations to which the Prime Minister referred. I mean in this way. Compensation, it is generally admitted, was due upon the solution of the old Moroccan tangle. The question of the degree and extent of the compensation was vital. In the end the compensation derived from the American solution was not very large. It did not amount to any very great acquisition to the German Colonial claim. From the German point of view the whole history of those negotiations from 1904 to 1911 amounted to an apparent attempt to isolate Germany, and I think it may fairly be said, to deprive her of the compensation which was naturally due from an arrangement affecting Morocco and Egypt by which those two countries went respectively to two other Powers. The Prime Minister's declaration also implied that we should regard in a broad view Germany's claim to consideration as one of the Cabinet of great Powers which, by the way, was a phrase in the notorious speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Cabinet of Nations, of which we claim to be one. To take a broad view of Germany's claim to an equal position in that Cabinet many people think would have led to a rather different attitude towards Germany's claims. It is one of the great traditions of British foreign action to stand for legality in the sight of the world. But nobody doubts that last year we condoned on the part of the French Government action in Morocco which was not strictly in accordance with the Algeciras Treaty. We were not by any means upholding legality when we overlooked the march to Fez. No doubt we deprecated it, but once it was an accomplished fact our policy might almost be described as "The French, right or wrong." We did not, at all events, in the sight of disinterested Powers, appear to be standing for legality as we have traditionally done in the past.

All that is not exactly in accord with the view implied in the Prime Minister's statement. I know the answer given by the Foreign Secretary in his speech on 27th November last was that there was a danger in the end of France being thrown into the orbit of German diplomacy. But that comes strangely from one who has been the most notorious apostle of the idea of peace, the present Foreign Secretary. It was hardly the way to hasten the better time of the cosmopolitan police which he sketched out in his famous arbitration speech. It was hardly consonant with that view to curtail a Power's claim to equal treatment, because she might attempt to create what is called an orbit—in other words, might conspire to isolate us, as undoubtedly to the German mind it appears that we have done in past years to isolate her. I only point to the fact that we have not removed the friction. We have not been successful in convincing the German mind that our action was strictly in accord with legality and with loyalty to treaty obligations. I think no apology is needed for raising this question, because we want to think that the whole matter is over. But, unhappily, it is not over so long as friction remains in the minds of responsible and important people in Germany. The excuse for the whole of this action of ours was that for a period of seventeen days we did not receive an answer from the German Government, and that the claim made by the German Government upon the French Government was, as the Foreign Secretary described it, obviously impossible to grant. On these two points steps have not been taken to convince German opinion. Many of us on both sides held that the publication of the correspondence would be very valuable, and might do a great deal to remove these misunderstandings. Because such, no doubt, they are. But we are not in a position to say so, and certainly we cannot expect the German people to understand that it is so. These misunderstandings might be removed.

One other generally admitted aim of our diplomacy is to strengthen the Anglo-French *entente* and to assuage the rivalry which certainly exists between France and Germany. We have often heard that nothing would please us better than that rivalry should be diminished. There are utterances on the part of responsible

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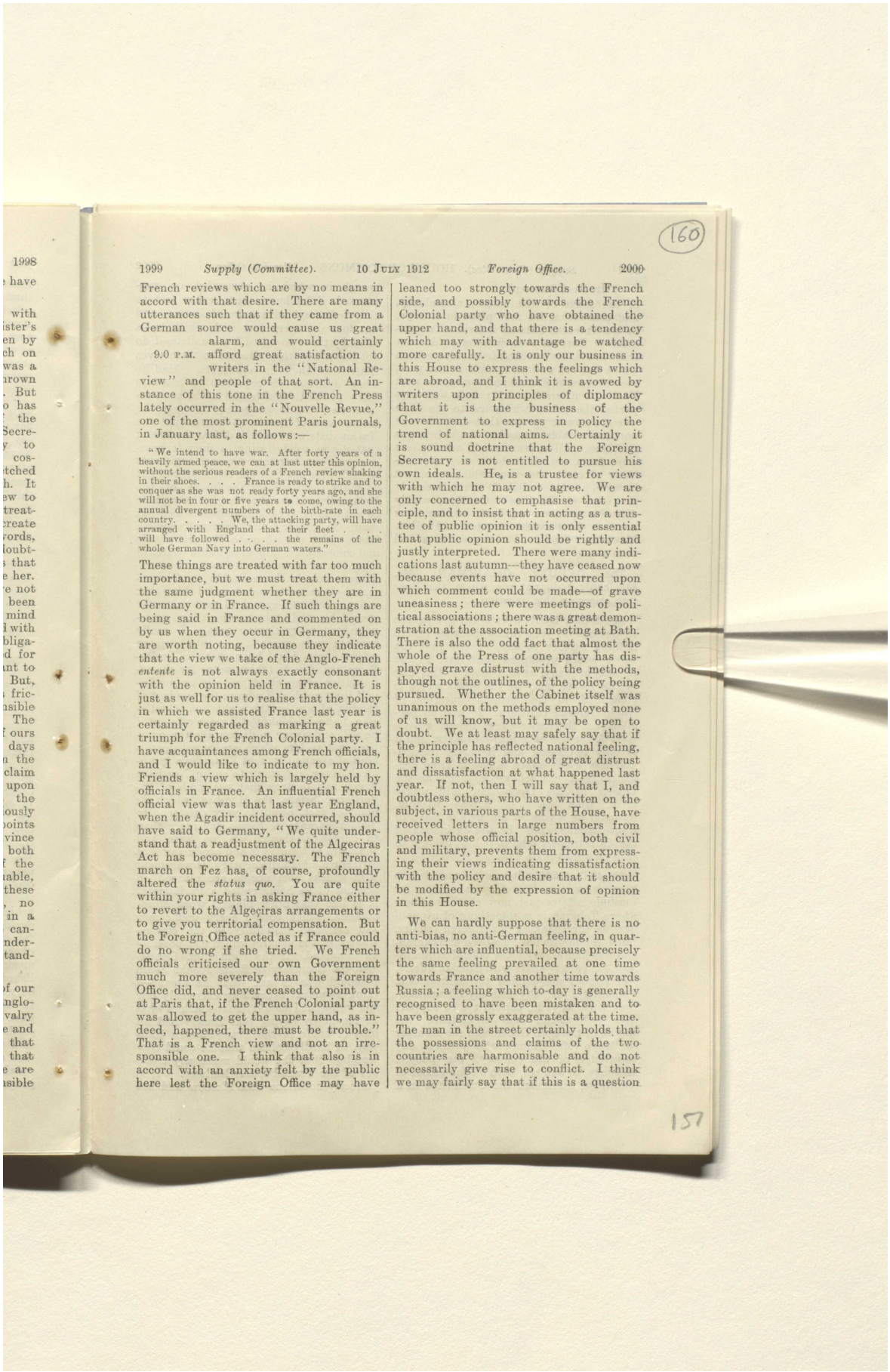

1998 have with ister's en by ch on was a rown . But o has the Secre- y to cos- tched h. It ew to treat- reate ords, loubt- that e her. e not been mind l with bliga- d for nt to But, fric- sible The ours days n the claim upon the ously points vince both f the iable, these , no in a can- nder- tand- f our nglo- valry e and that that e are sible

French reviews which are by no means in accord with that desire. There are many utterances such that if they came from a German source would cause us great alarm, and would certainly 9.0 P.M. afford great satisfaction to writers in the "National Review" and people of that sort. An instance of this tone in the French Press lately occurred in the "Nouvelle Revue," one of the most prominent Paris journals, in January last, as follows:—

"We intend to have war. After forty years of a heavily armed peace, we can at last utter this opinion, without the serious readers of a French review shaking in their shoes. . . . France is ready to strike and to conquer as she was not ready forty years ago, and she will not be in four or five years to come, owing to the annual divergent numbers of the birth-rate in each country. . . . . We, the attacking party, will have arranged with England that their fleet . . . . will have followed . . . . . the remains of the whole German Navy into German waters."

These things are treated with far too much importance, but we must treat them with the same judgment whether they are in Germany or in France. If such things are being said in France and commented on by us when they occur in Germany, they are worth noting, because they indicate that the view we take of the Anglo-French *entente* is not always exactly consonant with the opinion held in France. It is just as well for us to realise that the policy in which we assisted France last year is certainly regarded as marking a great triumph for the French Colonial party. I have acquaintances among French officials, and I would like to indicate to my hon. Friends a view which is largely held by officials in France. An influential French official view was that last year England, when the Agadir incident occurred, should have said to Germany, "We quite understand that a readjustment of the Algeciras Act has become necessary. The French march on Fez has, of course, profoundly altered the *status quo*. You are quite within your rights in asking France either to revert to the Algeciras arrangements or to give you territorial compensation. But the Foreign Office acted as if France could do no wrong if she tried. We French officials criticised our own Government much more severely than the Foreign Office did, and never ceased to point out at Paris that, if the French Colonial party was allowed to get the upper hand, as indeed, happened, there must be trouble." That is a French view and not an irresponsible one. I think that also is in accord with an anxiety felt by the public here lest the Foreign Office may have leaned too strongly towards the French side, and possibly towards the French Colonial party who have obtained the upper hand, and that there is a tendency which may with advantage be watched more carefully. It is only our business in this House to express the feelings which are abroad, and I think it is avowed by writers upon principles of diplomacy that it is the business of the Government to express in policy the trend of national aims. Certainly it is sound doctrine that the Foreign Secretary is not entitled to pursue his own ideals. He is a trustee for views with which he may not agree. We are only concerned to emphasise that principle, and to insist that in acting as a trustee of public opinion it is only essential that public opinion should be rightly and justly interpreted. There were many indications last autumn—they have ceased now because events have not occurred upon which comment could be made—of grave uneasiness; there were meetings of political associations; there was a great demonstration at the association meeting at Bath. There is also the odd fact that almost the whole of the Press of one party has displayed grave distrust with the methods, though not the outlines, of the policy being pursued. Whether the Cabinet itself was unanimous on the methods employed none of us will know, but it may be open to doubt. We at least may safely say that if the principle has reflected national feeling, there is a feeling abroad of great distrust and dissatisfaction at what happened last year. If not, then I will say that I, and doubtless others, who have written on the subject, in various parts of the House, have received letters in large numbers from people whose official position, both civil and military, prevents them from expressing their views indicating dissatisfaction with the policy and desire that it should be modified by the expression of opinion in this House.

We can hardly suppose that there is no anti-bias, no anti-German feeling, in quarters which are influential, because precisely the same feeling prevailed at one time towards France and another time towards Russia; a feeling which to-day is generally recognised to have been mistaken and to have been grossly exaggerated at the time. The man in the street certainly holds that the possessions and claims of the two countries are harmonisable and do not necessarily give rise to conflict. I think we may fairly say that if this is a question

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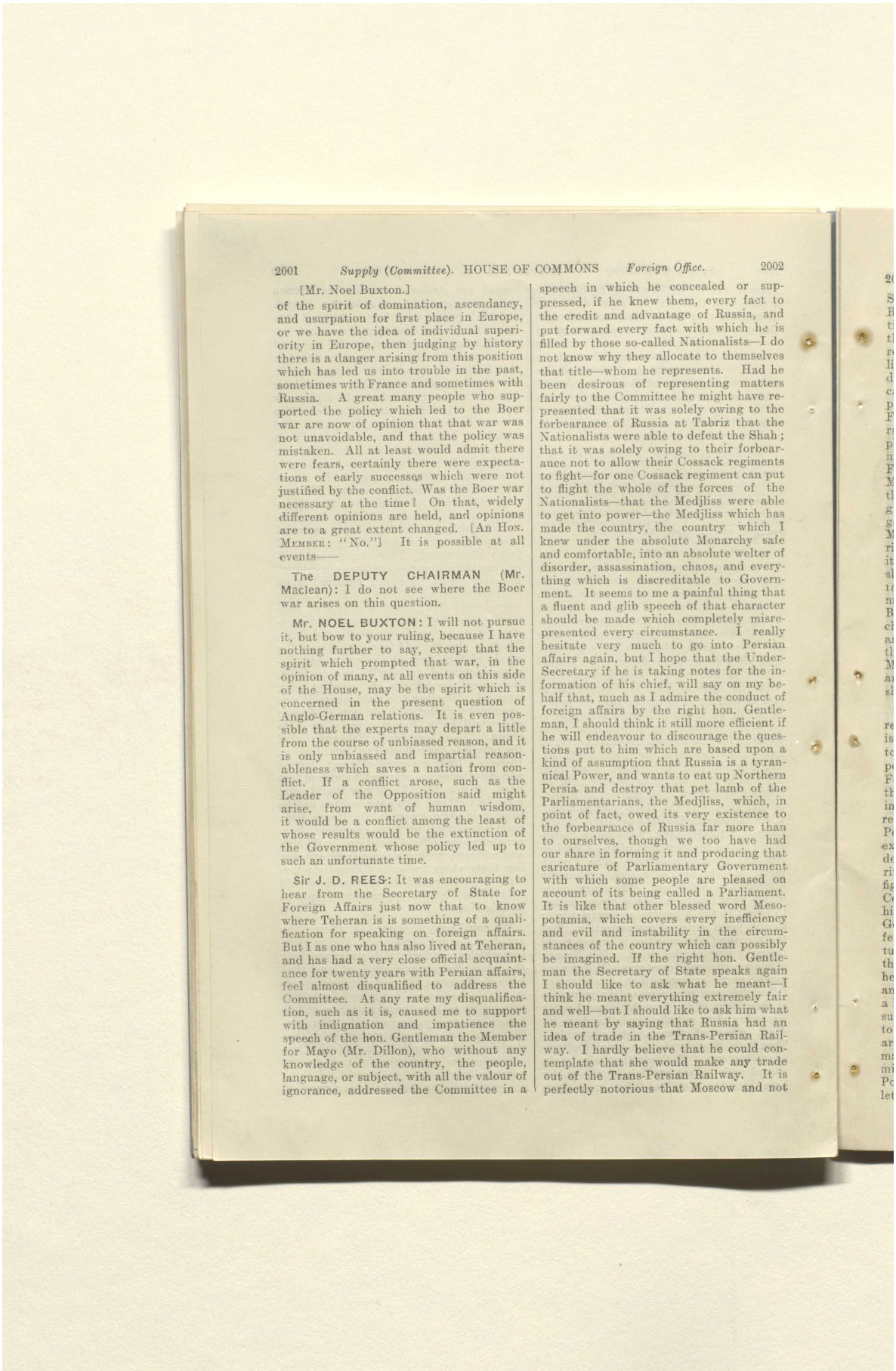

[Mr. Noel Buxton.]

of the spirit of domination, ascendancy, and usurpation for first place in Europe, or we have the idea of individual superiority in Europe, then judging by history there is a danger arising from this position which has led us into trouble in the past, sometimes with France and sometimes with Russia. A great many people who supported the policy which led to the Boer war are now of opinion that that war was not unavoidable, and that the policy was mistaken. All at least would admit there were fears, certainly there were expectations of early successes which were not justified by the conflict. Was the Boer war necessary at the time? On that, widely different opinions are held, and opinions are to a great extent changed. [An HON. MEMBER: "No."] It is possible at all events——

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Maclean): I do not see where the Boer war arises on this question.

Mr. NOEL BUXTON: I will not pursue it, but bow to your ruling, because I have nothing further to say, except that the spirit which prompted that war, in the opinion of many, at all events on this side of the House, may be the spirit which is concerned in the present question of Anglo-German relations. It is even possible that the experts may depart a little from the course of unbiassed reason, and it is only unbiassed and impartial reasonableness which saves a nation from conflict. If a conflict arose, such as the Leader of the Opposition said might arise, from want of human wisdom, it would be a conflict among the least of whose results would be the extinction of the Government whose policy led up to such an unfortunate time.

Sir J. D. REES: It was encouraging to hear from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs just now that to know where Teheran is is something of a qualification for speaking on foreign affairs. But I as one who has also lived at Teheran, and has had a very close official acquaintance for twenty years with Persian affairs, feel almost disqualified to address the Committee. At any rate my disqualification, such as it is, caused me to support with indignation and impatience the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who without any knowledge of the country, the people, language, or subject, with all the valour of ignorance, addressed the Committee in a speech in which he concealed or suppressed, if he knew them, every fact to the credit and advantage of Russia, and put forward every fact with which he is filled by those so-called Nationalists—I do not know why they allocate to themselves that title—whom he represents. Had he been desirous of representing matters fairly to the Committee he might have represented that it was solely owing to the forbearance of Russia at Tabriz that the Nationalists were able to defeat the Shah; that it was solely owing to their forbearance not to allow their Cossack regiments to fight—for one Cossack regiment can put to flight the whole of the forces of the Nationalists—that the Medjliss were able to get into power—the Medjliss which has made the country, the country which I knew under the absolute Monarchy safe and comfortable, into an absolute welter of disorder, assassination, chaos, and everything which is discreditable to Government. It seems to me a painful thing that a fluent and glib speech of that character should be made which completely misrepresented every circumstance. I really hesitate very much to go into Persian affairs again, but I hope that the Under-Secretary if he is taking notes for the information of his chief, will say on my behalf that, much as I admire the conduct of foreign affairs by the right hon. Gentleman, I should think it still more efficient if he will endeavour to discourage the questions put to him which are based upon a kind of assumption that Russia is a tyrannical Power, and wants to eat up Northern Persia and destroy that pet lamb of the Parliamentarians, the Medjliss, which, in point of fact, owed its very existence to the forbearance of Russia far more than to ourselves, though we too have had our share in forming it and producing that caricature of Parliamentary Government with which some people are pleased on account of its being called a Parliament. It is like that other blessed word Mesopotamia, which covers every inefficiency and evil and instability in the circumstances of the country which can possibly be imagined. If the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State speaks again I should like to ask what he meant—I think he meant everything extremely fair and well—but I should like to ask him what he meant by saying that Russia had an idea of trade in the Trans-Persian Railway. I hardly believe that he could contemplate that she would make any trade out of the Trans-Persian Railway. It is perfectly notorious that Moscow and not

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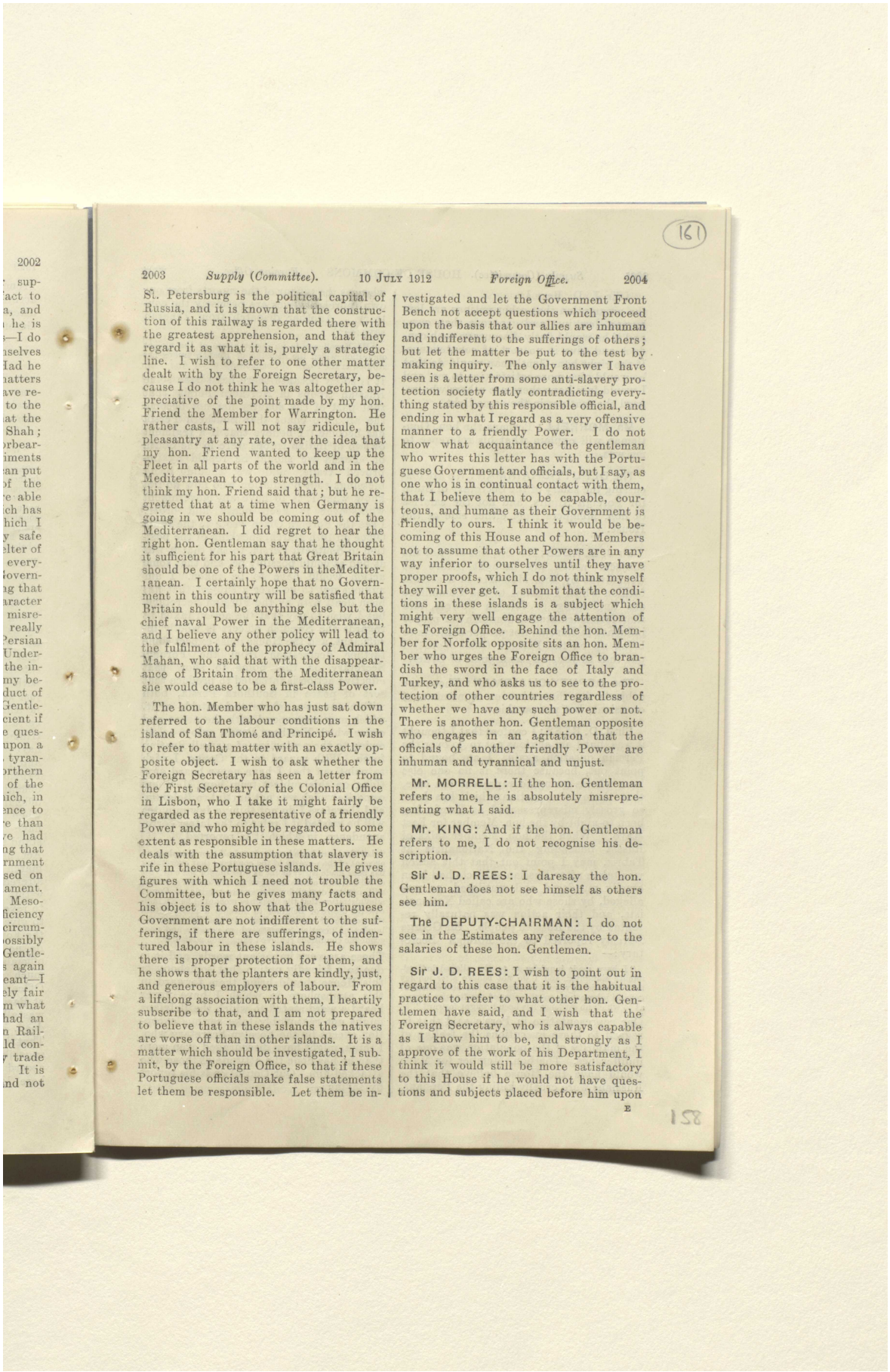

St. Petersburg is the political capital of Russia, and it is known that the construction of this railway is regarded there with the greatest apprehension, and that they regard it as what it is, purely a strategic line. I wish to refer to one other matter dealt with by the Foreign Secretary, because I do not think he was altogether appreciative of the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington. He rather casts, I will not say ridicule, but pleasantry at any rate, over the idea that my hon. Friend wanted to keep up the Fleet in all parts of the world and in the Mediterranean to top strength. I do not think my hon. Friend said that; but he regretted that at a time when Germany is going in we should be coming out of the Mediterranean. I did regret to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that he thought it sufficient for his part that Great Britain should be one of the Powers in the Mediterranean. I certainly hope that no Government in this country will be satisfied that Britain should be anything else but the chief naval Power in the Mediterranean, and I believe any other policy will lead to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Admiral Mahan, who said that with the disappearance of Britain from the Mediterranean she would cease to be a first-class Power.

The hon. Member who has just sat down referred to the labour conditions in the island of San Thomé and Principé. I wish to refer to that matter with an exactly opposite object. I wish to ask whether the Foreign Secretary has seen a letter from the First Secretary of the Colonial Office in Lisbon, who I take it might fairly be regarded as the representative of a friendly Power and who might be regarded to some extent as responsible in these matters. He deals with the assumption that slavery is rife in these Portuguese islands. He gives figures with which I need not trouble the Committee, but he gives many facts and his object is to show that the Portuguese Government are not indifferent to the sufferings, if there are sufferings, of indentured labour in these islands. He shows there is proper protection for them, and he shows that the planters are kindly, just, and generous employers of labour. From a lifelong association with them, I heartily subscribe to that, and I am not prepared to believe that in these islands the natives are worse off than in other islands. It is a matter which should be investigated, I submit, by the Foreign Office, so that if these Portuguese officials make false statements let them be responsible. Let them be investigated and let the Government Front Bench not accept questions which proceed upon the basis that our allies are inhuman and indifferent to the sufferings of others; but let the matter be put to the test by making inquiry. The only answer I have seen is a letter from some anti-slavery protection society flatly contradicting everything stated by this responsible official, and ending in what I regard as a very offensive manner to a friendly Power. I do not know what acquaintance the gentleman who writes this letter has with the Portuguese Government and officials, but I say, as one who is in continual contact with them, that I believe them to be capable, courteous, and humane as their Government is friendly to ours. I think it would be becoming of this House and of hon. Members not to assume that other Powers are in any way inferior to ourselves until they have proper proofs, which I do not think myself they will ever get. I submit that the conditions in these islands is a subject which might very well engage the attention of the Foreign Office. Behind the hon. Member for Norfolk opposite sits an hon. Member who urges the Foreign Office to brandish the sword in the face of Italy and Turkey, and who asks us to see to the protection of other countries regardless of whether we have any such power or not. There is another hon. Gentleman opposite who engages in an agitation that the officials of another friendly Power are inhuman and tyrannical and unjust.

Mr. MORRELL: If the hon. Gentleman refers to me, he is absolutely misrepresenting what I said.

Mr. KING: And if the hon. Gentleman refers to me, I do not recognise his description.

Sir J. D. REES: I daresay the hon. Gentleman does not see himself as others see him.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: I do not see in the Estimates any reference to the salaries of these hon. Gentlemen.

Sir J. D. REES: I wish to point out in regard to this case that it is the habitual practice to refer to what other hon. Gentlemen have said, and I wish that the Foreign Secretary, who is always capable as I know him to be, and strongly as I approve of the work of his Department, I think it would still be more satisfactory to this House if he would not have questions and subjects placed before him upon

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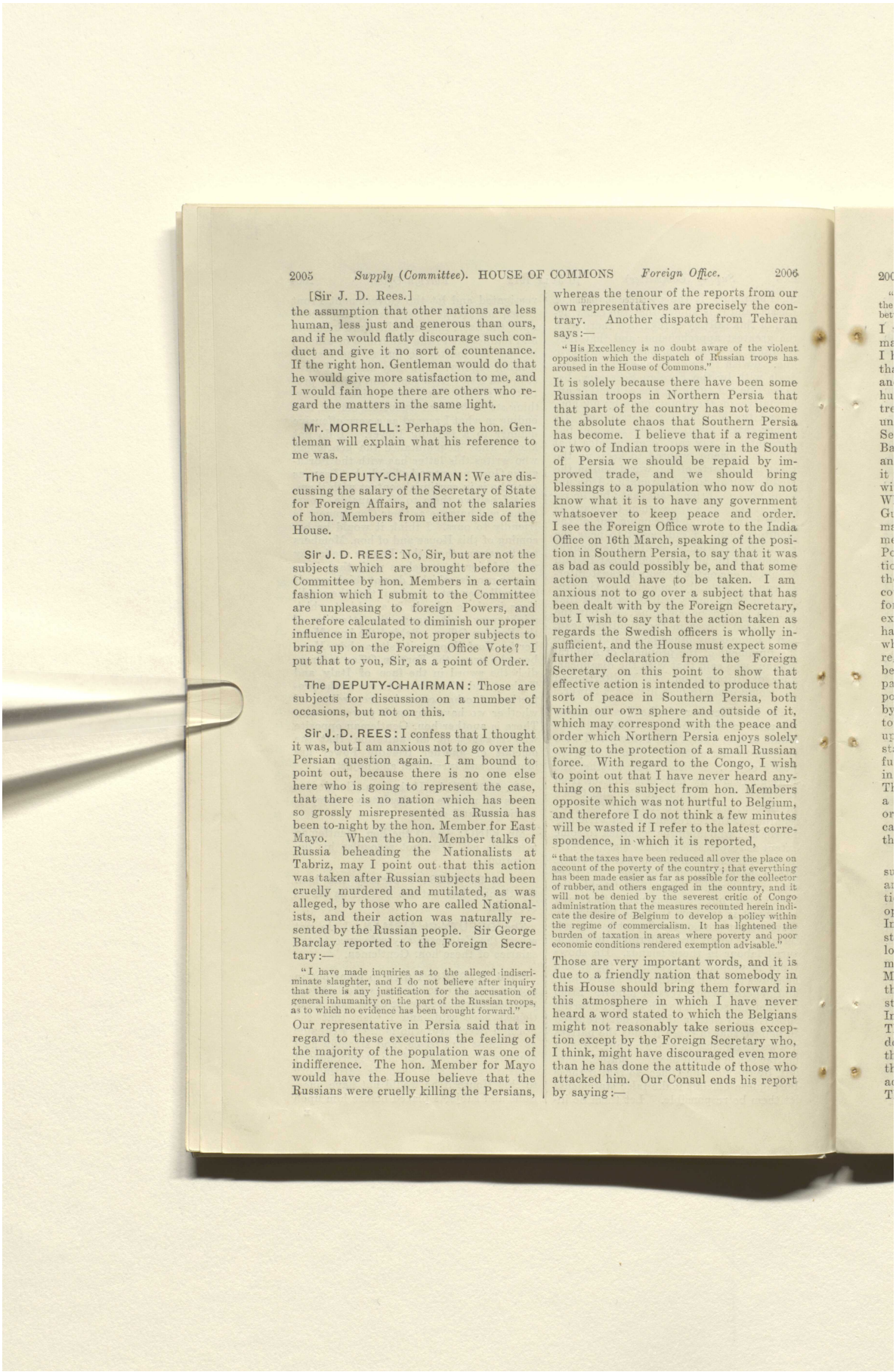

[Sir J. D. Rees.]

the assumption that other nations are less human, less just and generous than ours, and if he would flatly discourage such conduct and give it no sort of countenance. If the right hon. Gentleman would do that he would give more satisfaction to me, and I would fain hope there are others who regard the matters in the same light.

Mr. MORRELL: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will explain what his reference to me was.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the salary of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and not the salaries of hon. Members from either side of the House.

Sir J. D. REES: No, Sir, but are not the subjects which are brought before the Committee by hon. Members in a certain fashion which I submit to the Committee are unpleasing to foreign Powers, and therefore calculated to diminish our proper influence in Europe, not proper subjects to bring up on the Foreign Office Vote? I put that to you, Sir, as a point of Order.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Those are subjects for discussion on a number of occasions, but not on this.

Sir J. D. REES: I confess that I thought it was, but I am anxious not to go over the Persian question again. I am bound to point out, because there is no one else here who is going to represent the case, that there is no nation which has been so grossly misrepresented as Russia has been to-night by the hon. Member for East Mayo. When the hon. Member talks of Russia beheading the Nationalists at Tabriz, may I point out that this action was taken after Russian subjects had been cruelly murdered and mutilated, as was alleged, by those who are called Nationalists, and their action was naturally resented by the Russian people. Sir George Barclay reported to the Foreign Secretary:—

"I have made inquiries as to the alleged indiscriminate slaughter, and I do not believe after inquiry that there is any justification for the accusation of general inhumanity on the part of the Russian troops, as to which no evidence has been brought forward."

Our representative in Persia said that in regard to these executions the feeling of the majority of the population was one of indifference. The hon. Member for Mayo would have the House believe that the Russians were cruelly killing the Persians, whereas the tenour of the reports from our own representatives are precisely the contrary. Another dispatch from Teheran says:—

"His Excellency is no doubt aware of the violent opposition which the dispatch of Russian troops has aroused in the House of Commons."

It is solely because there have been some Russian troops in Northern Persia that that part of the country has not become the absolute chaos that Southern Persia has become. I believe that if a regiment or two of Indian troops were in the South of Persia we should be repaid by improved trade, and we should bring blessings to a population who now do not know what it is to have any government whatsoever to keep peace and order. I see the Foreign Office wrote to the India Office on 16th March, speaking of the position in Southern Persia, to say that it was as bad as could possibly be, and that some action would have to be taken. I am anxious not to go over a subject that has been dealt with by the Foreign Secretary, but I wish to say that the action taken as regards the Swedish officers is wholly insufficient, and the House must expect some further declaration from the Foreign Secretary on this point to show that effective action is intended to produce that sort of peace in Southern Persia, both within our own sphere and outside of it, which may correspond with the peace and order which Northern Persia enjoys solely owing to the protection of a small Russian force. With regard to the Congo, I wish to point out that I have never heard anything on this subject from hon. Members opposite which was not hurtful to Belgium, and therefore I do not think a few minutes will be wasted if I refer to the latest correspondence, in which it is reported,

"that the taxes have been reduced all over the place on account of the poverty of the country; that everything has been made easier as far as possible for the collector of rubber, and others engaged in the country, and it will not be denied by the severest critic of Congo administration that the measures recounted herein indicate the desire of Belgium to develop a policy within the regime of commercialism. It has lightened the burden of taxation in areas where poverty and poor economic conditions rendered exemption advisable."

Those are very important words, and it is due to a friendly nation that somebody in this House should bring them forward in this atmosphere in which I have never heard a word stated to which the Belgians might not reasonably take serious exception except by the Foreign Secretary who, I think, might have discouraged even more than he has done the attitude of those who attacked him. Our Consul ends his report by saying:—

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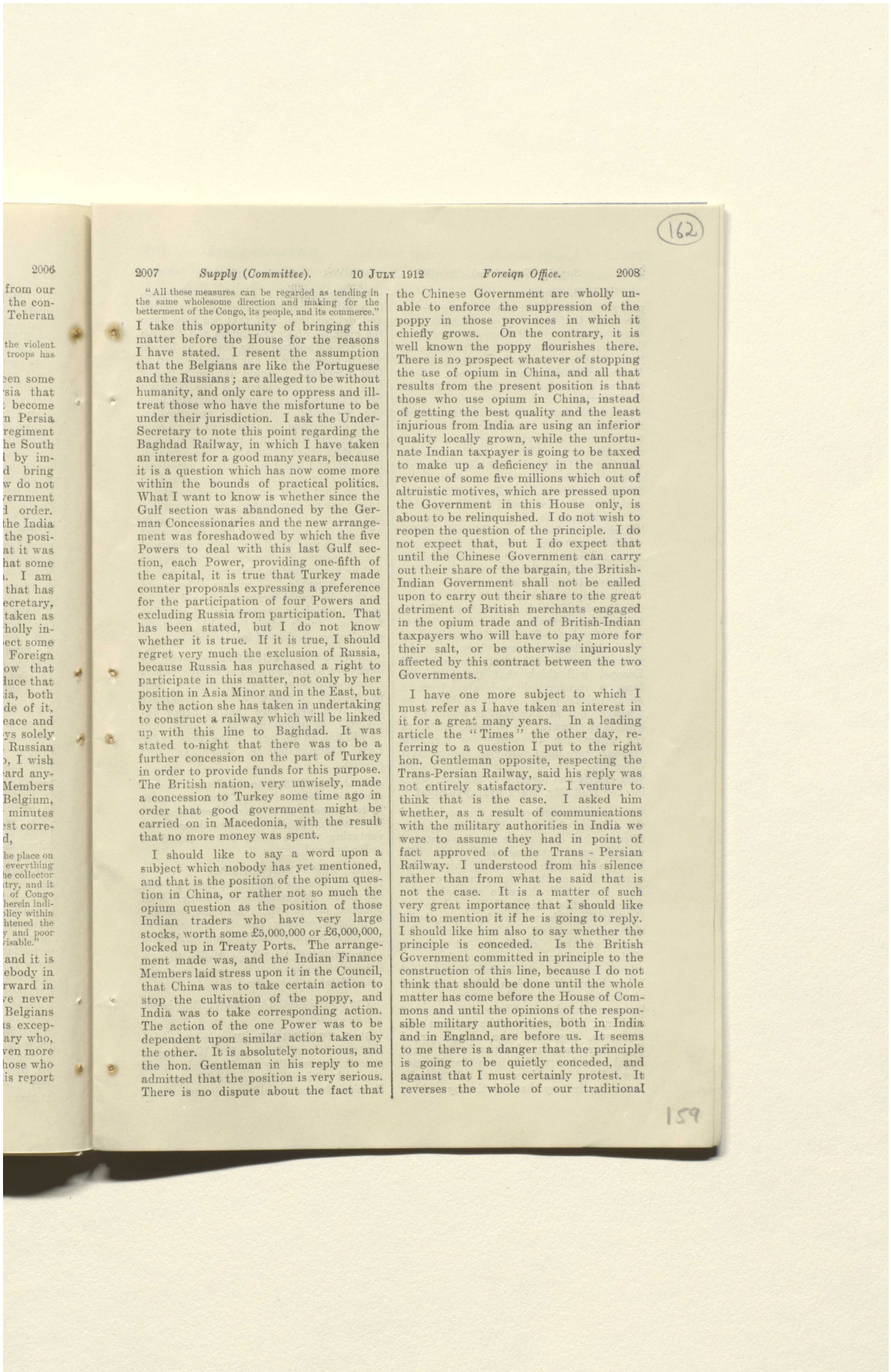

"All these measures can be regarded as tending in the same wholesome direction and making for the betterment of the Congo, its people, and its commerce."

I take this opportunity of bringing this matter before the House for the reasons I have stated. I resent the assumption that the Belgians are like the Portuguese and the Russians; are alleged to be without humanity, and only care to oppress and ill-treat those who have the misfortune to be under their jurisdiction. I ask the Under-Secretary to note this point regarding the Baghdad Railway, in which I have taken an interest for a good many years, because it is a question which has now come more within the bounds of practical politics. What I want to know is whether since the Gulf section was abandoned by the German Concessionaries and the new arrangement was foreshadowed by which the five Powers to deal with this last Gulf section, each Power, providing one-fifth of the capital, it is true that Turkey made counter proposals expressing a preference for the participation of four Powers and excluding Russia from participation. That has been stated, but I do not know whether it is true. If it is true, I should regret very much the exclusion of Russia, because Russia has purchased a right to participate in this matter, not only by her position in Asia Minor and in the East, but by the action she has taken in undertaking to construct a railway which will be linked up with this line to Baghdad. It was stated to-night that there was to be a further concession on the part of Turkey in order to provide funds for this purpose. The British nation, very unwisely, made a concession to Turkey some time ago in order that good government might be carried on in Macedonia, with the result that no more money was spent.

I should like to say a word upon a subject which nobody has yet mentioned, and that is the position of the opium question in China, or rather not so much the opium question as the position of those Indian traders who have very large stocks, worth some £5,000,000 or £6,000,000, locked up in Treaty Ports. The arrangement made was, and the Indian Finance Members laid stress upon it in the Council, that China was to take certain action to stop the cultivation of the poppy, and India was to take corresponding action. The action of the one Power was to be dependent upon similar action taken by the other. It is absolutely notorious, and the hon. Gentleman in his reply to me admitted that the position is very serious. There is no dispute about the fact that the Chinese Government are wholly unable to enforce the suppression of the poppy in those provinces in which it chiefly grows. On the contrary, it is well known the poppy flourishes there. There is no prospect whatever of stopping the use of opium in China, and all that results from the present position is that those who use opium in China, instead of getting the best quality and the least injurious from India are using an inferior quality locally grown, while the unfortunate Indian taxpayer is going to be taxed to make up a deficiency in the annual revenue of some five millions which out of altruistic motives, which are pressed upon the Government in this House only, is about to be relinquished. I do not wish to reopen the question of the principle. I do not expect that, but I do expect that until the Chinese Government can carry out their share of the bargain, the British-Indian Government shall not be called upon to carry out their share to the great detriment of British merchants engaged in the opium trade and of British-Indian taxpayers who will have to pay more for their salt, or be otherwise injuriously affected by this contract between the two Governments.

I have one more subject to which I must refer as I have taken an interest in it for a great many years. In a leading article the "Times" the other day, referring to a question I put to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, respecting the Trans-Persian Railway, said his reply was not entirely satisfactory. I venture to think that is the case. I asked him whether, as a result of communications with the military authorities in India we were to assume they had in point of fact approved of the Trans-Persian Railway. I understood from his silence rather than from what he said that is not the case. It is a matter of such very great importance that I should like him to mention it if he is going to reply. I should like him also to say whether the principle is conceded. Is the British Government committed in principle to the construction of this line, because I do not think that should be done until the whole matter has come before the House of Commons and until the opinions of the responsible military authorities, both in India and in England, are before us. It seems to me there is a danger that the principle is going to be quietly conceded, and against that I must certainly protest. It reverses the whole of our traditional

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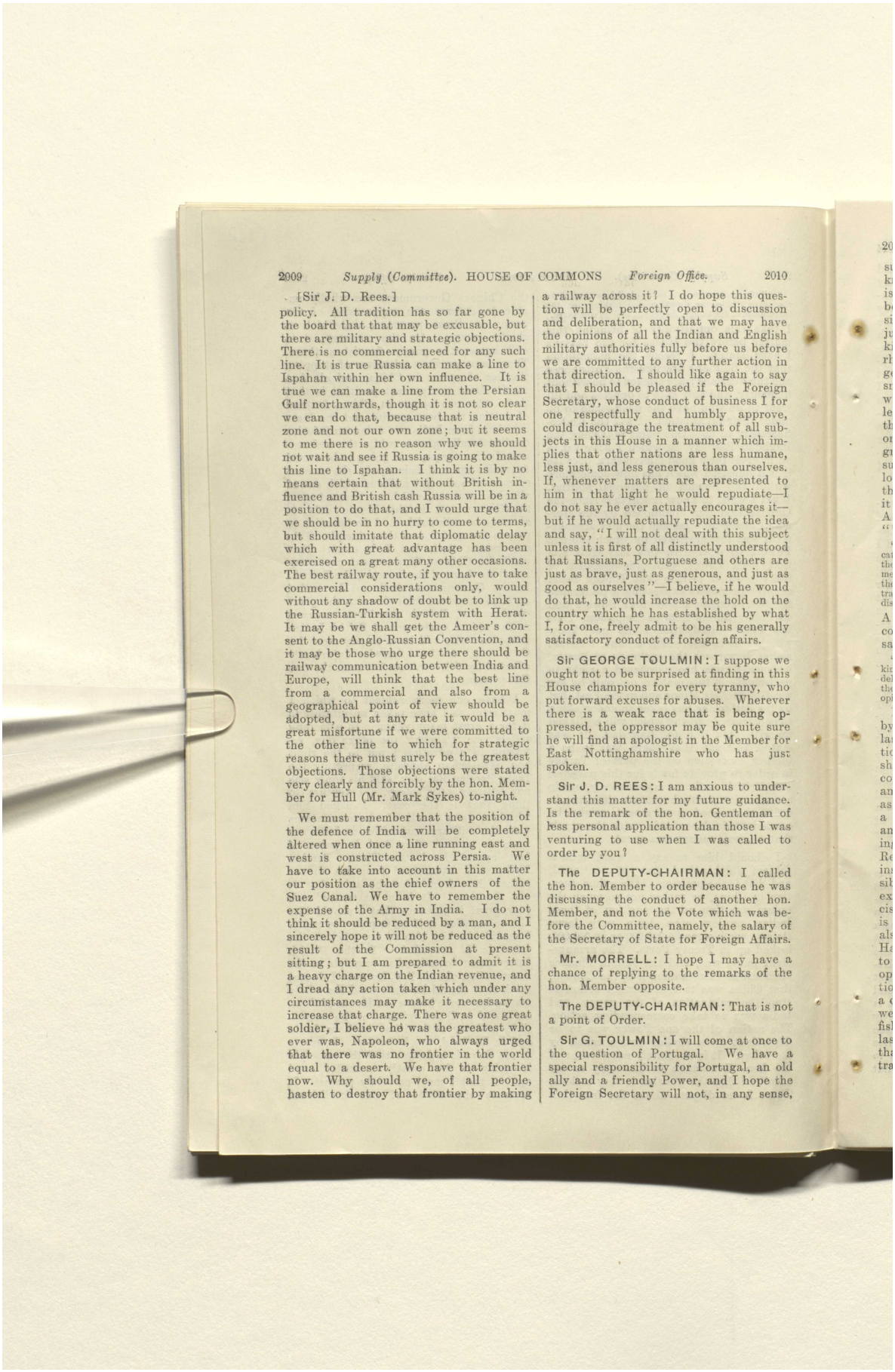

[Sir J. D. Rees.]

policy. All tradition has so far gone by the board that that may be excusable, but there are military and strategic objections. There is no commercial need for any such line. It is true Russia can make a line to Ispahan within her own influence. It is true we can make a line from the Persian Gulf northwards, though it is not so clear we can do that, because that is neutral zone and not our own zone; but it seems to me there is no reason why we should not wait and see if Russia is going to make this line to Ispahan. I think it is by no means certain that without British influence and British cash Russia will be in a position to do that, and I would urge that we should be in no hurry to come to terms, but should imitate that diplomatic delay which with great advantage has been exercised on a great many other occasions. The best railway route, if you have to take commercial considerations only, would without any shadow of doubt be to link up the Russian-Turkish system with Herat. It may be we shall get the Ameer's consent to the Anglo-Russian Convention, and it may be those who urge there should be railway communication between India and Europe, will think that the best line from a commercial and also from a geographical point of view should be adopted, but at any rate it would be a great misfortune if we were committed to the other line to which for strategic reasons there must surely be the greatest objections. Those objections were stated very clearly and forcibly by the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Mark Sykes) to-night.

We must remember that the position of the defence of India will be completely altered when once a line running east and west is constructed across Persia. We have to take into account in this matter our position as the chief owners of the Suez Canal. We have to remember the expense of the Army in India. I do not think it should be reduced by a man, and I sincerely hope it will not be reduced as the result of the Commission at present sitting; but I am prepared to admit it is a heavy charge on the Indian revenue, and I dread any action taken which under any circumstances may make it necessary to increase that charge. There was one great soldier, I believe he was the greatest who ever was, Napoleon, who always urged that there was no frontier in the world equal to a desert. We have that frontier now. Why should we, of all people, hasten to destroy that frontier by making a railway across it? I do hope this question will be perfectly open to discussion and deliberation, and that we may have the opinions of all the Indian and English military authorities fully before us before we are committed to any further action in that direction. I should like again to say that I should be pleased if the Foreign Secretary, whose conduct of business I for one respectfully and humbly approve, could discourage the treatment of all subjects in this House in a manner which implies that other nations are less humane, less just, and less generous than ourselves. If, whenever matters are represented to him in that light he would repudiate—I do not say he ever actually encourages it—but if he would actually repudiate the idea and say, "I will not deal with this subject unless it is first of all distinctly understood that Russians, Portuguese and others are just as brave, just as generous, and just as good as ourselves"—I believe, if he would do that, he would increase the hold on the country which he has established by what I, for one, freely admit to be his generally satisfactory conduct of foreign affairs.

Sir GEORGE TOULMIN: I suppose we ought not to be surprised at finding in this House champions for every tyranny, who put forward excuses for abuses. Wherever there is a weak race that is being oppressed, the oppressor may be quite sure he will find an apologist in the Member for East Nottinghamshire who has just spoken.

Sir J. D. REES: I am anxious to understand this matter for my future guidance. Is the remark of the hon. Gentleman of less personal application than those I was venturing to use when I was called to order by you?

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: I called the hon. Member to order because he was discussing the conduct of another hon. Member, and not the Vote which was before the Committee, namely, the salary of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. MORRELL: I hope I may have a chance of replying to the remarks of the hon. Member opposite.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of Order.

Sir G. TOULMIN: I will come at once to the question of Portugal. We have a special responsibility for Portugal, an old ally and a friendly Power, and I hope the Foreign Secretary will not, in any sense,

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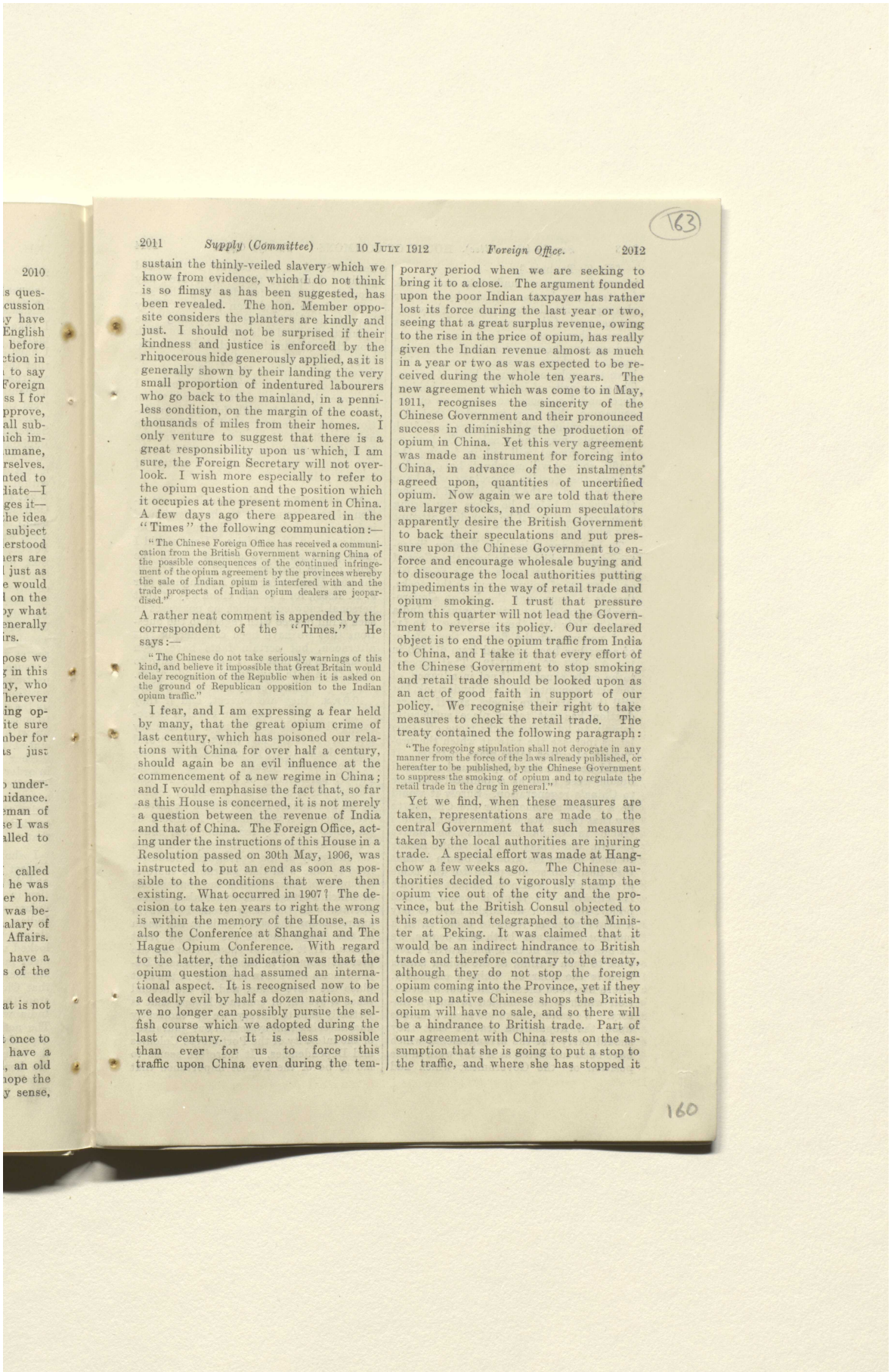

sustain the thinly-veiled slavery which we know from evidence, which I do not think is so flimsy as has been suggested, has been revealed. The hon. Member opposite considers the planters are kindly and just. I should not be surprised if their kindness and justice is enforced by the rhinocerous hide generously applied, as it is generally shown by their landing the very small proportion of indentured labourers who go back to the mainland, in a penniless condition, on the margin of the coast, thousands of miles from their homes. I only venture to suggest that there is a great responsibility upon us which, I am sure, the Foreign Secretary will not overlook. I wish more especially to refer to the opium question and the position which it occupies at the present moment in China. A few days ago there appeared in the "Times" the following communication:—

"The Chinese Foreign Office has received a communication from the British Government warning China of the possible consequences of the continued infringement of the opium agreement by the provinces whereby the sale of Indian opium is interfered with and the trade prospects of Indian opium dealers are jeopardised."

A rather neat comment is appended by the correspondent of the "Times." He says:—

"The Chinese do not take seriously warnings of this kind, and believe it impossible that Great Britain would delay recognition of the Republic when it is asked on the ground of Republican opposition to the Indian opium traffic."

I fear, and I am expressing a fear held by many, that the great opium crime of last century, which has poisoned our relations with China for over half a century, should again be an evil influence at the commencement of a new regime in China; and I would emphasise the fact that, so far as this House is concerned, it is not merely a question between the revenue of India and that of China. The Foreign Office, acting under the instructions of this House in a Resolution passed on 30th May, 1906, was instructed to put an end as soon as possible to the conditions that were then existing. What occurred in 1907? The decision to take ten years to right the wrong is within the memory of the House, as is also the Conference at Shanghai and The Hague Opium Conference. With regard to the latter, the indication was that the opium question had assumed an international aspect. It is recognised now to be a deadly evil by half a dozen nations, and we no longer can possibly pursue the selfish course which we adopted during the last century. It is less possible than ever for us to force this traffic upon China even during the temporary period when we are seeking to bring it to a close. The argument founded upon the poor Indian taxpayer has rather lost its force during the last year or two, seeing that a great surplus revenue, owing to the rise in the price of opium, has really given the Indian revenue almost as much in a year or two as was expected to be received during the whole ten years. The new agreement which was come to in May, 1911, recognises the sincerity of the Chinese Government and their pronounced success in diminishing the production of opium in China. Yet this very agreement was made an instrument for forcing into China, in advance of the instalments agreed upon, quantities of uncertified opium. Now again we are told that there are larger stocks, and opium speculators apparently desire the British Government to back their speculations and put pressure upon the Chinese Government to enforce and encourage wholesale buying and to discourage the local authorities putting impediments in the way of retail trade and opium smoking. I trust that pressure from this quarter will not lead the Government to reverse its policy. Our declared object is to end the opium traffic from India to China, and I take it that every effort of the Chinese Government to stop smoking and retail trade should be looked upon as an act of good faith in support of our policy. We recognise their right to take measures to check the retail trade. The treaty contained the following paragraph:

"The foregoing stipulation shall not derogate in any manner from the force of the laws already published, or hereafter to be published, by the Chinese Government to suppress the smoking of opium and to regulate the retail trade in the drug in general."

Yet we find, when these measures are taken, representations are made to the central Government that such measures taken by the local authorities are injuring trade. A special effort was made at Hangchow a few weeks ago. The Chinese authorities decided to vigorously stamp the opium vice out of the city and the province, but the British Consul objected to this action and telegraphed to the Minister at Peking. It was claimed that it would be an indirect hindrance to British trade and therefore contrary to the treaty, although they do not stop the foreign opium coming into the Province, yet if they close up native Chinese shops the British opium will have no sale, and so there will be a hindrance to British trade. Part of our agreement with China rests on the assumption that she is going to put a stop to the traffic, and where she has stopped it

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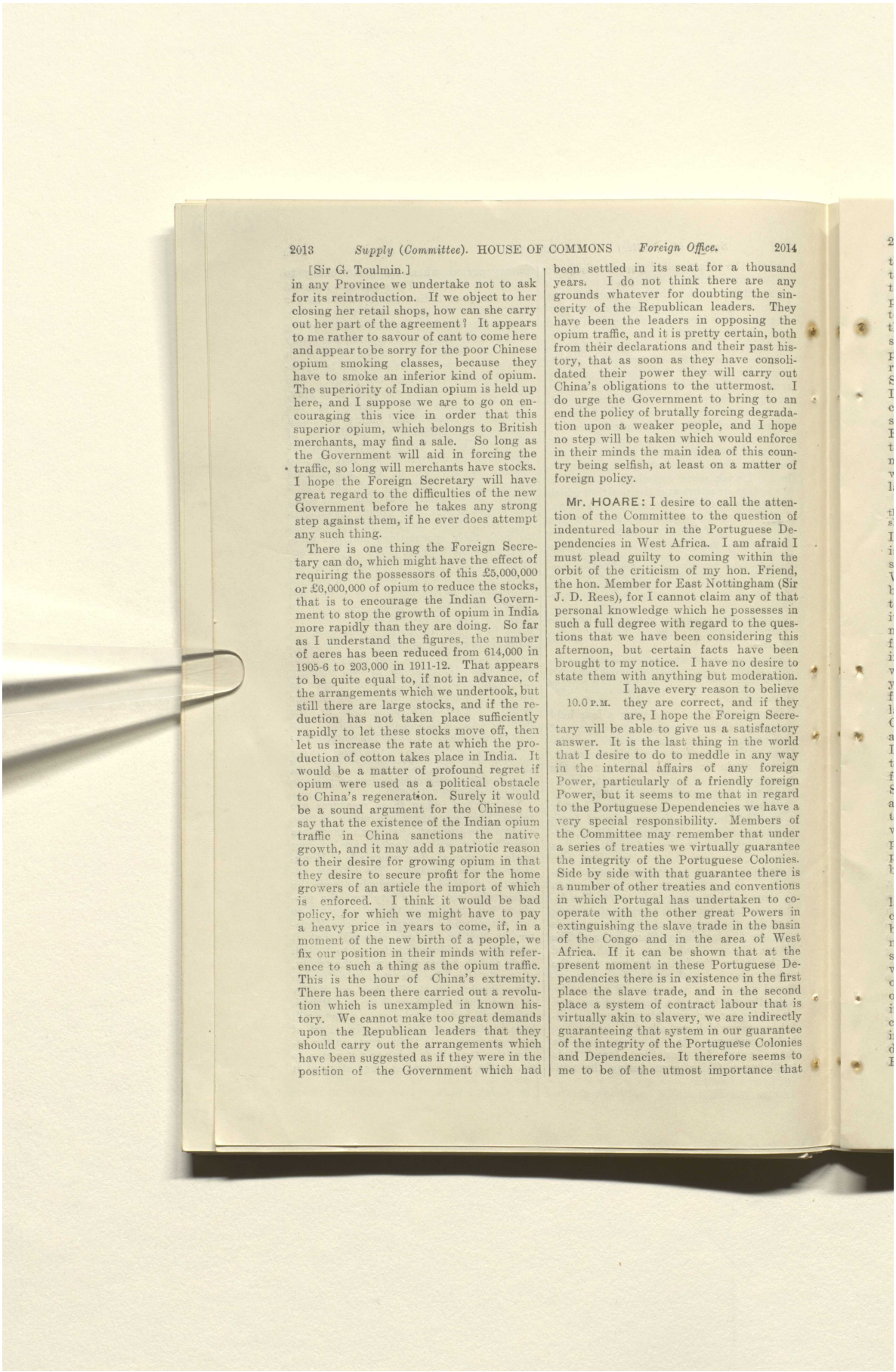

[Sir G. Toulmin.]

in any Province we undertake not to ask for its reintroduction. If we object to her closing her retail shops, how can she carry out her part of the agreement? It appears to me rather to savour of cant to come here and appear to be sorry for the poor Chinese opium smoking classes, because they have to smoke an inferior kind of opium. The superiority of Indian opium is held up here, and I suppose we are to go on encouraging this vice in order that this superior opium, which belongs to British merchants, may find a sale. So long as the Government will aid in forcing the traffic, so long will merchants have stocks. I hope the Foreign Secretary will have great regard to the difficulties of the new Government before he takes any strong step against them, if he ever does attempt any such thing.

There is one thing the Foreign Secretary can do, which might have the effect of requiring the possessors of this £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 of opium to reduce the stocks, that is to encourage the Indian Government to stop the growth of opium in India more rapidly than they are doing. So far as I understand the figures, the number of acres has been reduced from 614,000 in 1905-6 to 203,000 in 1911-12. That appears to be quite equal to, if not in advance, of the arrangements which we undertook, but still there are large stocks, and if the reduction has not taken place sufficiently rapidly to let these stocks move off, then let us increase the rate at which the production of cotton takes place in India. It would be a matter of profound regret if opium were used as a political obstacle to China's regeneration. Surely it would be a sound argument for the Chinese to say that the existence of the Indian opium traffic in China sanctions the native growth, and it may add a patriotic reason to their desire for growing opium in that they desire to secure profit for the home growers of an article the import of which is enforced. I think it would be bad policy, for which we might have to pay a heavy price in years to come, if, in a moment of the new birth of a people, we fix our position in their minds with reference to such a thing as the opium traffic. This is the hour of China's extremity. There has been there carried out a revolution which is unexampled in known history. We cannot make too great demands upon the Republican leaders that they should carry out the arrangements which have been suggested as if they were in the position of the Government which had been settled in its seat for a thousand years. I do not think there are any grounds whatever for doubting the sincerity of the Republican leaders. They have been the leaders in opposing the opium traffic, and it is pretty certain, both from their declarations and their past history, that as soon as they have consolidated their power they will carry out China's obligations to the uttermost. I do urge the Government to bring to an end the policy of brutally forcing degradation upon a weaker people, and I hope no step will be taken which would enforce in their minds the main idea of this country being selfish, at least on a matter of foreign policy.

Mr. HOARE: I desire to call the attention of the Committee to the question of indentured labour in the Portuguese Dependencies in West Africa. I am afraid I must plead guilty to coming within the orbit of the criticism of my hon. Friend, the hon. Member for East Nottingham (Sir J. D. Rees), for I cannot claim any of that personal knowledge which he possesses in such a full degree with regard to the questions that we have been considering this afternoon, but certain facts have been brought to my notice. I have no desire to state them with anything but moderation. I have every reason to believe

10.0 P.M. they are correct, and if they are, I hope the Foreign Secretary will be able to give us a satisfactory answer. It is the last thing in the world that I desire to do to meddle in any way in the internal affairs of any foreign Power, particularly of a friendly foreign Power, but it seems to me that in regard to the Portuguese Dependencies we have a very special responsibility. Members of the Committee may remember that under a series of treaties we virtually guarantee the integrity of the Portuguese Colonies. Side by side with that guarantee there is a number of other treaties and conventions in which Portugal has undertaken to co-operate with the other great Powers in extinguishing the slave trade in the basin of the Congo and in the area of West Africa. If it can be shown that at the present moment in these Portuguese Dependencies there is in existence in the first place the slave trade, and in the second place a system of contract labour that is virtually akin to slavery, we are indirectly guaranteeing that system in our guarantee of the integrity of the Portuguese Colonies and Dependencies. It therefore seems to me to be of the utmost importance that

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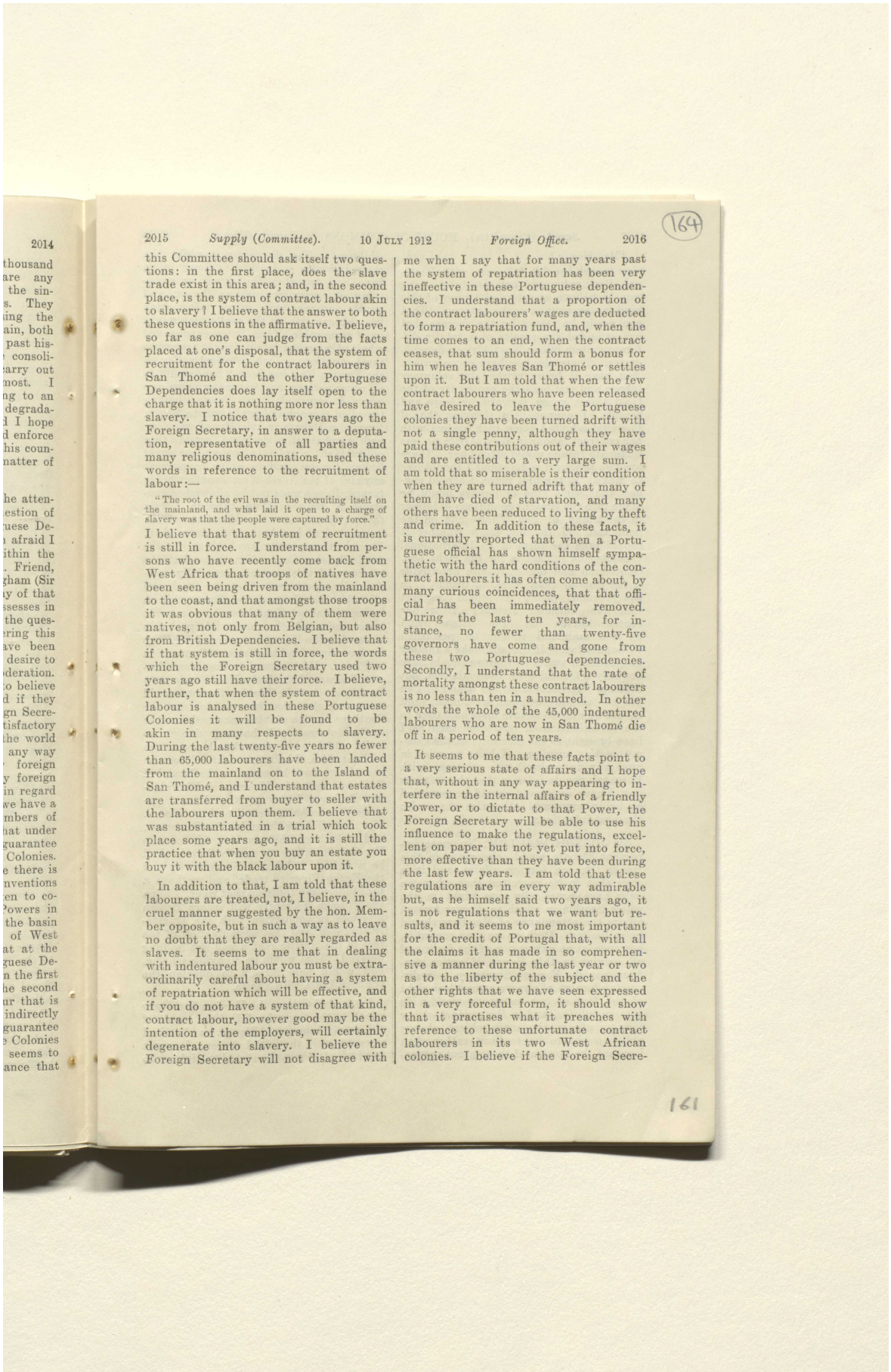

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this Committee should ask itself two questions: in the first place, does the slave trade exist in this area; and, in the second place, is the system of contract labour akin to slavery? I believe that the answer to both these questions in the affirmative. I believe, so far as one can judge from the facts placed at one's disposal, that the system of recruitment for the contract labourers in San Thomé and the other Portuguese Dependencies does lay itself open to the charge that it is nothing more nor less than slavery. I notice that two years ago the Foreign Secretary, in answer to a deputation, representative of all parties and many religious denominations, used these words in reference to the recruitment of labour:—

"The root of the evil was in the recruiting itself on the mainland, and what laid it open to a charge of slavery was that the people were captured by force."

I believe that that system of recruitment is still in force. I understand from persons who have recently come back from West Africa that troops of natives have been seen being driven from the mainland to the coast, and that amongst those troops it was obvious that many of them were natives, not only from Belgian, but also from British Dependencies. I believe that if that system is still in force, the words which the Foreign Secretary used two years ago still have their force. I believe, further, that when the system of contract labour is analysed in these Portuguese Colonies it will be found to be akin in many respects to slavery. During the last twenty-five years no fewer than 65,000 labourers have been landed from the mainland on to the Island of San Thomé, and I understand that estates are transferred from buyer to seller with the labourers upon them. I believe that was substantiated in a trial which took place some years ago, and it is still the practice that when you buy an estate you buy it with the black labour upon it.

In addition to that, I am told that these labourers are treated, not, I believe, in the cruel manner suggested by the hon. Member opposite, but in such a way as to leave no doubt that they are really regarded as slaves. It seems to me that in dealing with indentured labour you must be extraordinarily careful about having a system of repatriation which will be effective, and if you do not have a system of that kind, contract labour, however good may be the intention of the employers, will certainly degenerate into slavery. I believe the Foreign Secretary will not disagree with me when I say that for many years past the system of repatriation has been very ineffective in these Portuguese dependencies. I understand that a proportion of the contract labourers' wages are deducted to form a repatriation fund, and, when the time comes to an end, when the contract ceases, that sum should form a bonus for him when he leaves San Thomé or settles upon it. But I am told that when the few contract labourers who have been released have desired to leave the Portuguese colonies they have been turned adrift with not a single penny, although they have paid these contributions out of their wages and are entitled to a very large sum. I am told that so miserable is their condition when they are turned adrift that many of them have died of starvation, and many others have been reduced to living by theft and crime. In addition to these facts, it is currently reported that when a Portuguese official has shown himself sympathetic with the hard conditions of the contract labourers it has often come about, by many curious coincidences, that that official has been immediately removed. During the last ten years, for instance, no fewer than twenty-five governors have come and gone from these two Portuguese dependencies. Secondly, I understand that the rate of mortality amongst these contract labourers is no less than ten in a hundred. In other words the whole of the 45,000 indentured labourers who are now in San Thomé die off in a period of ten years.

It seems to me that these facts point to a very serious state of affairs and I hope that, without in any way appearing to interfere in the internal affairs of a friendly Power, or to dictate to that Power, the Foreign Secretary will be able to use his influence to make the regulations, excellent on paper but not yet put into force, more effective than they have been during the last few years. I am told that these regulations are in every way admirable but, as he himself said two years ago, it is not regulations that we want but results, and it seems to me most important for the credit of Portugal that, with all the claims it has made in so comprehensive a manner during the last year or two as to the liberty of the subject and the other rights that we have seen expressed in a very forceful form, it should show that it practises what it preaches with reference to these unfortunate contract labourers in its two West African colonies. I believe if the Foreign Secre-

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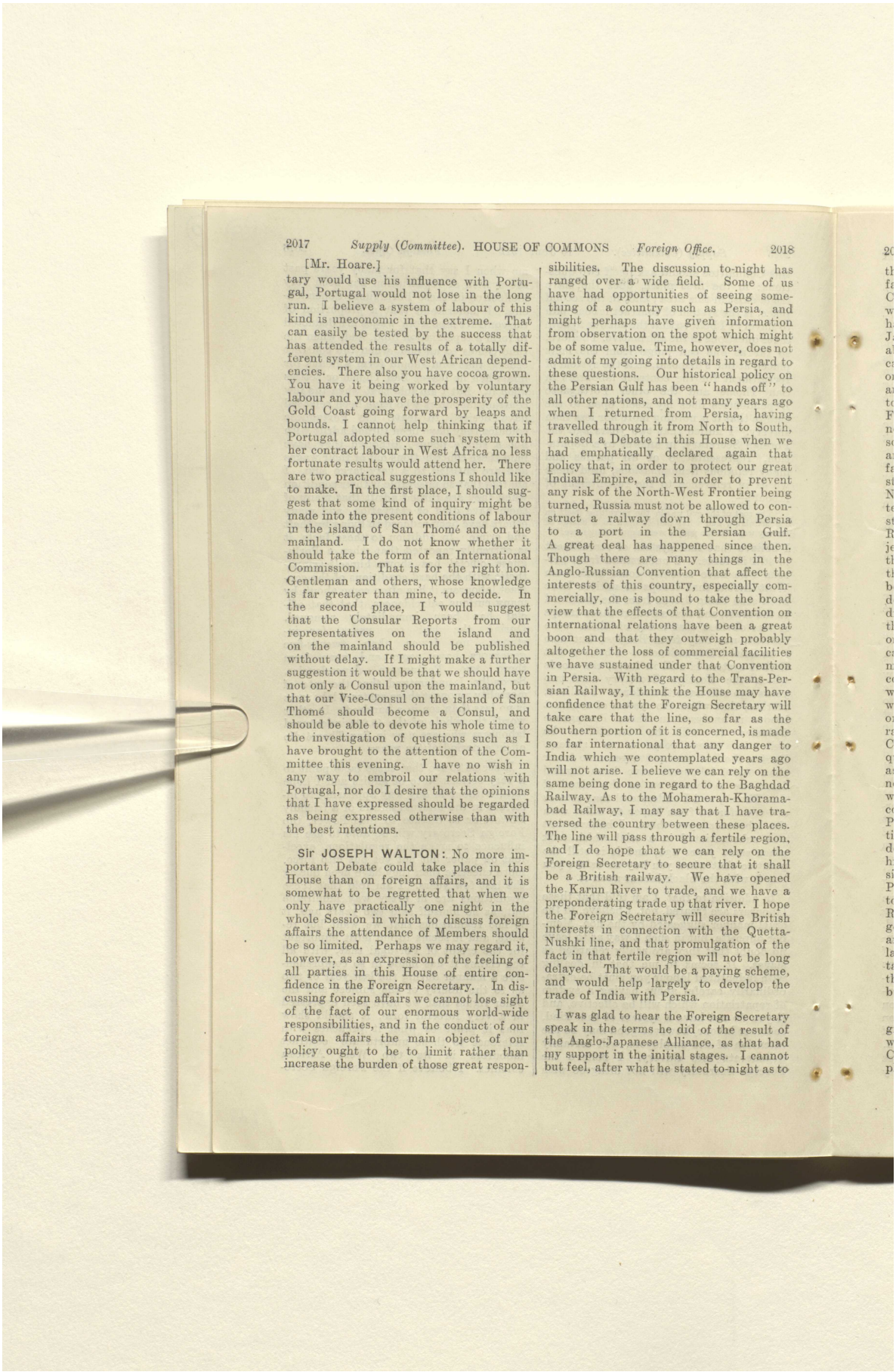

[Mr. Hoare.]

tary would use his influence with Portugal, Portugal would not lose in the long run. I believe a system of labour of this kind is uneconomic in the extreme. That can easily be tested by the success that has attended the results of a totally different system in our West African dependencies. There also you have cocoa grown. You have it being worked by voluntary labour and you have the prosperity of the Gold Coast going forward by leaps and bounds. I cannot help thinking that if Portugal adopted some such system with her contract labour in West Africa no less fortunate results would attend her. There are two practical suggestions I should like to make. In the first place, I should suggest that some kind of inquiry might be made into the present conditions of labour in the island of San Thomé and on the mainland. I do not know whether it should take the form of an International Commission. That is for the right hon. Gentleman and others, whose knowledge is far greater than mine, to decide. In the second place, I would suggest that the Consular Reports from our representatives on the island and on the mainland should be published without delay. If I might make a further suggestion it would be that we should have not only a Consul upon the mainland, but that our Vice-Consul on the island of San Thomé should become a Consul, and should be able to devote his whole time to the investigation of questions such as I have brought to the attention of the Committee this evening. I have no wish in any way to embroil our relations with Portugal, nor do I desire that the opinions that I have expressed should be regarded as being expressed otherwise than with the best intentions.

Sir JOSEPH WALTON: No more important Debate could take place in this House than on foreign affairs, and it is somewhat to be regretted that when we only have practically one night in the whole Session in which to discuss foreign affairs the attendance of Members should be so limited. Perhaps we may regard it, however, as an expression of the feeling of all parties in this House of entire confidence in the Foreign Secretary. In discussing foreign affairs we cannot lose sight of the fact of our enormous world-wide responsibilities, and in the conduct of our foreign affairs the main object of our policy ought to be to limit rather than increase the burden of those great responsibilities. The discussion to-night has ranged over a wide field. Some of us have had opportunities of seeing something of a country such as Persia, and might perhaps have given information from observation on the spot which might be of some value. Time, however, does not admit of my going into details in regard to these questions. Our historical policy on the Persian Gulf has been "hands off" to all other nations, and not many years ago when I returned from Persia, having travelled through it from North to South, I raised a Debate in this House when we had emphatically declared again that policy that, in order to protect our great Indian Empire, and in order to prevent any risk of the North-West Frontier being turned, Russia must not be allowed to construct a railway down through Persia to a port in the Persian Gulf. A great deal has happened since then. Though there are many things in the Anglo-Russian Convention that affect the interests of this country, especially commercially, one is bound to take the broad view that the effects of that Convention on international relations have been a great boon and that they outweigh probably altogether the loss of commercial facilities we have sustained under that Convention in Persia. With regard to the Trans-Persian Railway, I think the House may have confidence that the Foreign Secretary will take care that the line, so far as the Southern portion of it is concerned, is made so far international that any danger to India which we contemplated years ago will not arise. I believe we can rely on the same being done in regard to the Baghdad Railway. As to the Mohamerah-Khoramabad Railway, I may say that I have traversed the country between these places. The line will pass through a fertile region, and I do hope that we can rely on the Foreign Secretary to secure that it shall be a British railway. We have opened the Karun River to trade, and we have a preponderating trade up that river. I hope the Foreign Secretary will secure British interests in connection with the Quetta-Nushki line, and that promulgation of the fact in that fertile region will not be long delayed. That would be a paying scheme, and would help largely to develop the trade of India with Persia.

I was glad to hear the Foreign Secretary speak in the terms he did of the result of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, as that had my support in the initial stages. I cannot but feel, after what he stated to-night as to

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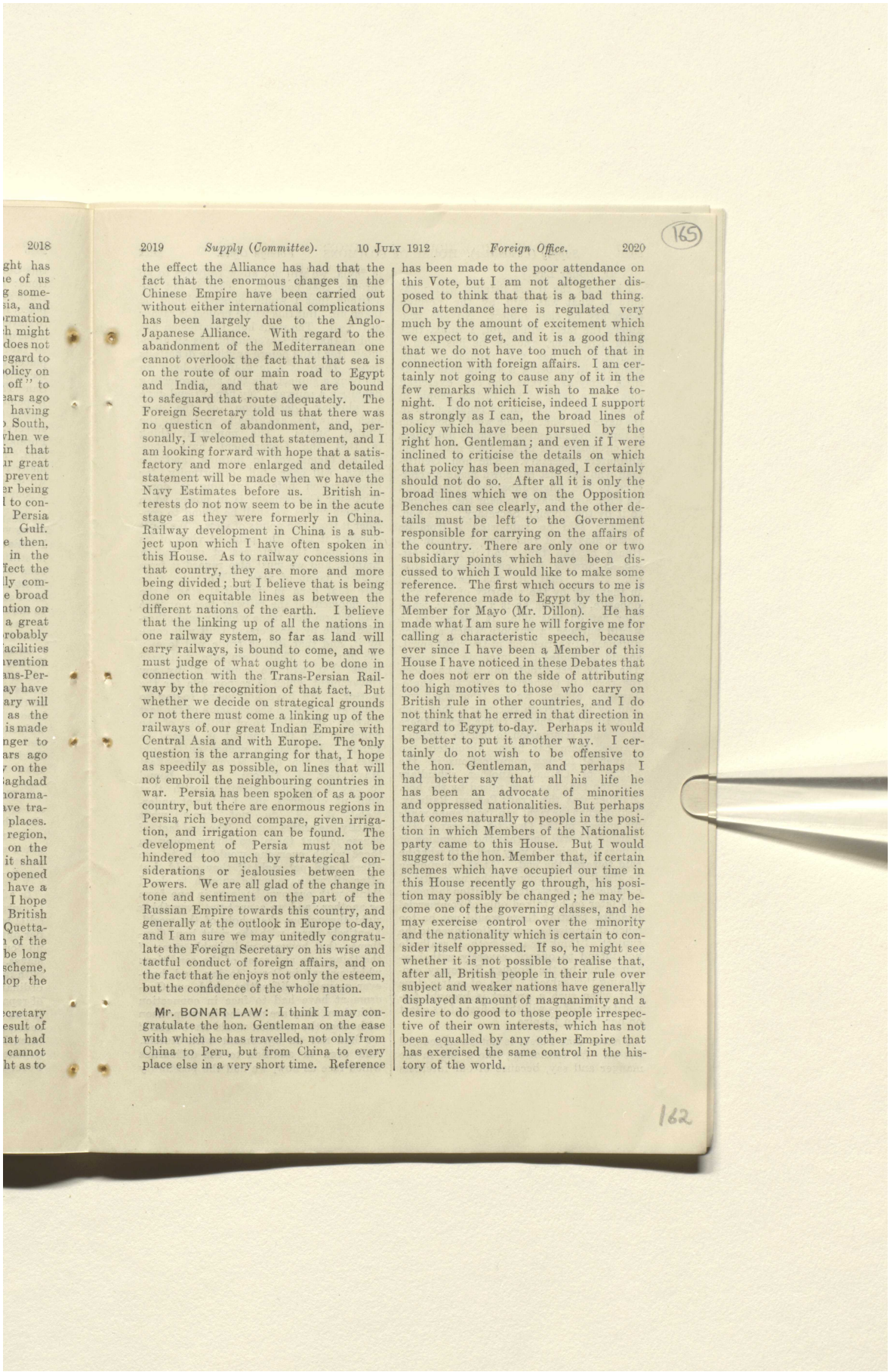

the effect the Alliance has had that the fact that the enormous changes in the Chinese Empire have been carried out without either international complications has been largely due to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. With regard to the abandonment of the Mediterranean one cannot overlook the fact that that sea is on the route of our main road to Egypt and India, and that we are bound to safeguard that route adequately. The Foreign Secretary told us that there was no question of abandonment, and, personally, I welcomed that statement, and I am looking forward with hope that a satisfactory and more enlarged and detailed statement will be made when we have the Navy Estimates before us. British interests do not now seem to be in the acute stage as they were formerly in China. Railway development in China is a subject upon which I have often spoken in this House. As to railway concessions in that country, they are more and more being divided; but I believe that is being done on equitable lines as between the different nations of the earth. I believe that the linking up of all the nations in one railway system, so far as land will carry railways, is bound to come, and we must judge of what ought to be done in connection with the Trans-Persian Railway by the recognition of that fact. But whether we decide on strategical grounds or not there must come a linking up of the railways of our great Indian Empire with Central Asia and with Europe. The only question is the arranging for that, I hope as speedily as possible, on lines that will not embroil the neighbouring countries in war. Persia has been spoken of as a poor country, but there are enormous regions in Persia rich beyond compare, given irrigation, and irrigation can be found. The development of Persia must not be hindered too much by strategical considerations or jealousies between the Powers. We are all glad of the change in tone and sentiment on the part of the Russian Empire towards this country, and generally at the outlook in Europe to-day, and I am sure we may unitedly congratulate the Foreign Secretary on his wise and tactful conduct of foreign affairs, and on the fact that he enjoys not only the esteem, but the confidence of the whole nation.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I think I may congratulate the hon. Gentleman on the ease with which he has travelled, not only from China to Peru, but from China to every place else in a very short time. Reference has been made to the poor attendance on this Vote, but I am not altogether disposed to think that that is a bad thing. Our attendance here is regulated very much by the amount of excitement which we expect to get, and it is a good thing that we do not have too much of that in connection with foreign affairs. I am certainly not going to cause any of it in the few remarks which I wish to make to-night. I do not criticise, indeed I support as strongly as I can, the broad lines of policy which have been pursued by the right hon. Gentleman; and even if I were inclined to criticise the details on which that policy has been managed, I certainly should not do so. After all it is only the broad lines which we on the Opposition Benches can see clearly, and the other details must be left to the Government responsible for carrying on the affairs of the country. There are only one or two subsidiary points which have been discussed to which I would like to make some reference. The first which occurs to me is the reference made to Egypt by the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon). He has made what I am sure he will forgive me for calling a characteristic speech, because ever since I have been a Member of this House I have noticed in these Debates that he does not err on the side of attributing too high motives to those who carry on British rule in other countries, and I do not think that he erred in that direction in regard to Egypt to-day. Perhaps it would be better to put it another way. I certainly do not wish to be offensive to the hon. Gentleman, and perhaps I had better say that all his life he has been an advocate of minorities and oppressed nationalities. But perhaps that comes naturally to people in the position in which Members of the Nationalist party came to this House. But I would suggest to the hon. Member that, if certain schemes which have occupied our time in this House recently go through, his position may possibly be changed; he may become one of the governing classes, and he may exercise control over the minority and the nationality which is certain to consider itself oppressed. If so, he might see whether it is not possible to realise that, after all, British people in their rule over subject and weaker nations have generally displayed an amount of magnanimity and a desire to do good to those people irrespective of their own interests, which has not been equalled by any other Empire that has exercised the same control in the history of the world.

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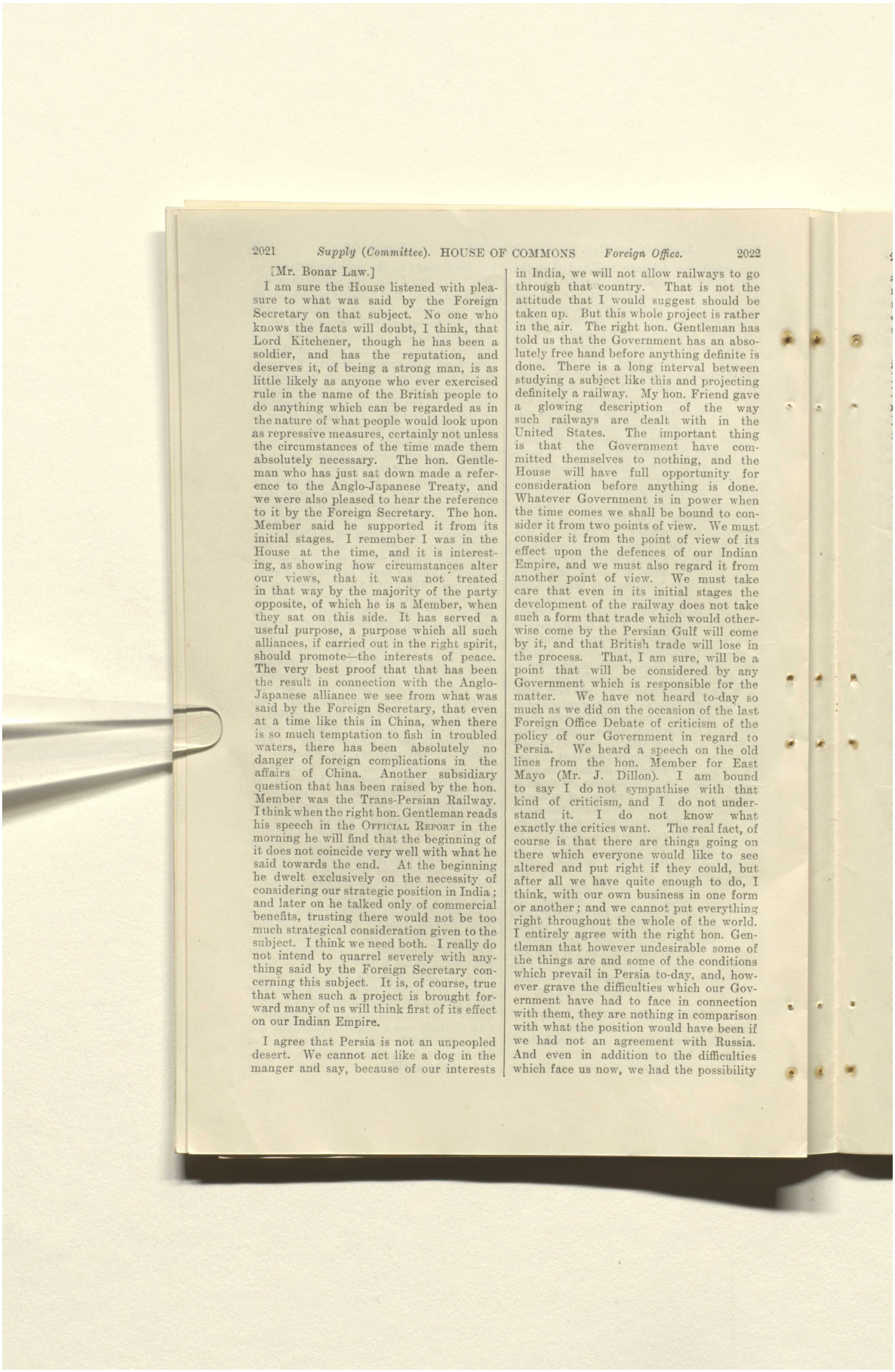

[Mr. Bonar Law.]

I am sure the House listened with pleasure to what was said by the Foreign Secretary on that subject. No one who knows the facts will doubt, I think, that Lord Kitchener, though he has been a soldier, and has the reputation, and deserves it, of being a strong man, is as little likely as anyone who ever exercised rule in the name of the British people to do anything which can be regarded as in the nature of what people would look upon as repressive measures, certainly not unless the circumstances of the time made them absolutely necessary. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down made a reference to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, and we were also pleased to hear the reference to it by the Foreign Secretary. The hon. Member said he supported it from its initial stages. I remember I was in the House at the time, and it is interesting, as showing how circumstances alter our views, that it was not treated in that way by the majority of the party opposite, of which he is a Member, when they sat on this side. It has served a useful purpose, a purpose which all such alliances, if carried out in the right spirit, should promote—the interests of peace. The very best proof that that has been the result in connection with the Anglo-Japanese alliance we see from what was said by the Foreign Secretary, that even at a time like this in China, when there is so much temptation to fish in troubled waters, there has been absolutely no danger of foreign complications in the affairs of China. Another subsidiary question that has been raised by the hon. Member was the Trans-Persian Railway. I think when the right hon. Gentleman reads his speech in the OFFICIAL REPORT in the morning he will find that the beginning of it does not coincide very well with what he said towards the end. At the beginning he dwelt exclusively on the necessity of considering our strategic position in India; and later on he talked only of commercial benefits, trusting there would not be too much strategical consideration given to the subject. I think we need both. I really do not intend to quarrel severely with anything said by the Foreign Secretary concerning this subject. It is, of course, true that when such a project is brought forward many of us will think first of its effect on our Indian Empire.

I agree that Persia is not an unpeopled desert. We cannot act like a dog in the manger and say, because of our interests in India, we will not allow railways to go through that country. That is not the attitude that I would suggest should be taken up. But this whole project is rather in the air. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the Government has an absolutely free hand before anything definite is done. There is a long interval between studying a subject like this and projecting definitely a railway. My hon. Friend gave a glowing description of the way such railways are dealt with in the United States. The important thing is that the Government have committed themselves to nothing, and the House will have full opportunity for consideration before anything is done. Whatever Government is in power when the time comes we shall be bound to consider it from two points of view. We must consider it from the point of view of its effect upon the defences of our Indian Empire, and we must also regard it from another point of view. We must take care that even in its initial stages the development of the railway does not take such a form that trade which would otherwise come by the Persian Gulf will come by it, and that British trade will lose in the process. That, I am sure, will be a point that will be considered by any Government which is responsible for the matter. We have not heard to-day so much as we did on the occasion of the last Foreign Office Debate of criticism of the policy of our Government in regard to Persia. We heard a speech on the old lines from the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. J. Dillon). I am bound to say I do not sympathise with that kind of criticism, and I do not understand it. I do not know what exactly the critics want. The real fact, of course is that there are things going on there which everyone would like to see altered and put right if they could, but after all we have quite enough to do, I think, with our own business in one form or another; and we cannot put everything right throughout the whole of the world. I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman that however undesirable some of the things are and some of the conditions which prevail in Persia to-day, and, however grave the difficulties which our Government have had to face in connection with them, they are nothing in comparison with what the position would have been if we had not an agreement with Russia. And even in addition to the difficulties which face us now, we had the possibility

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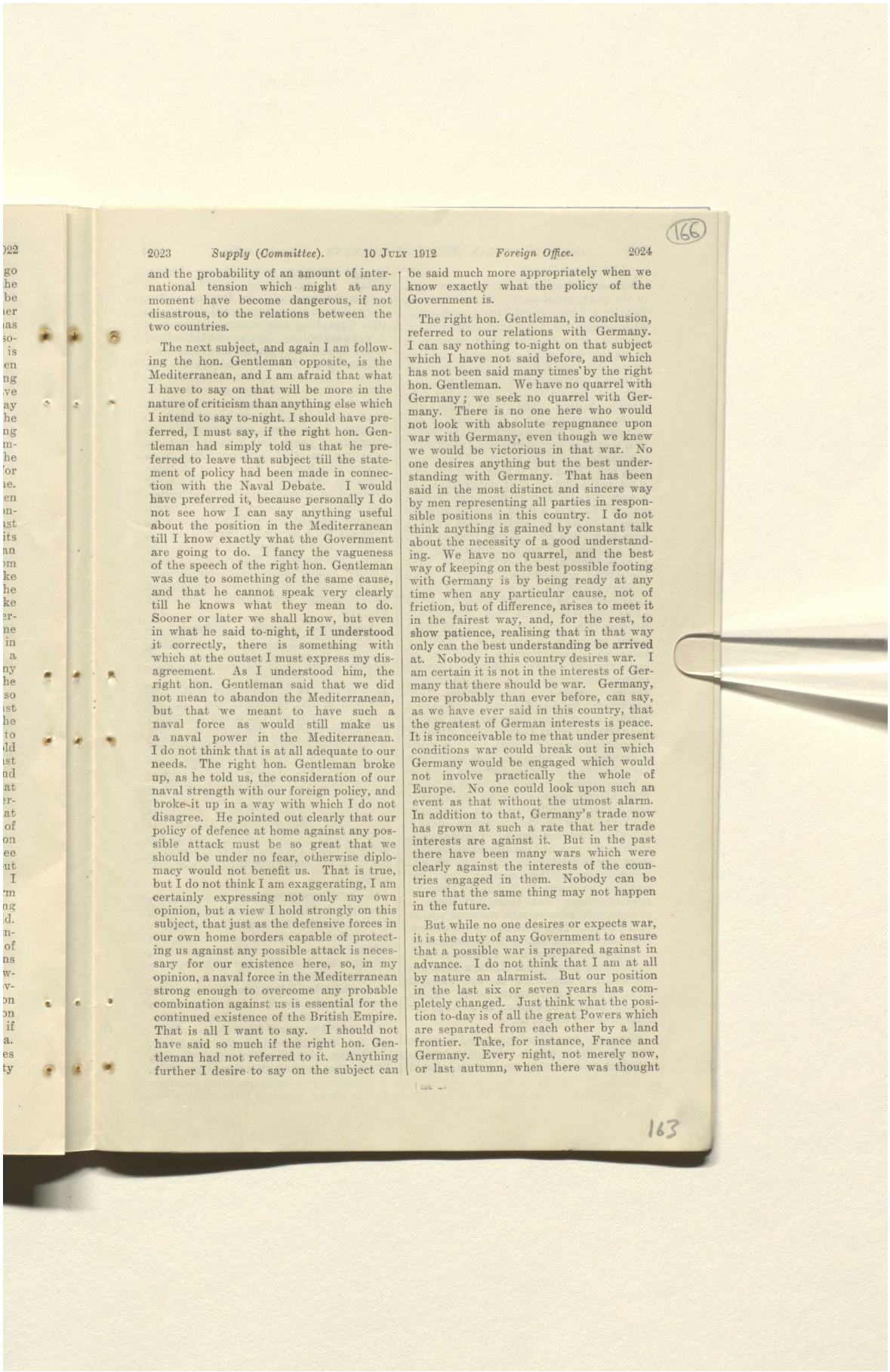

and the probability of an amount of international tension which might at any moment have become dangerous, if not disastrous, to the relations between the two countries.

The next subject, and again I am following the hon. Gentleman opposite, is the Mediterranean, and I am afraid that what I have to say on that will be more in the nature of criticism than anything else which I intend to say to-night. I should have preferred, I must say, if the right hon. Gentleman had simply told us that he preferred to leave that subject till the statement of policy had been made in connection with the Naval Debate. I would have preferred it, because personally I do not see how I can say anything useful about the position in the Mediterranean till I know exactly what the Government are going to do. I fancy the vagueness of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman was due to something of the same cause, and that he cannot speak very clearly till he knows what they mean to do. Sooner or later we shall know, but even in what he said to-night, if I understood it correctly, there is something with which at the outset I must express my disagreement. As I understood him, the right hon. Gentleman said that we did not mean to abandon the Mediterranean, but that we meant to have such a naval force as would still make us a naval power in the Mediterranean. I do not think that is at all adequate to our needs. The right hon. Gentleman broke up, as he told us, the consideration of our naval strength with our foreign policy, and broke it up in a way with which I do not disagree. He pointed out clearly that our policy of defence at home against any possible attack must be so great that we should be under no fear, otherwise diplomacy would not benefit us. That is true, but I do not think I am exaggerating, I am certainly expressing not only my own opinion, but a view I hold strongly on this subject, that just as the defensive forces in our own home borders capable of protecting us against any possible attack is necessary for our existence here, so, in my opinion, a naval force in the Mediterranean strong enough to overcome any probable combination against us is essential for the continued existence of the British Empire. That is all I want to say. I should not have said so much if the right hon. Gentleman had not referred to it. Anything further I desire to say on the subject can be said much more appropriately when we know exactly what the policy of the Government is.

The right hon. Gentleman, in conclusion, referred to our relations with Germany. I can say nothing to-night on that subject which I have not said before, and which has not been said many times by the right hon. Gentleman. We have no quarrel with Germany; we seek no quarrel with Germany. There is no one here who would not look with absolute repugnance upon war with Germany, even though we knew we would be victorious in that war. No one desires anything but the best understanding with Germany. That has been said in the most distinct and sincere way by men representing all parties in responsible positions in this country. I do not think anything is gained by constant talk about the necessity of a good understanding. We have no quarrel, and the best way of keeping on the best possible footing with Germany is by being ready at any time when any particular cause, not of friction, but of difference, arises to meet it in the fairest way, and, for the rest, to show patience, realising that in that way only can the best understanding be arrived at. Nobody in this country desires war. I am certain it is not in the interests of Germany that there should be war. Germany, more probably than ever before, can say, as we have ever said in this country, that the greatest of German interests is peace. It is inconceivable to me that under present conditions war could break out in which Germany would be engaged which would not involve practically the whole of Europe. No one could look upon such an event as that without the utmost alarm. In addition to that, Germany's trade now has grown at such a rate that her trade interests are against it. But in the past there have been many wars which were clearly against the interests of the countries engaged in them. Nobody can be sure that the same thing may not happen in the future.

But while no one desires or expects war, it is the duty of any Government to ensure that a possible war is prepared against in advance. I do not think that I am at all by nature an alarmist. But our position in the last six or seven years has completely changed. Just think what the position to-day is of all the great Powers which are separated from each other by a land frontier. Take, for instance, France and Germany. Every night, not merely now, or last autumn, when there was thought

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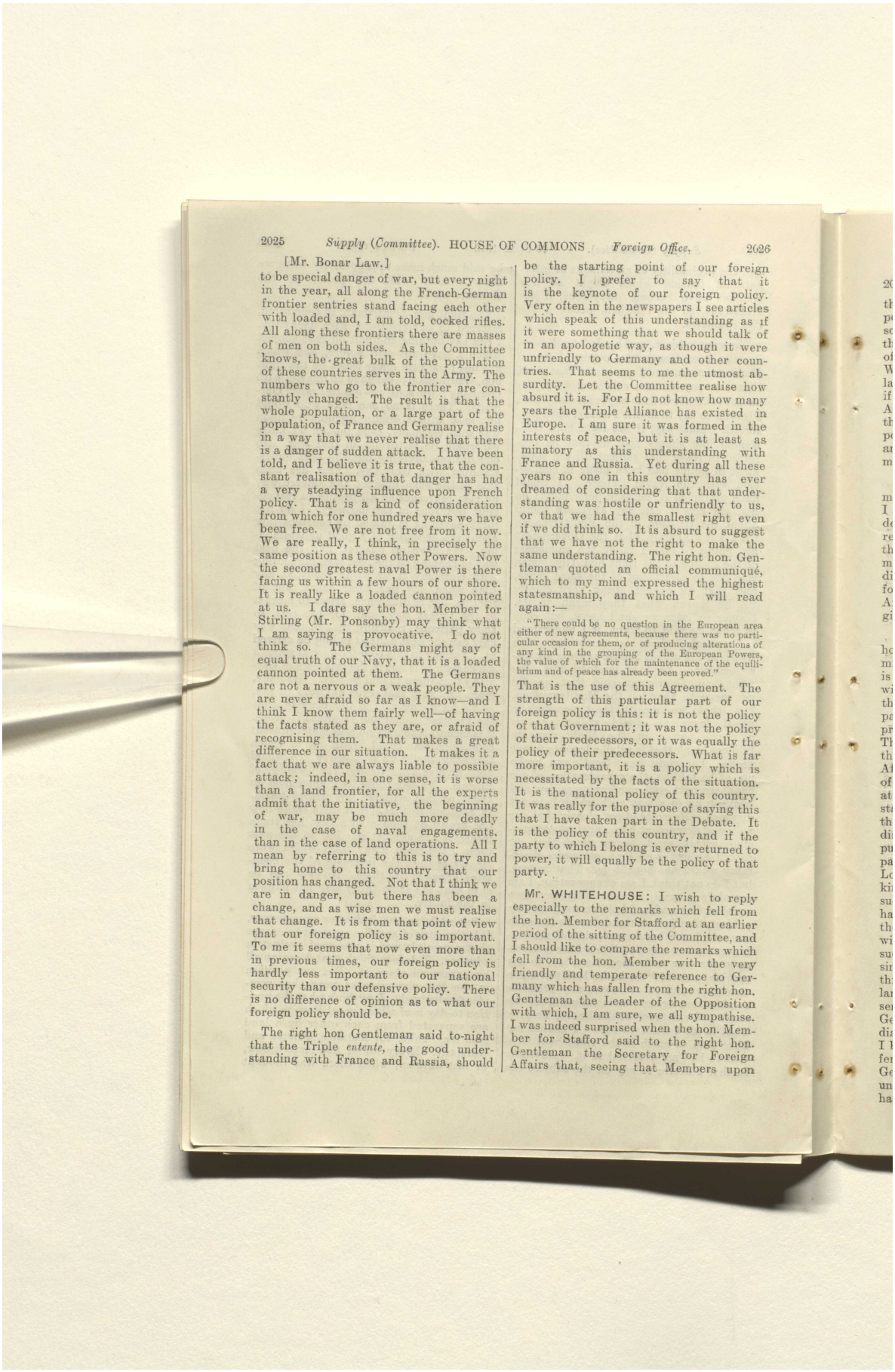

[Mr. Bonar Law.]

to be special danger of war, but every night in the year, all along the French-German frontier sentries stand facing each other with loaded and, I am told, cocked rifles. All along these frontiers there are masses of men on both sides. As the Committee knows, the great bulk of the population of these countries serves in the Army. The numbers who go to the frontier are constantly changed. The result is that the whole population, or a large part of the population, of France and Germany realise in a way that we never realise that there is a danger of sudden attack. I have been told, and I believe it is true, that the constant realisation of that danger has had a very steadying influence upon French policy. That is a kind of consideration from which for one hundred years we have been free. We are not free from it now. We are really, I think, in precisely the same position as these other Powers. Now the second greatest naval Power is there facing us within a few hours of our shore. It is really like a loaded cannon pointed at us. I dare say the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Ponsonby) may think what I am saying is provocative. I do not think so. The Germans might say of equal truth of our Navy, that it is a loaded cannon pointed at them. The Germans are not a nervous or a weak people. They are never afraid so far as I know—and I think I know them fairly well—of having the facts stated as they are, or afraid of recognising them. That makes a great difference in our situation. It makes it a fact that we are always liable to possible attack; indeed, in one sense, it is worse than a land frontier, for all the experts admit that the initiative, the beginning of war, may be much more deadly in the case of naval engagements, than in the case of land operations. All I mean by referring to this is to try and bring home to this country that our position has changed. Not that I think we are in danger, but there has been a change, and as wise men we must realise that change. It is from that point of view that our foreign policy is so important. To me it seems that now even more than in previous times, our foreign policy is hardly less important to our national security than our defensive policy. There is no difference of opinion as to what our foreign policy should be.

The right hon Gentleman said to-night that the Triple *entente*, the good understanding with France and Russia, should be the starting point of our foreign policy. I prefer to say that it is the keynote of our foreign policy. Very often in the newspapers I see articles which speak of this understanding as if it were something that we should talk of in an apologetic way, as though it were unfriendly to Germany and other countries. That seems to me the utmost absurdity. Let the Committee realise how absurd it is. For I do not know how many years the Triple Alliance has existed in Europe. I am sure it was formed in the interests of peace, but it is at least as minatory as this understanding with France and Russia. Yet during all these years no one in this country has ever dreamed of considering that that understanding was hostile or unfriendly to us, or that we had the smallest right even if we did think so. It is absurd to suggest that we have not the right to make the same understanding. The right hon. Gentleman quoted an official communiqué, which to my mind expressed the highest statesmanship, and which I will read again:—

"There could be no question in the European area either of new agreements, because there was no particular occasion for them, or of producing alterations of any kind in the grouping of the European Powers, the value of which for the maintenance of the equilibrium and of peace has already been proved."

That is the use of this Agreement. The strength of this particular part of our foreign policy is this: it is not the policy of that Government; it was not the policy of their predecessors, or it was equally the policy of their predecessors. What is far more important, it is a policy which is necessitated by the facts of the situation. It is the national policy of this country. It was really for the purpose of saying this that I have taken part in the Debate. It is the policy of this country, and if the party to which I belong is ever returned to power, it will equally be the policy of that party.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE: I wish to reply especially to the remarks which fell from the hon. Member for Stafford at an earlier period of the sitting of the Committee, and I should like to compare the remarks which fell from the hon. Member with the very friendly and temperate reference to Germany which has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition with which, I am sure, we all sympathise. I was indeed surprised when the hon. Member for Stafford said to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Foreign Affairs that, seeing that Members upon

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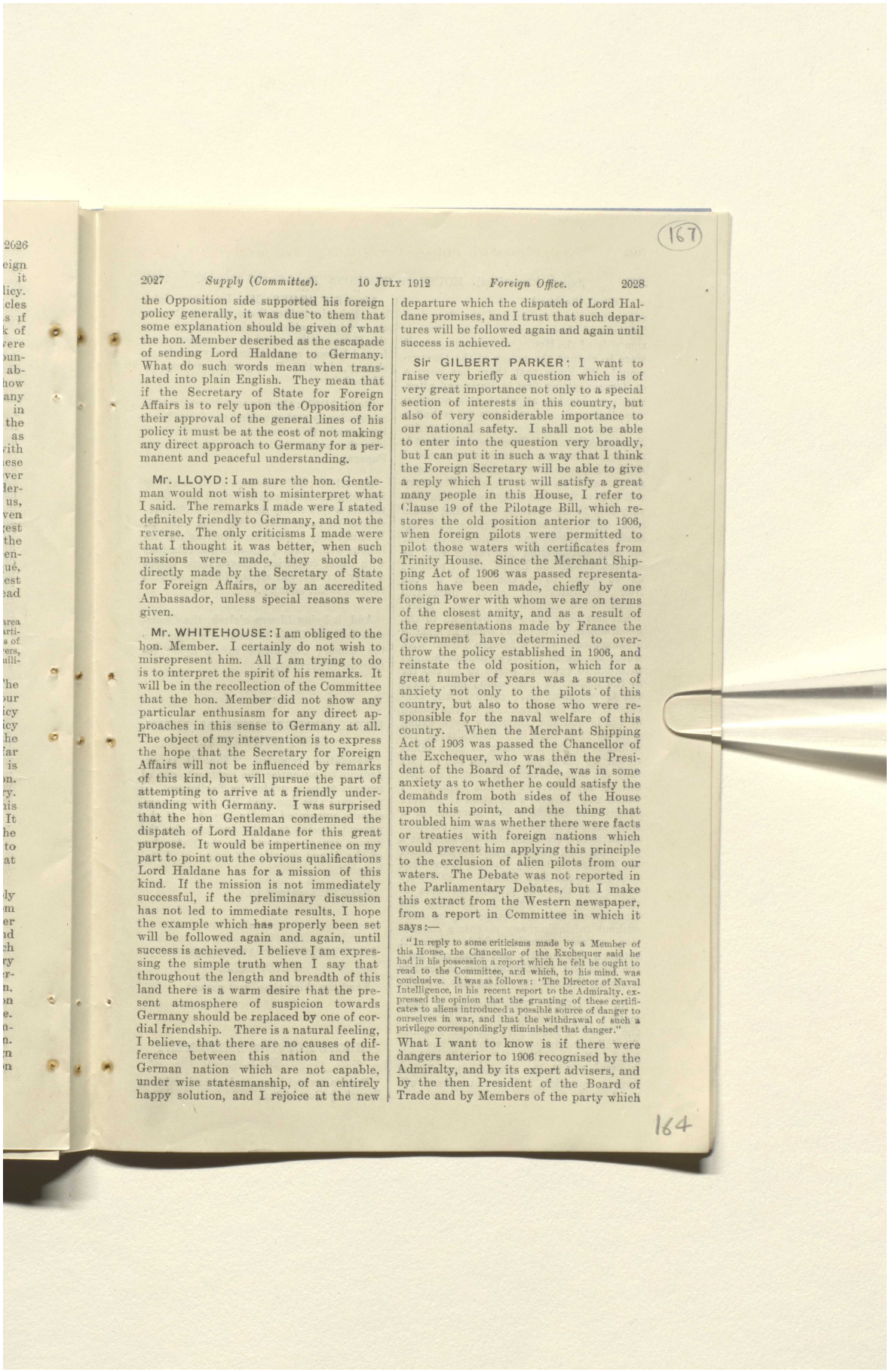

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the Opposition side supported his foreign policy generally, it was due to them that some explanation should be given of what the hon. Member described as the escapade of sending Lord Haldane to Germany. What do such words mean when translated into plain English. They mean that if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is to rely upon the Opposition for their approval of the general lines of his policy it must be at the cost of not making any direct approach to Germany for a permanent and peaceful understanding.

Mr. LLOYD: I am sure the hon. Gentleman would not wish to misinterpret what I said. The remarks I made were I stated definitely friendly to Germany, and not the reverse. The only criticisms I made were that I thought it was better, when such missions were made, they should be directly made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, or by an accredited Ambassador, unless special reasons were given.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE: I am obliged to the hon. Member. I certainly do not wish to misrepresent him. All I am trying to do is to interpret the spirit of his remarks. It will be in the recollection of the Committee that the hon. Member did not show any particular enthusiasm for any direct approaches in this sense to Germany at all. The object of my intervention is to express the hope that the Secretary for Foreign Affairs will not be influenced by remarks of this kind, but will pursue the part of attempting to arrive at a friendly understanding with Germany. I was surprised that the hon Gentleman condemned the dispatch of Lord Haldane for this great purpose. It would be impertinence on my part to point out the obvious qualifications Lord Haldane has for a mission of this kind. If the mission is not immediately successful, if the preliminary discussion has not led to immediate results, I hope the example which has properly been set will be followed again and again, until success is achieved. I believe I am expressing the simple truth when I say that throughout the length and breadth of this land there is a warm desire that the present atmosphere of suspicion towards Germany should be replaced by one of cordial friendship. There is a natural feeling, I believe, that there are no causes of difference between this nation and the German nation which are not capable, under wise statesmanship, of an entirely happy solution, and I rejoice at the new departure which the dispatch of Lord Haldane promises, and I trust that such departures will be followed again and again until success is achieved.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: I want to raise very briefly a question which is of very great importance not only to a special section of interests in this country, but also of very considerable importance to our national safety. I shall not be able to enter into the question very broadly, but I can put it in such a way that I think the Foreign Secretary will be able to give a reply which I trust will satisfy a great many people in this House, I refer to Clause 19 of the Pilotage Bill, which restores the old position anterior to 1906, when foreign pilots were permitted to pilot those waters with certificates from Trinity House. Since the Merchant Shipping Act of 1906 was passed representations have been made, chiefly by one foreign Power with whom we are on terms of the closest amity, and as a result of the representations made by France the Government have determined to overthrow the policy established in 1906, and reinstate the old position, which for a great number of years was a source of anxiety not only to the pilots of this country, but also to those who were responsible for the naval welfare of this country. When the Merchant Shipping Act of 1906 was passed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was then the President of the Board of Trade, was in some anxiety as to whether he could satisfy the demands from both sides of the House upon this point, and the thing that troubled him was whether there were facts or treaties with foreign nations which would prevent him applying this principle to the exclusion of alien pilots from our waters. The Debate was not reported in the Parliamentary Debates, but I make this extract from the Western newspaper, from a report in Committee in which it says:—

"In reply to some criticisms made by a Member of this House, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he had in his possession a report which he felt he ought to read to the Committee, and which, to his mind, was conclusive. It was as follows: 'The Director of Naval Intelligence, in his recent report to the Admiralty, expressed the opinion that the granting of these certificates to aliens introduced a possible source of danger to ourselves in war, and that the withdrawal of such a privilege correspondingly diminished that danger."

What I want to know is if there were dangers anterior to 1906 recognised by the Admiralty, and by its expert advisers, and by the then President of the Board of Trade and by Members of the party which

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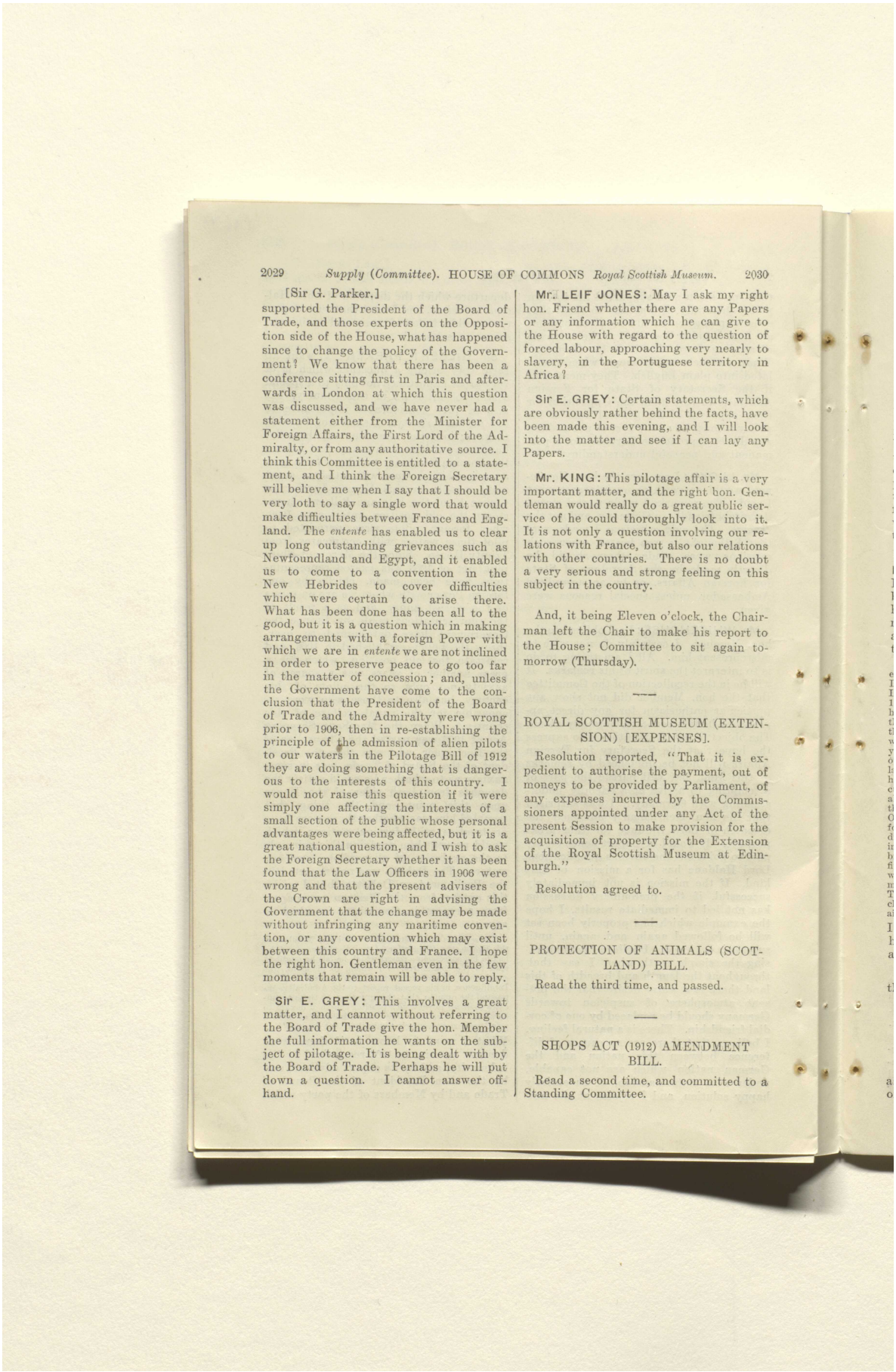

[Sir G. Parker.]

supported the President of the Board of Trade, and those experts on the Opposition side of the House, what has happened since to change the policy of the Government? We know that there has been a conference sitting first in Paris and afterwards in London at which this question was discussed, and we have never had a statement either from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the First Lord of the Admiralty, or from any authoritative source. I think this Committee is entitled to a statement, and I think the Foreign Secretary will believe me when I say that I should be very loth to say a single word that would make difficulties between France and England. The *entente* has enabled us to clear up long outstanding grievances such as Newfoundland and Egypt, and it enabled us to come to a convention in the New Hebrides to cover difficulties which were certain to arise there. What has been done has been all to the good, but it is a question which in making arrangements with a foreign Power with which we are in *entente* we are not inclined in order to preserve peace to go too far in the matter of concession; and, unless the Government have come to the conclusion that the President of the Board of Trade and the Admiralty were wrong prior to 1906, then in re-establishing the principle of the admission of alien pilots to our waters in the Pilotage Bill of 1912 they are doing something that is dangerous to the interests of this country. I would not raise this question if it were simply one affecting the interests of a small section of the public whose personal advantages were being affected, but it is a great national question, and I wish to ask the Foreign Secretary whether it has been found that the Law Officers in 1906 were wrong and that the present advisers of the Crown are right in advising the Government that the change may be made without infringing any maritime convention, or any covention which may exist between this country and France. I hope the right hon. Gentleman even in the few moments that remain will be able to reply.

Sir E. GREY: This involves a great matter, and I cannot without referring to the Board of Trade give the hon. Member the full information he wants on the subject of pilotage. It is being dealt with by the Board of Trade. Perhaps he will put down a question. I cannot answer offhand.

Mr. LEIF JONES: May I ask my right hon. Friend whether there are any Papers or any information which he can give to the House with regard to the question of forced labour, approaching very nearly to slavery, in the Portuguese territory in Africa?

Sir E. GREY: Certain statements, which are obviously rather behind the facts, have been made this evening, and I will look into the matter and see if I can lay any Papers.

Mr. KING: This pilotage affair is a very important matter, and the right hon. Gentleman would really do a great public service of he could thoroughly look into it. It is not only a question involving our relations with France, but also our relations with other countries. There is no doubt a very serious and strong feeling on this subject in the country.

And, it being Eleven o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House; Committee to sit again tomorrow (Thursday).

ROYAL SCOTTISH MUSEUM (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES].

Resolution reported, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners appointed under any Act of the present Session to make provision for the acquisition of property for the Extension of the Royal Scottish Museum at Edinburgh."

Resolution agreed to.

PROTECTION OF ANIMALS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

SHOPS ACT (1912) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

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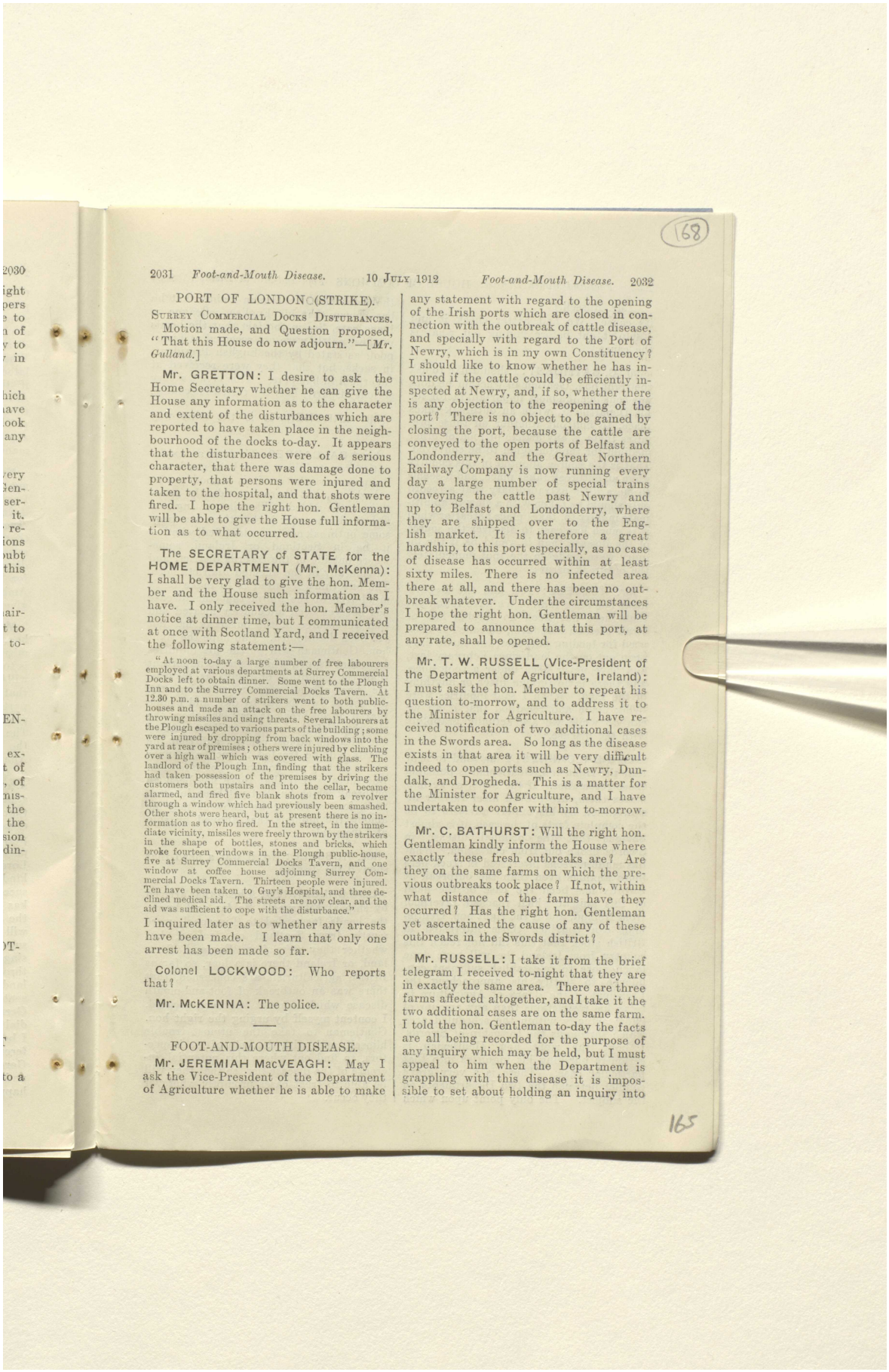

PORT OF LONDON (STRIKE).

SURREY COMMERCIAL DOCKS DISTURBANCES.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Mr. Gulland.*]

Mr. GRETTON: I desire to ask the Home Secretary whether he can give the House any information as to the character and extent of the disturbances which are reported to have taken place in the neighbourhood of the docks to-day. It appears that the disturbances were of a serious character, that there was damage done to property, that persons were injured and taken to the hospital, and that shots were fired. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to give the House full information as to what occurred.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. McKenna): I shall be very glad to give the hon. Member and the House such information as I have. I only received the hon. Member's notice at dinner time, but I communicated at once with Scotland Yard, and I received the following statement:—

"At noon to-day a large number of free labourers employed at various departments at Surrey Commercial Docks left to obtain dinner. Some went to the Plough Inn and to the Surrey Commercial Docks Tavern. At 12.30 p.m. a number of strikers went to both public-houses and made an attack on the free labourers by throwing missiles and using threats. Several labourers at the Plough escaped to various parts of the building; some were injured by dropping from back windows into the yard at rear of premises; others were injured by climbing over a high wall which was covered with glass. The landlord of the Plough Inn, finding that the strikers had taken possession of the premises by driving the customers both upstairs and into the cellar, became alarmed, and fired five blank shots from a revolver through a window which had previously been smashed. Other shots were heard, but at present there is no information as to who fired. In the street, in the immediate vicinity, missiles were freely thrown by the strikers in the shape of bottles, stones and bricks, which broke fourteen windows in the Plough public-house, five at Surrey Commercial Docks Tavern, and one window at coffee house adjoining Surrey Commercial Docks Tavern. Thirteen people were injured. Ten have been taken to Guy's Hospital, and three declined medical aid. The streets are now clear, and the aid was sufficient to cope with the disturbance."

I inquired later as to whether any arrests have been made. I learn that only one arrest has been made so far.

Colonel LOCKWOOD: Who reports that?

Mr. McKENNA: The police.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

Mr. JEREMIAH MacVEAGH: May I ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture whether he is able to make any statement with regard to the opening of the Irish ports which are closed in connection with the outbreak of cattle disease, and specially with regard to the Port of Newry, which is in my own Constituency? I should like to know whether he has inquired if the cattle could be efficiently inspected at Newry, and, if so, whether there is any objection to the reopening of the port? There is no object to be gained by closing the port, because the cattle are conveyed to the open ports of Belfast and Londonderry, and the Great Northern Railway Company is now running every day a large number of special trains conveying the cattle past Newry and up to Belfast and Londonderry, where they are shipped over to the English market. It is therefore a great hardship, to this port especially, as no case of disease has occurred within at least sixty miles. There is no infected area there at all, and there has been no outbreak whatever. Under the circumstances I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be prepared to announce that this port, at any rate, shall be opened.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture, Ireland): I must ask the hon. Member to repeat his question to-morrow, and to address it to the Minister for Agriculture. I have received notification of two additional cases in the Swords area. So long as the disease exists in that area it will be very difficult indeed to open ports such as Newry, Dundalk, and Drogheda. This is a matter for the Minister for Agriculture, and I have undertaken to confer with him to-morrow.

Mr. C. BATHURST: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly inform the House where exactly these fresh outbreaks are? Are they on the same farms on which the previous outbreaks took place? If not, within what distance of the farms have they occurred? Has the right hon. Gentleman yet ascertained the cause of any of these outbreaks in the Swords district?

Mr. RUSSELL: I take it from the brief telegram I received to-night that they are in exactly the same area. There are three farms affected altogether, and I take it the two additional cases are on the same farm. I told the hon. Gentleman to-day the facts are all being recorded for the purpose of any inquiry which may be held, but I must appeal to him when the Department is grappling with this disease it is impossible to set about holding an inquiry into

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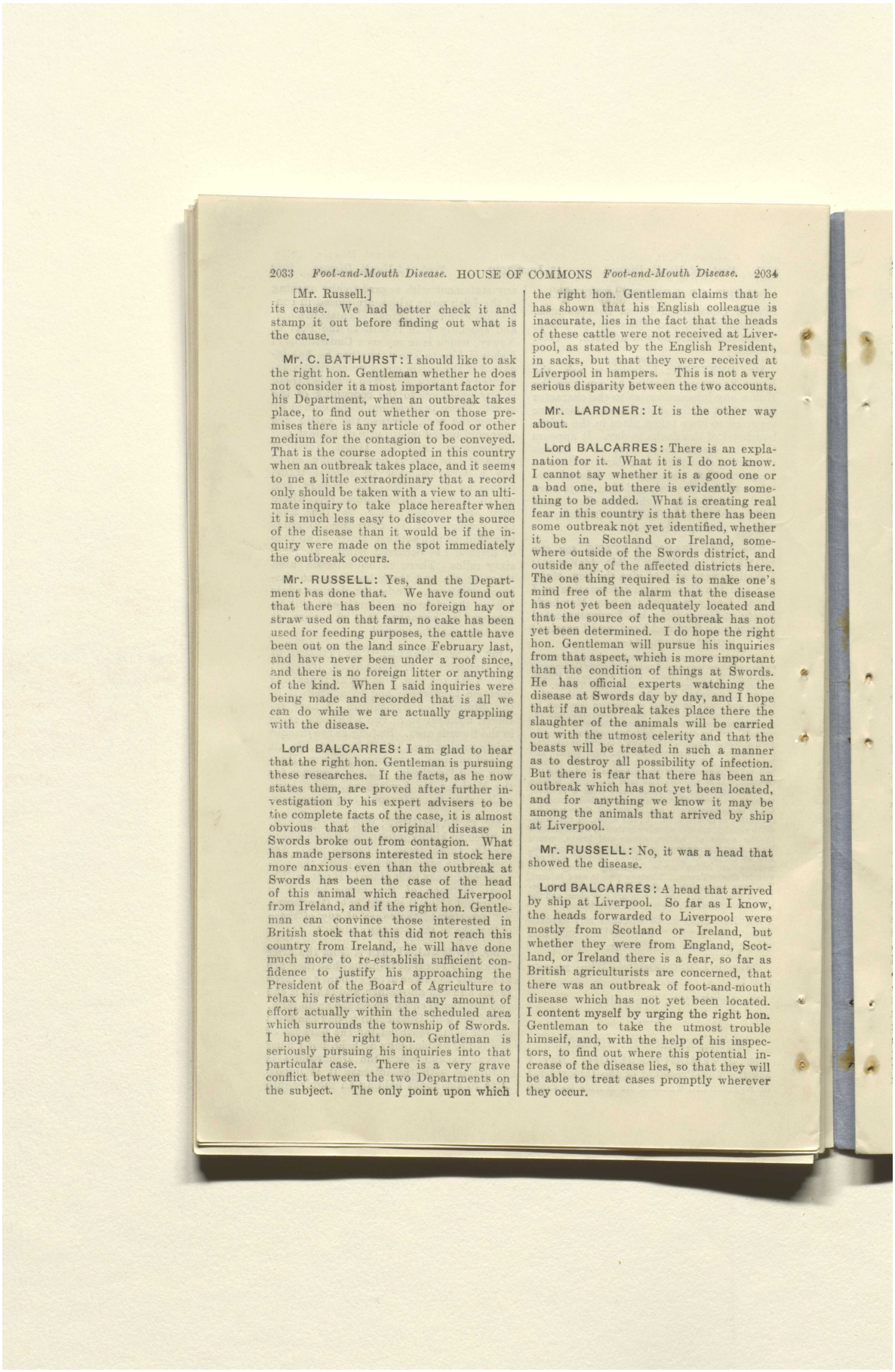

[Mr. Russell.]

its cause. We had better check it and stamp it out before finding out what is the cause.

Mr. C. BATHURST: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he does not consider it a most important factor for his Department, when an outbreak takes place, to find out whether on those premises there is any article of food or other medium for the contagion to be conveyed. That is the course adopted in this country when an outbreak takes place, and it seems to me a little extraordinary that a record only should be taken with a view to an ultimate inquiry to take place hereafter when it is much less easy to discover the source of the disease than it would be if the inquiry were made on the spot immediately the outbreak occurs.

Mr. RUSSELL: Yes, and the Department has done that. We have found out that there has been no foreign hay or straw used on that farm, no cake has been used for feeding purposes, the cattle have been out on the land since February last, and have never been under a roof since, and there is no foreign litter or anything of the kind. When I said inquiries were being made and recorded that is all we can do while we are actually grappling with the disease.

Lord BALCARRES: I am glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman is pursuing these researches. If the facts, as he now states them, are proved after further investigation by his expert advisers to be the complete facts of the case, it is almost obvious that the original disease in Swords broke out from contagion. What has made persons interested in stock here more anxious even than the outbreak at Swords has been the case of the head of this animal which reached Liverpool from Ireland, and if the right hon. Gentleman can convince those interested in British stock that this did not reach this country from Ireland, he will have done much more to re-establish sufficient confidence to justify his approaching the President of the Board of Agriculture to relax his restrictions than any amount of effort actually within the scheduled area which surrounds the township of Swords. I hope the right hon. Gentleman is seriously pursuing his inquiries into that particular case. There is a very grave conflict between the two Departments on the subject. The only point upon which the right hon. Gentleman claims that he has shown that his English colleague is inaccurate, lies in the fact that the heads of these cattle were not received at Liverpool, as stated by the English President, in sacks, but that they were received at Liverpool in hampers. This is not a very serious disparity between the two accounts.

Mr. LARDNER: It is the other way about.

Lord BALCARRES: There is an explanation for it. What it is I do not know. I cannot say whether it is a good one or a bad one, but there is evidently something to be added. What is creating real fear in this country is that there has been some outbreak not yet identified, whether it be in Scotland or Ireland, somewhere outside of the Swords district, and outside any of the affected districts here. The one thing required is to make one's mind free of the alarm that the disease has not yet been adequately located and that the source of the outbreak has not yet been determined. I do hope the right hon. Gentleman will pursue his inquiries from that aspect, which is more important than the condition of things at Swords. He has official experts watching the disease at Swords day by day, and I hope that if an outbreak takes place there the slaughter of the animals will be carried out with the utmost celerity and that the beasts will be treated in such a manner as to destroy all possibility of infection. But there is fear that there has been an outbreak which has not yet been located, and for anything we know it may be among the animals that arrived by ship at Liverpool.

Mr. RUSSELL: No, it was a head that showed the disease.

Lord BALCARRES: A head that arrived by ship at Liverpool. So far as I know, the heads forwarded to Liverpool were mostly from Scotland or Ireland, but whether they were from England, Scotland, or Ireland there is a fear, so far as British agriculturists are concerned, that there was an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease which has not yet been located. I content myself by urging the right hon. Gentleman to take the utmost trouble himself, and, with the help of his inspectors, to find out where this potential increase of the disease lies, so that they will be able to treat cases promptly wherever they occur.

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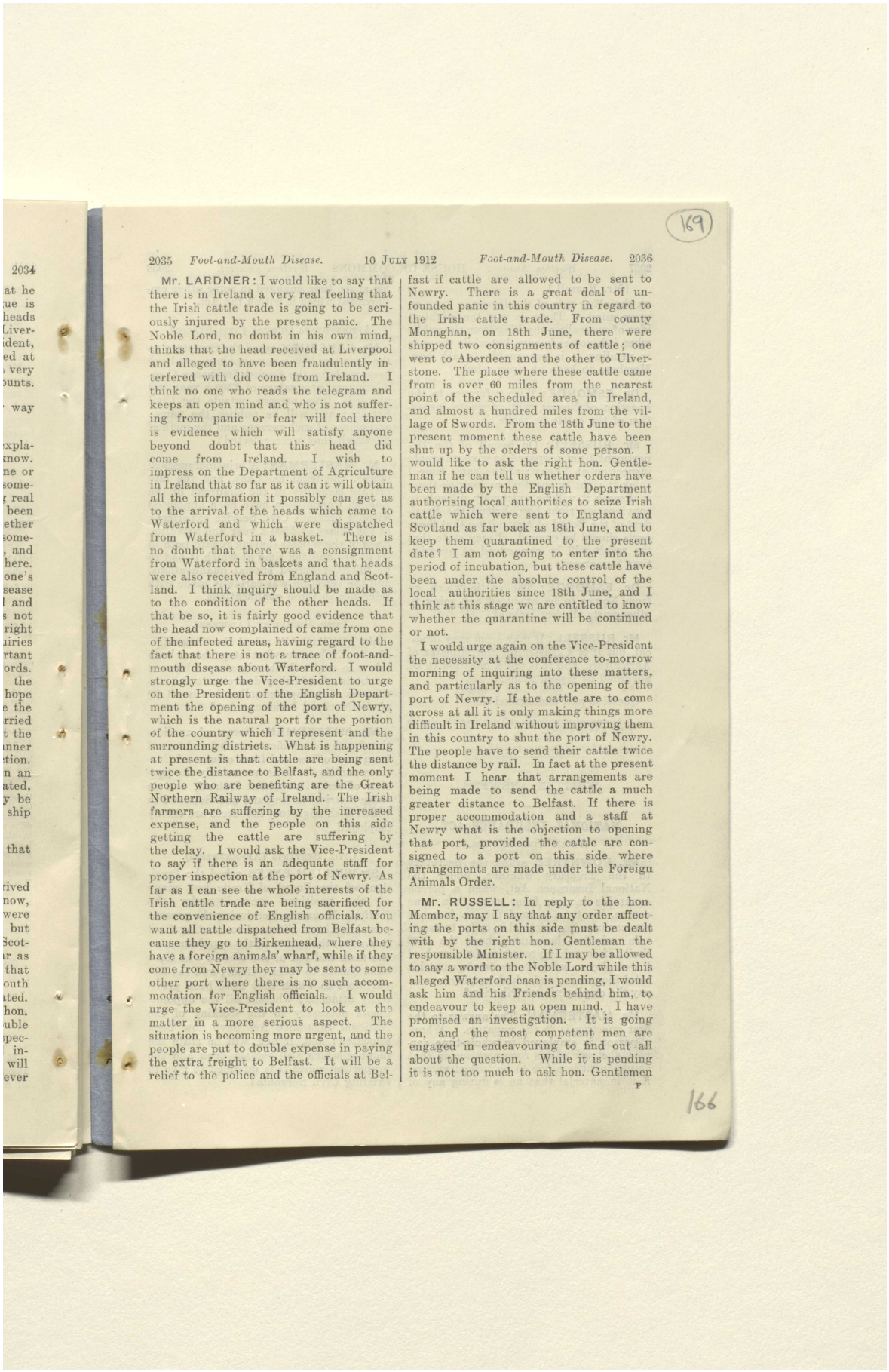

Mr. LARDNER: I would like to say that there is in Ireland a very real feeling that the Irish cattle trade is going to be seriously injured by the present panic. The Noble Lord, no doubt in his own mind, thinks that the head received at Liverpool and alleged to have been fraudulently interfered with did come from Ireland. I think no one who reads the telegram and keeps an open mind and who is not suffering from panic or fear will feel there is evidence which will satisfy anyone beyond doubt that this head did come from Ireland. I wish to impress on the Department of Agriculture in Ireland that so far as it can it will obtain all the information it possibly can get as to the arrival of the heads which came to Waterford and which were dispatched from Waterford in a basket. There is no doubt that there was a consignment from Waterford in baskets and that heads were also received from England and Scotland. I think inquiry should be made as to the condition of the other heads. If that be so, it is fairly good evidence that the head now complained of came from one of the infected areas, having regard to the fact that there is not a trace of foot-and-mouth disease about Waterford. I would strongly urge the Vice-President to urge on the President of the English Department the opening of the port of Newry, which is the natural port for the portion of the country which I represent and the surrounding districts. What is happening at present is that cattle are being sent twice the distance to Belfast, and the only people who are benefiting are the Great Northern Railway of Ireland. The Irish farmers are suffering by the increased expense, and the people on this side getting the cattle are suffering by the delay. I would ask the Vice-President to say if there is an adequate staff for proper inspection at the port of Newry. As far as I can see the whole interests of the Irish cattle trade are being sacrificed for the convenience of English officials. You want all cattle dispatched from Belfast because they go to Birkenhead, where they have a foreign animals' wharf, while if they come from Newry they may be sent to some other port where there is no such accommodation for English officials. I would urge the Vice-President to look at the matter in a more serious aspect. The situation is becoming more urgent, and the people are put to double expense in paying the extra freight to Belfast. It will be a relief to the police and the officials at Belfast if cattle are allowed to be sent to Newry. There is a great deal of unfounded panic in this country in regard to the Irish cattle trade. From county Monaghan, on 18th June, there were shipped two consignments of cattle; one went to Aberdeen and the other to Ulverstone. The place where these cattle came from is over 60 miles from the nearest point of the scheduled area in Ireland, and almost a hundred miles from the village of Swords. From the 18th June to the present moment these cattle have been shut up by the orders of some person. I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can tell us whether orders have been made by the English Department authorising local authorities to seize Irish cattle which were sent to England and Scotland as far back as 18th June, and to keep them quarantined to the present date? I am not going to enter into the period of incubation, but these cattle have been under the absolute control of the local authorities since 18th June, and I think at this stage we are entitled to know whether the quarantine will be continued or not.

I would urge again on the Vice-President the necessity at the conference to-morrow morning of inquiring into these matters, and particularly as to the opening of the port of Newry. If the cattle are to come across at all it is only making things more difficult in Ireland without improving them in this country to shut the port of Newry. The people have to send their cattle twice the distance by rail. In fact at the present moment I hear that arrangements are being made to send the cattle a much greater distance to Belfast. If there is proper accommodation and a staff at Newry what is the objection to opening that port, provided the cattle are consigned to a port on this side where arrangements are made under the Foreign Animals Order.

Mr. RUSSELL: In reply to the hon. Member, may I say that any order affecting the ports on this side must be dealt with by the right hon. Gentleman the responsible Minister. If I may be allowed to say a word to the Noble Lord while this alleged Waterford case is pending, I would ask him and his Friends behind him, to endeavour to keep an open mind. I have promised an investigation. It is going on, and the most competent men are engaged in endeavouring to find out all about the question. While it is pending it is not too much to ask hon. Gentlemen

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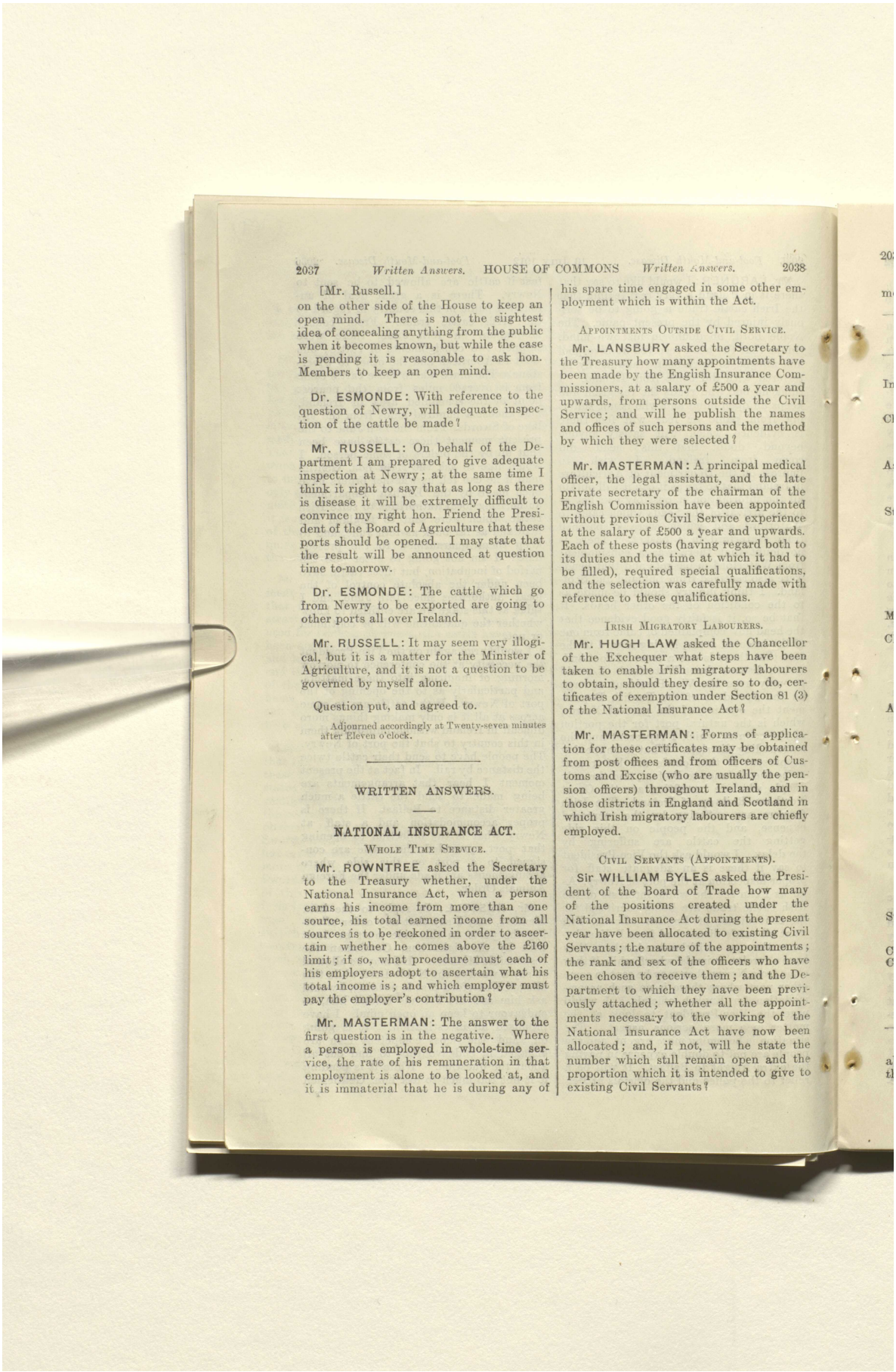

[Mr. Russell.]

on the other side of the House to keep an open mind. There is not the slightest idea of concealing anything from the public when it becomes known, but while the case is pending it is reasonable to ask hon. Members to keep an open mind.

Dr. ESMONDE: With reference to the question of Newry, will adequate inspection of the cattle be made?

Mr. RUSSELL: On behalf of the Department I am prepared to give adequate inspection at Newry; at the same time I think it right to say that as long as there is disease it will be extremely difficult to convince my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture that these ports should be opened. I may state that the result will be announced at question time to-morrow.

Dr. ESMONDE: The cattle which go from Newry to be exported are going to other ports all over Ireland.

Mr. RUSSELL: It may seem very illogical, but it is a matter for the Minister of Agriculture, and it is not a question to be governed by myself alone.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Twenty-seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

Whole Time Service.

Mr. ROWNTREE asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether, under the National Insurance Act, when a person earns his income from more than one source, his total earned income from all sources is to be reckoned in order to ascertain whether he comes above the £160 limit; if so, what procedure must each of his employers adopt to ascertain what his total income is; and which employer must pay the employer's contribution?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The answer to the first question is in the negative. Where a person is employed in whole-time service, the rate of his remuneration in that employment is alone to be looked at, and it is immaterial that he is during any of his spare time engaged in some other employment which is within the Act.

Appointments Outside Civil Service.

Mr. LANSBURY asked the Secretary to the Treasury how many appointments have been made by the English Insurance Commissioners, at a salary of £500 a year and upwards, from persons outside the Civil Service; and will he publish the names and offices of such persons and the method by which they were selected?

Mr. MASTERMAN: A principal medical officer, the legal assistant, and the late private secretary of the chairman of the English Commission have been appointed without previous Civil Service experience at the salary of £500 a year and upwards. Each of these posts (having regard both to its duties and the time at which it had to be filled), required special qualifications, and the selection was carefully made with reference to these qualifications.

Irish Migratory Labourers.

Mr. HUGH LAW asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps have been taken to enable Irish migratory labourers to obtain, should they desire so to do, certificates of exemption under Section 81 (3) of the National Insurance Act?

Mr. MASTERMAN: Forms of application for these certificates may be obtained from post offices and from officers of Customs and Excise (who are usually the pension officers) throughout Ireland, and in those districts in England and Scotland in which Irish migratory labourers are chiefly employed.

Civil Servants (Appointments).

Sir WILLIAM BYLES asked the President of the Board of Trade how many of the positions created under the National Insurance Act during the present year have been allocated to existing Civil Servants; the nature of the appointments; the rank and sex of the officers who have been chosen to receive them; and the Department to which they have been previously attached; whether all the appointments necessary to the working of the National Insurance Act have now been allocated; and, if not, will he state the number which still remain open and the proportion which it is intended to give to existing Civil Servants?

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Mr. BUXTON: The following appointments under Part II. of the National Insurance Act have been allotted to existing Civil Servants:—

Nature of Appointment.	Rank of Officer before Appointment.	Department to which previously attached.
MEN.		
Insurance Officer	Higher Grade Second Division Clerk	Board of Trade.
	Minor Staff Clerk	Board of Education.
Chief of Section	Staff Divisional Officer ...	Board of Trade.
	Second Class Staff Officer...	Board of Trade.
	Examiner in Office of Official Receiver	Board of Trade.
Assistant Chief of Section ...	3 Upper Division Clerks ...	Board of Trade.
	Minor Staff Officer... ...	Board of Trade.
	Second Division Clerk (Higher Grade)	Board of Trade.
Staff Officer	Staff Officer...	Board of Trade.
	Senior Realisation Clerk ...	Board of Trade.
	2 Examiners	Exchequer and Audit.
	1 Second Class Clerk ...	India Office.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Inland Revenue.
	5 Second Division Clerks...	Board of Trade.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Foreign Office.
	1 Second Division Clerk ..	British Museum.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Board of Agriculture.
Manager (4th Grade) ...	Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist	General Post Office.
Clerks...	1 Assistant Clerk	Board of Trade.
	1 Assistant Clerk	Prison Commission (Scotland).
	3 Sorting Clerks and Telegraphists	General Post Office.
	2 Postmen	General Post Office.
	2 Clerical Assistants ...	General Post Office.
Assistant Insurance Officer.	2 Second Division Clerks...	Board of Trade.
	1 Minor Staff Clerk ...	Board of Trade.
	1 Deputy Superintendent ..	Mercantile Marine Offices.
	2 Second Division Clerks...	Board of Education.
	2 Second Division Clerks...	Local Government Board.
	1 Second Division Clerk ..	War Office.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Civil Service Commission.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Inland Revenue.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	General Post Office.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Charity Commission.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Home Office.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Scotch Education Department.
	1 Second Division Clerk ...	Office of the Commissioner of Valuation, Ireland.
	1 Second Class Clerk ...	General Register House, Edinburgh.
	1 Third Class Clerk ...	Principal Probate Registry.
	1 Third Class Clerk ...	Court of Criminal Appeal.
WOMEN.		
Staff Officer	1 Principal Clerk	General Post Office.
	6 First Class Clerks ...	General Post Office.
	1 Second Class Clerk ...	General Post Office.
Claims and Checking Clerks	165 Women Clerks... ...	General Post Office.
Clerks...	1 Woman Sorter	General Post Office.
	1 Counter Clerk and Telegraphist	General Post Office.
	1 Telephone Clerk	General Post Office.
	1 Shorthand Typist ...	General Post Office.

Some further appointments will probably be necessary, and I propose to offer them to existing Civil Servants wherever practicable, but it is not possible to fix in advance the exact proportion of such appointments which will be so filled.

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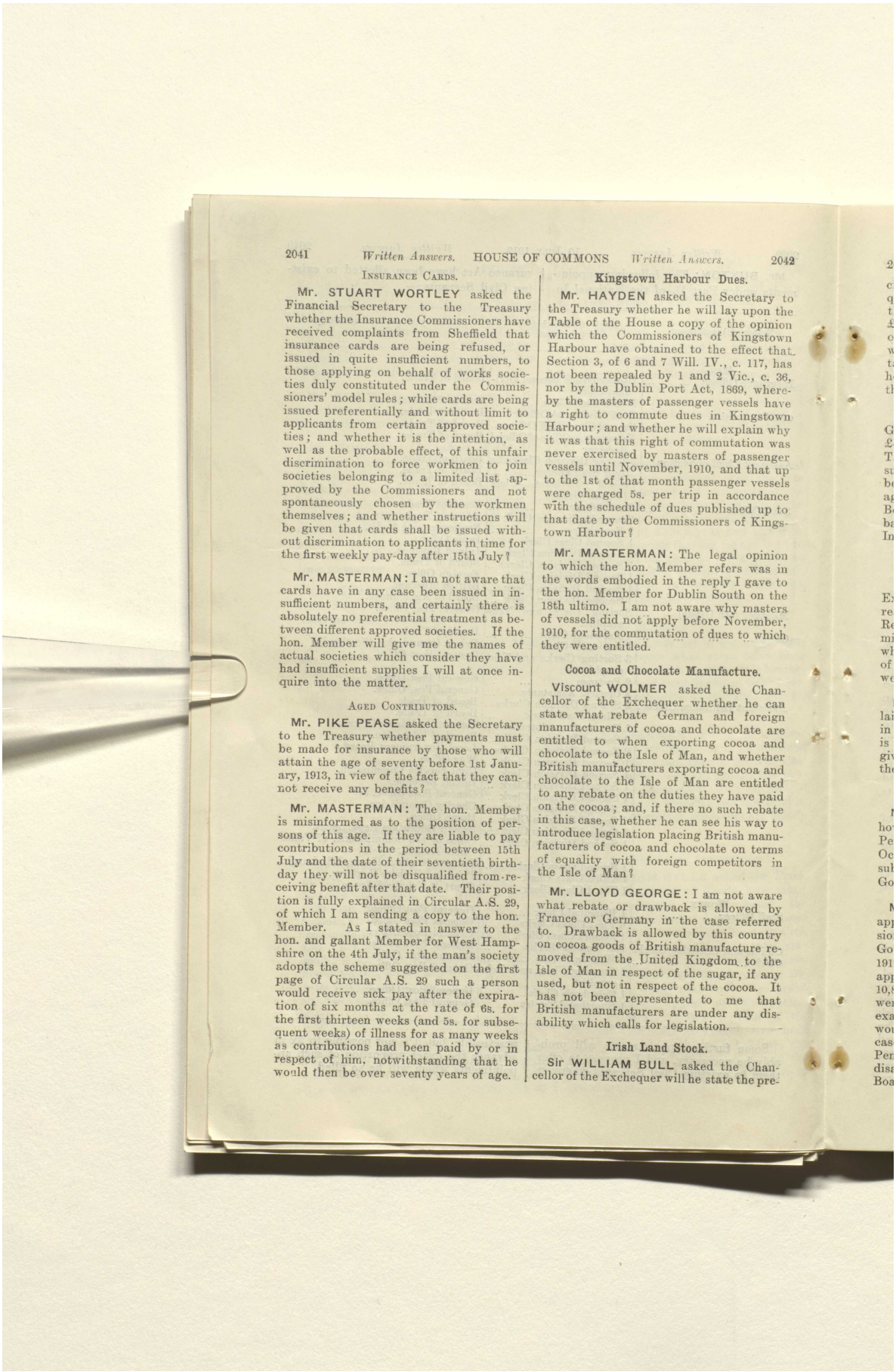

2041 *Written Answers.* HOUSE OF COMMONS *Written Answers.* 2042

INSURANCE CARDS.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether the Insurance Commissioners have received complaints from Sheffield that insurance cards are being refused, or issued in quite insufficient numbers, to those applying on behalf of works societies duly constituted under the Commissioners' model rules; while cards are being issued preferentially and without limit to applicants from certain approved societies; and whether it is the intention, as well as the probable effect, of this unfair discrimination to force workmen to join societies belonging to a limited list approved by the Commissioners and not spontaneously chosen by the workmen themselves; and whether instructions will be given that cards shall be issued without discrimination to applicants in time for the first weekly pay-day after 15th July?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I am not aware that cards have in any case been issued in insufficient numbers, and certainly there is absolutely no preferential treatment as between different approved societies. If the hon. Member will give me the names of actual societies which consider they have had insufficient supplies I will at once inquire into the matter.

AGED CONTRIBUTORS.

Mr. PIKE PEASE asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether payments must be made for insurance by those who will attain the age of seventy before 1st January, 1913, in view of the fact that they cannot receive any benefits?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The hon. Member is misinformed as to the position of persons of this age. If they are liable to pay contributions in the period between 15th July and the date of their seventieth birthday they will not be disqualified from receiving benefit after that date. Their position is fully explained in Circular A.S. 29, of which I am sending a copy to the hon. Member. As I stated in answer to the hon. and gallant Member for West Hampshire on the 4th July, if the man's society adopts the scheme suggested on the first page of Circular A.S. 29 such a person would receive sick pay after the expiration of six months at the rate of 6s. for the first thirteen weeks (and 5s. for subsequent weeks) of illness for as many weeks as contributions had been paid by or in respect of him, notwithstanding that he would then be over seventy years of age.

Kingstown Harbour Dues.

Mr. HAYDEN asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the opinion which the Commissioners of Kingstown Harbour have obtained to the effect that Section 3, of 6 and 7 Will. IV., c. 117, has not been repealed by 1 and 2 Vic., c. 36, nor by the Dublin Port Act, 1869, whereby the masters of passenger vessels have a right to commute dues in Kingstown Harbour; and whether he will explain why it was that this right of commutation was never exercised by masters of passenger vessels until November, 1910, and that up to the 1st of that month passenger vessels were charged 5s. per trip in accordance with the schedule of dues published up to that date by the Commissioners of Kingstown Harbour?

Mr. MASTERMAN: The legal opinion to which the hon. Member refers was in the words embodied in the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Dublin South on the 18th ultimo. I am not aware why masters of vessels did not apply before November, 1910, for the commutation of dues to which they were entitled.

Cocoa and Chocolate Manufacture.

Viscount WOLMER asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state what rebate German and foreign manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate are entitled to when exporting cocoa and chocolate to the Isle of Man, and whether British manufacturers exporting cocoa and chocolate to the Isle of Man are entitled to any rebate on the duties they have paid on the cocoa; and, if there no such rebate in this case, whether he can see his way to introduce legislation placing British manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate on terms of equality with foreign competitors in the Isle of Man?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: I am not aware what rebate or drawback is allowed by France or Germany in the case referred to. Drawback is allowed by this country on cocoa goods of British manufacture removed from the United Kingdom to the Isle of Man in respect of the sugar, if any used, but not in respect of the cocoa. It has not been represented to me that British manufacturers are under any disability which calls for legislation.

Irish Land Stock.

Sir WILLIAM BULL asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer will he state the pre-

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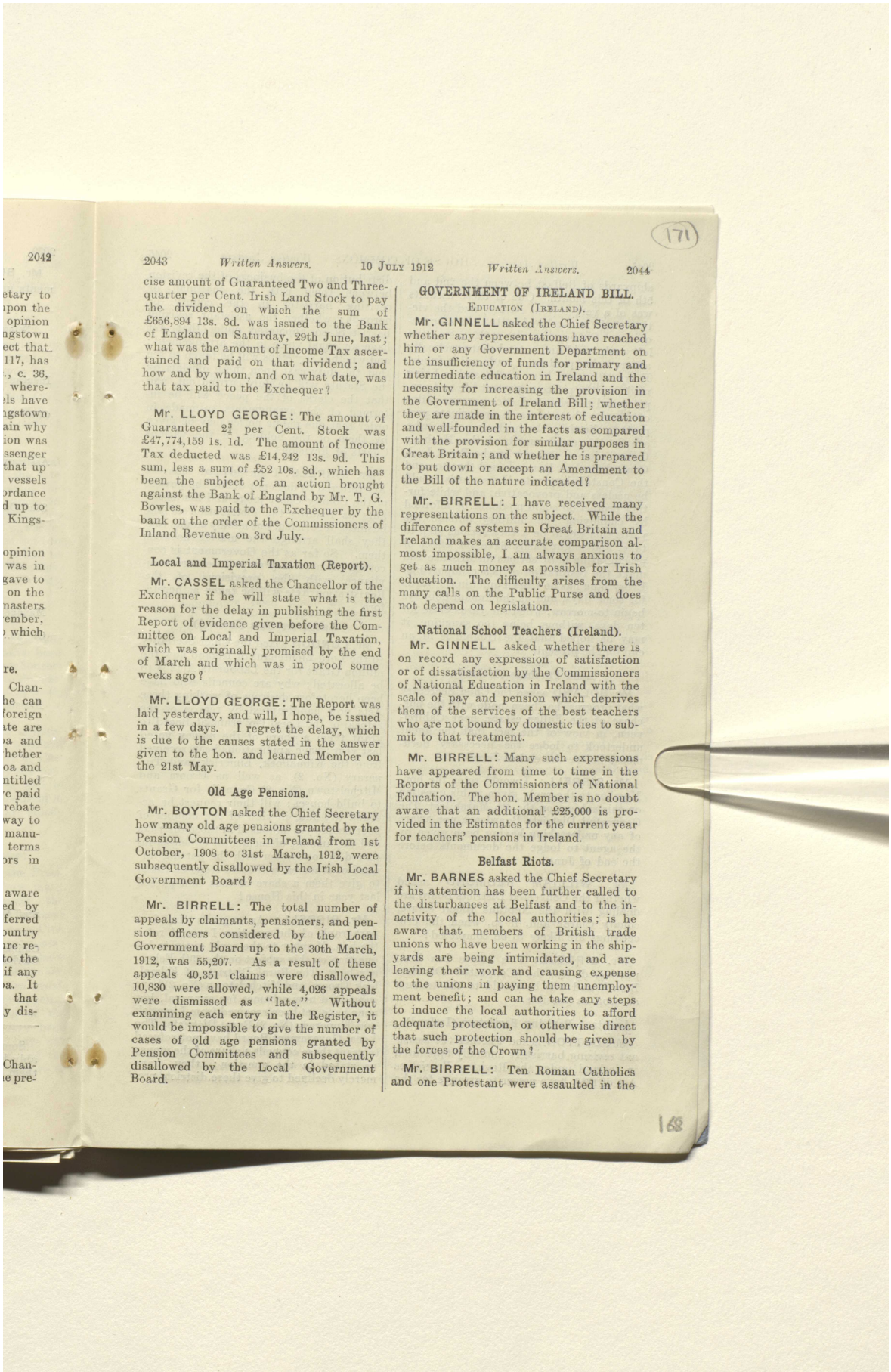

cise amount of Guaranteed Two and Three-quarter per Cent. Irish Land Stock to pay the dividend on which the sum of £656,894 13s. 8d. was issued to the Bank of England on Saturday, 29th June, last; what was the amount of Income Tax ascertained and paid on that dividend; and how and by whom, and on what date, was that tax paid to the Exchequer?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: The amount of Guaranteed 2¾ per Cent. Stock was £47,774,159 1s. 1d. The amount of Income Tax deducted was £14,242 13s. 9d. This sum, less a sum of £52 10s. 8d., which has been the subject of an action brought against the Bank of England by Mr. T. G. Bowles, was paid to the Exchequer by the bank on the order of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue on 3rd July.

Local and Imperial Taxation (Report).

Mr. CASSEL asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state what is the reason for the delay in publishing the first Report of evidence given before the Committee on Local and Imperial Taxation, which was originally promised by the end of March and which was in proof some weeks ago?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: The Report was laid yesterday, and will, I hope, be issued in a few days. I regret the delay, which is due to the causes stated in the answer given to the hon. and learned Member on the 21st May.

Old Age Pensions.

Mr. BOYTON asked the Chief Secretary how many old age pensions granted by the Pension Committees in Ireland from 1st October, 1908 to 31st March, 1912, were subsequently disallowed by the Irish Local Government Board?

Mr. BIRRELL: The total number of appeals by claimants, pensioners, and pension officers considered by the Local Government Board up to the 30th March, 1912, was 55,207. As a result of these appeals 40,351 claims were disallowed, 10,830 were allowed, while 4,026 appeals were dismissed as "late." Without examining each entry in the Register, it would be impossible to give the number of cases of old age pensions granted by Pension Committees and subsequently disallowed by the Local Government Board.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Mr. GINNELL asked the Chief Secretary whether any representations have reached him or any Government Department on the insufficiency of funds for primary and intermediate education in Ireland and the necessity for increasing the provision in the Government of Ireland Bill; whether they are made in the interest of education and well-founded in the facts as compared with the provision for similar purposes in Great Britain; and whether he is prepared to put down or accept an Amendment to the Bill of the nature indicated?

Mr. BIRRELL: I have received many representations on the subject. While the difference of systems in Great Britain and Ireland makes an accurate comparison almost impossible, I am always anxious to get as much money as possible for Irish education. The difficulty arises from the many calls on the Public Purse and does not depend on legislation.

National School Teachers (Ireland).

Mr. GINNELL asked whether there is on record any expression of satisfaction or of dissatisfaction by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland with the scale of pay and pension which deprives them of the services of the best teachers who are not bound by domestic ties to submit to that treatment.

Mr. BIRRELL: Many such expressions have appeared from time to time in the Reports of the Commissioners of National Education. The hon. Member is no doubt aware that an additional £25,000 is provided in the Estimates for the current year for teachers' pensions in Ireland.

Belfast Riots.

Mr. BARNES asked the Chief Secretary if his attention has been further called to the disturbances at Belfast and to the inactivity of the local authorities; is he aware that members of British trade unions who have been working in the shipyards are being intimidated, and are leaving their work and causing expense to the unions in paying them unemployment benefit; and can he take any steps to induce the local authorities to afford adequate protection, or otherwise direct that such protection should be given by the forces of the Crown?

Mr. BIRRELL: Ten Roman Catholics and one Protestant were assaulted in the

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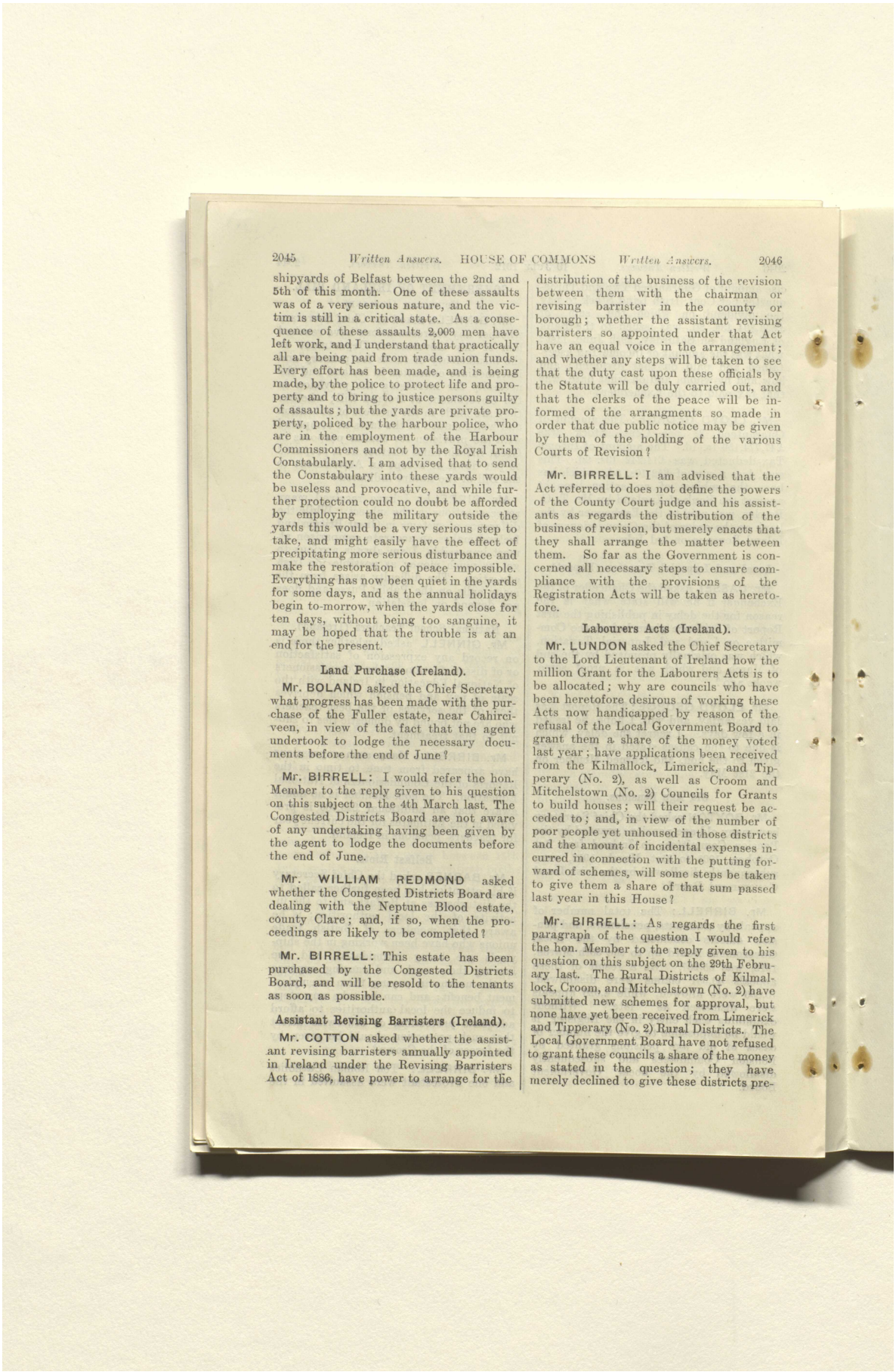

shipyards of Belfast between the 2nd and 5th of this month. One of these assaults was of a very serious nature, and the victim is still in a critical state. As a consequence of these assaults 2,009 men have left work, and I understand that practically all are being paid from trade union funds. Every effort has been made, and is being made, by the police to protect life and property and to bring to justice persons guilty of assaults; but the yards are private property, policed by the harbour police, who are in the employment of the Harbour Commissioners and not by the Royal Irish Constabularly. I am advised that to send the Constabulary into these yards would be useless and provocative, and while further protection could no doubt be afforded by employing the military outside the yards this would be a very serious step to take, and might easily have the effect of precipitating more serious disturbance and make the restoration of peace impossible. Everything has now been quiet in the yards for some days, and as the annual holidays begin to-morrow, when the yards close for ten days, without being too sanguine, it may be hoped that the trouble is at an end for the present.

Land Purchase (Ireland).

Mr. BOLAND asked the Chief Secretary what progress has been made with the purchase of the Fuller estate, near Cahirciveen, in view of the fact that the agent undertook to lodge the necessary documents before the end of June?

Mr. BIRRELL: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to his question on this subject on the 4th March last. The Congested Districts Board are not aware of any undertaking having been given by the agent to lodge the documents before the end of June.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND asked whether the Congested Districts Board are dealing with the Neptune Blood estate, county Clare; and, if so, when the proceedings are likely to be completed?

Mr. BIRRELL: This estate has been purchased by the Congested Districts Board, and will be resold to the tenants as soon as possible.

Assistant Revising Barristers (Ireland).

Mr. COTTON asked whether the assistant revising barristers annually appointed in Ireland under the Revising Barristers Act of 1886, have power to arrange for the distribution of the business of the revision between them with the chairman or revising barrister in the county or borough; whether the assistant revising barristers so appointed under that Act have an equal voice in the arrangement; and whether any steps will be taken to see that the duty cast upon these officials by the Statute will be duly carried out, and that the clerks of the peace will be informed of the arrangments so made in order that due public notice may be given by them of the holding of the various Courts of Revision?

Mr. BIRRELL: I am advised that the Act referred to does not define the powers of the County Court judge and his assistants as regards the distribution of the business of revision, but merely enacts that they shall arrange the matter between them. So far as the Government is concerned all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Registration Acts will be taken as heretofore.

Labourers Acts (Ireland).

Mr. LUNDON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how the million Grant for the Labourers Acts is to be allocated; why are councils who have been heretofore desirous of working these Acts now handicapped by reason of the refusal of the Local Government Board to grant them a share of the money voted last year; have applications been received from the Kilmallock, Limerick, and Tipperary (No. 2), as well as Croom and Mitchelstown (No. 2) Councils for Grants to build houses; will their request be acceded to; and, in view of the number of poor people yet unhoused in those districts and the amount of incidental expenses incurred in connection with the putting forward of schemes, will some steps be taken to give them a share of that sum passed last year in this House?

Mr. BIRRELL: As regards the first paragraph of the question I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to his question on this subject on the 29th February last. The Rural Districts of Kilmallock, Croom, and Mitchelstown (No. 2) have submitted new schemes for approval, but none have yet been received from Limerick and Tipperary (No. 2) Rural Districts. The Local Government Board have not refused to grant these councils a share of the money as stated in the question; they have merely declined to give these districts pre-

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cedence over other districts where the need for additional labourers' cottages is comparatively greater.

Reformatory School Expenditure.

Mr. JOHN GORDON (Londonderry) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland what was the total expenditure in the last financial year on reformatory schools conducted by Roman Catholic communities, reformatory schools conducted by Protestant committees, industrial schools conducted by Roman Catholic communities, and industrial schools conducted by Protestant committees, respectively; how much of the expenditure in each case was contributed from Parliamentary Grants and how much from the rates; what was the entire expenditure on the administration of these schools; how and by whom are the accounts of these schools audited; what means are taken to see that Grants are not diverted to purposes other than those for which they are made; and have any complaints been made as to inmates of these institutions not being sufficiently fed, clothed, and otherwise cared for?

Mr. BIRRELL: The following Return shows the number of Roman Catholic and Protestant Reformatory and Industrial Schools, the total expenditure on each class of school, the amount contributed from Parliamentary Grants and from the rates respectively, and the expenditure on administration during the year ended 31st December, 1911:—

—	Number of Schools.	Total Expenditure.	Amount Contributed from Parliamentary Grants.	Amount Contributed from the Rates.	Entire Expenditure on the Administration.
		£	£	£	£
Reformatory Schools ...	5				
Roman Catholic ...	4	13,657	7,955	3,786	6,565
Protestant	1	2,787	1,722	726	1,617
Industrial Schools ...	66				
Roman Catholic ...	61	145,714	86,745	38,249	70,852
Protestant	5	18,926	11,186	5,644	10,513

The accounts dealing with the Treasury Grants are regularly examined and checked in the office of the Inspectors of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and periodically audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General. A detailed statement of receipts and payments in the case of each school is annually furnished to the inspectors. Every reformatory and industrial school is visited by the inspectors, who see that Parliamentary Grants are expended satisfactorily on the food, clothing, and education of the children. No complaint has reached the inspectors during the year as to the children not being sufficiently fed, clothed, or otherwise cared for.

Irish Creameries and Dairy Produce Bill.

Mr. LUNDON asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) if any agreement has yet been come to between the various conflicting parties in Ireland on the contentious Clauses in the Butter Bill; and, if so, will it be carried into law during this Session of Parliament?

Mr. BIRRELL: The Irish Creameries and Dairy Produce Bill, which passed its Second Reading in the House of Lords on the 11th June, is, as regards its main features, in substantial agreement with the views expressed by the Irish Butter Trade Association, the Irish Creamery Managers' Association, and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. All sections of the trade in Ireland appear to be satisfied as to the advantages to be conferred by the Bill. Representations for its modifications have been submitted by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, who desire the amendment of some Clauses of the Bill. With a view to meeting some of the points raised by the society certain Amendments will be proposed on behalf of the Government at the Committee stage of the Bill in the House of Lords. It is hoped to take the Committee stage in the House of Lords before the end of the present month, and, if at all possible, to have the Bill in the House of Commons before the House adjourns for the Summer Recess.

Wages in Government Contracts.

Mr. COURTHOPE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in the case of complaints from trade union officials or others with reference to wages paid by Government contractors, the complainants

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are required to show that good grounds exist for their complaints before time and money is spent upon investigation; and whether, in the event of such complaints being shown to be unfounded or vexatious, any steps are taken against the complainant or to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents?

Dr. MACNAMARA: In most cases the complaints received have shown sufficient ground to justify investigation; but if the information given is, *primâ facie*, insufficient, action is deferred till further particulars are forthcoming. So far as my experience of these complaints goes, and practically all of them pass through my hands, they have been made in good faith.

Building Society Touting.

Mr. NEWTON asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that representatives of building societies are in the habit of touting for business on board of His Majesty's ships among men of the Royal Navy; whether such touting is by the permission of any person or authority and, in this event, whether access to His Majesty's ships for this purpose is permitted to representatives of all such societies or is restricted to the representatives of *bonâ fide* societies only; and whether he will consider the advisability, so long as access to His Majesty's ships is permitted to insurance agents, of taking steps to protect the men from the misrepresentations of those agents?

Dr. MACNAMARA: An Order was issued in November last directing that after an interval of six months no traders should be allowed on board His Majesty's ships. The time was subsequently extended to 31st October next, in order that tradesmen who have enjoyed the privilege in the past may have an opportunity of working off their stocks. I have no information as to the representatives of building societies canvassing for business on board ship. Insurance agents come within the general Order to which I have already referred.

BRITISH ARMY.

National Reserve.

Mr. HERBERT CRAIG asked the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any representations as to the inadequacy of the present Grant of 1s. per head in respect of the National Reserve; whether he is aware that in many cases officers of the National Reserve have had to provide money in order to meet the necessary office expenses of their battalions; and whether he is prepared to recommend such an increase in the amount of the Grant as will provide for the necessary expenses of maintenance and organisation?

Colonel SEELY: Representations have been received on this subject, but I am not yet in a position to make a statement.

Army Ordnance Store, Colchester.

Mr. WORTHINGTON-EVANS asked the Secretary of State for War whether a decision as to the increase of pay in the case of leading hands in the Army Ordnance store at Colchester which was being considered on the 5th March last has yet been given?

Colonel SEELY: Yes, Sir. On the 28th June the General Officer Commanding concerned was informed that he had power to pay leading hands at his discretion up to 20s. 6d.

Egypt (Garrison)

Sir J. D. REES asked the Secretary of State for War whether the garrison of Egypt has a strength of about 6,000 men and has, besides garrisoning Egypt, to hold Cyprus and the Soudan; and, if so, whether, in view of the acquisition of Tobruk by a Power which is a member of the Triple Alliance, of the unsettled state of the Levant, and of the strategic changes which have occurred in late years in Syria, Asia Minor, and Northern Africa, it is proposed to increase the Egyptian garrison to a strength suitable to the responsibilities of Great Britain upon the route to India and in the Mediterranean?

Colonel SEELY: The matters referred to cannot be discussed with advantage before the statement of policy to be made in the House next week.

Teachers' Pensions.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS asked the President of the Board of Education whether the terms of reference to the Departmental Committee set up to inquire into teachers' pensions will allow the case of teachers now retired on inadequate pensions to be considered; and, if not, will he consider the desirability of extending the scope of the inquiry to make this possible?

Mr. TREVELYAN: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The second part of the question does not, therefore, arise.

For Continuation of Written Answers, see Official Report, 11th July, 1912.

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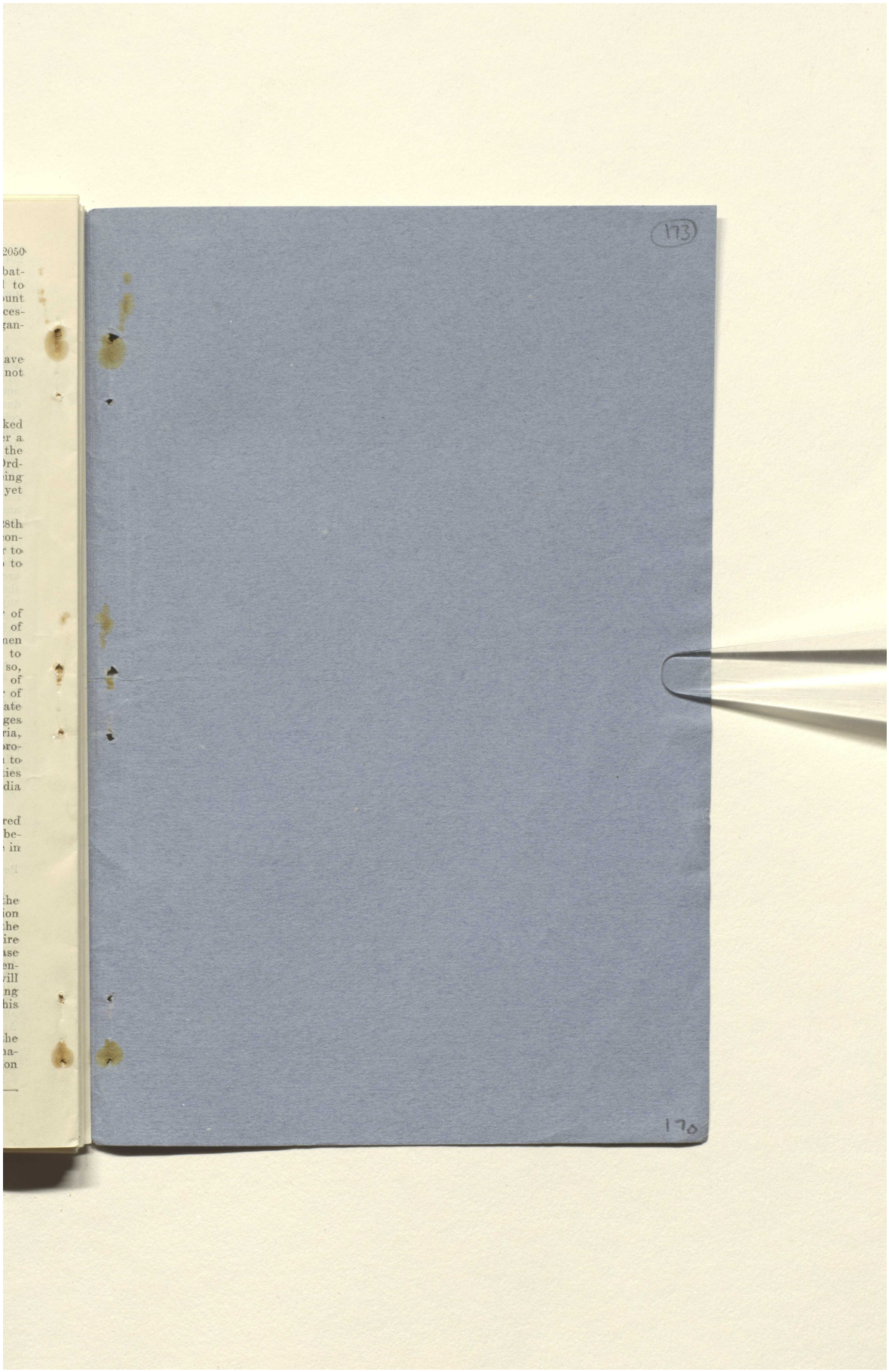

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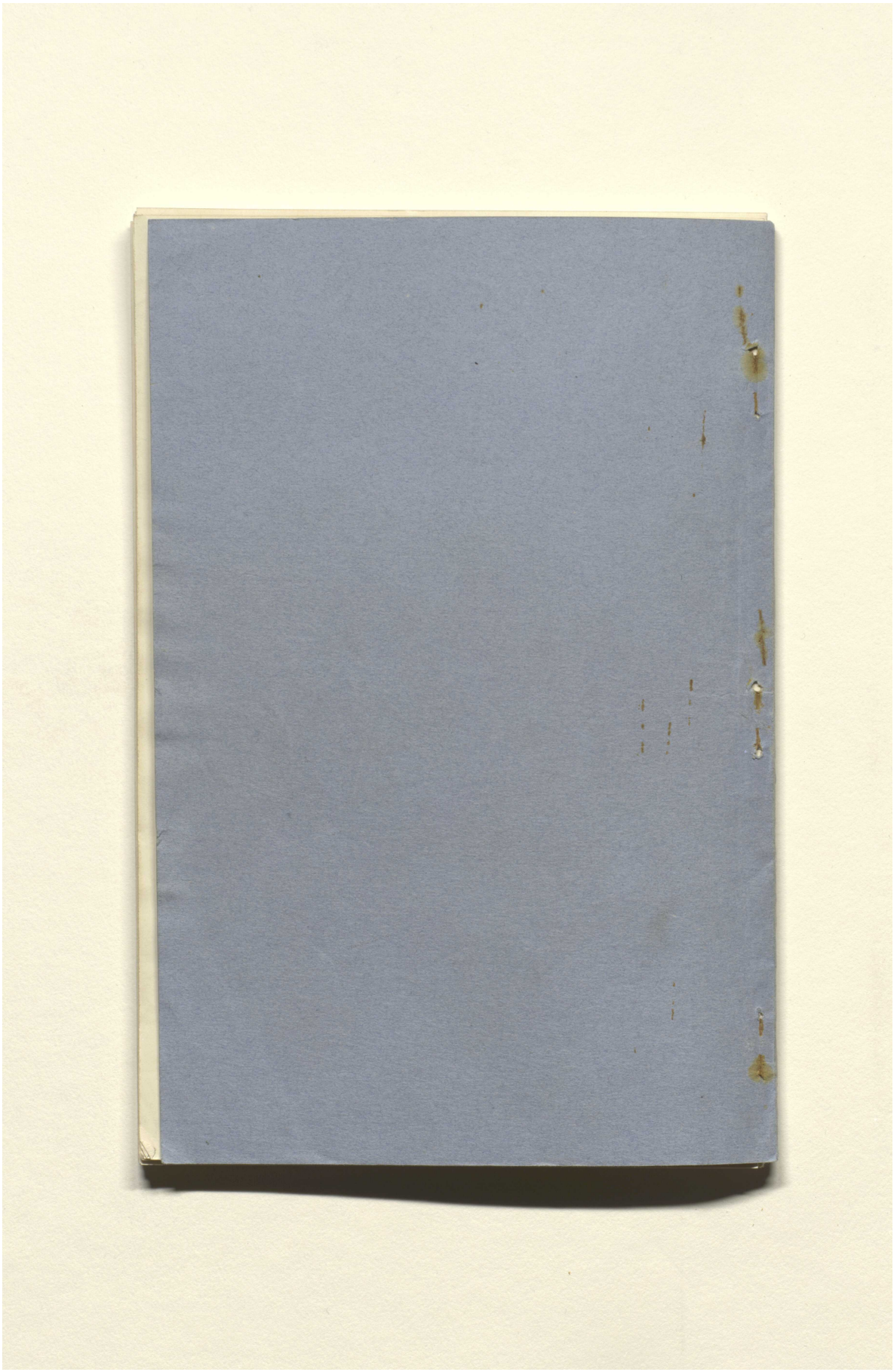

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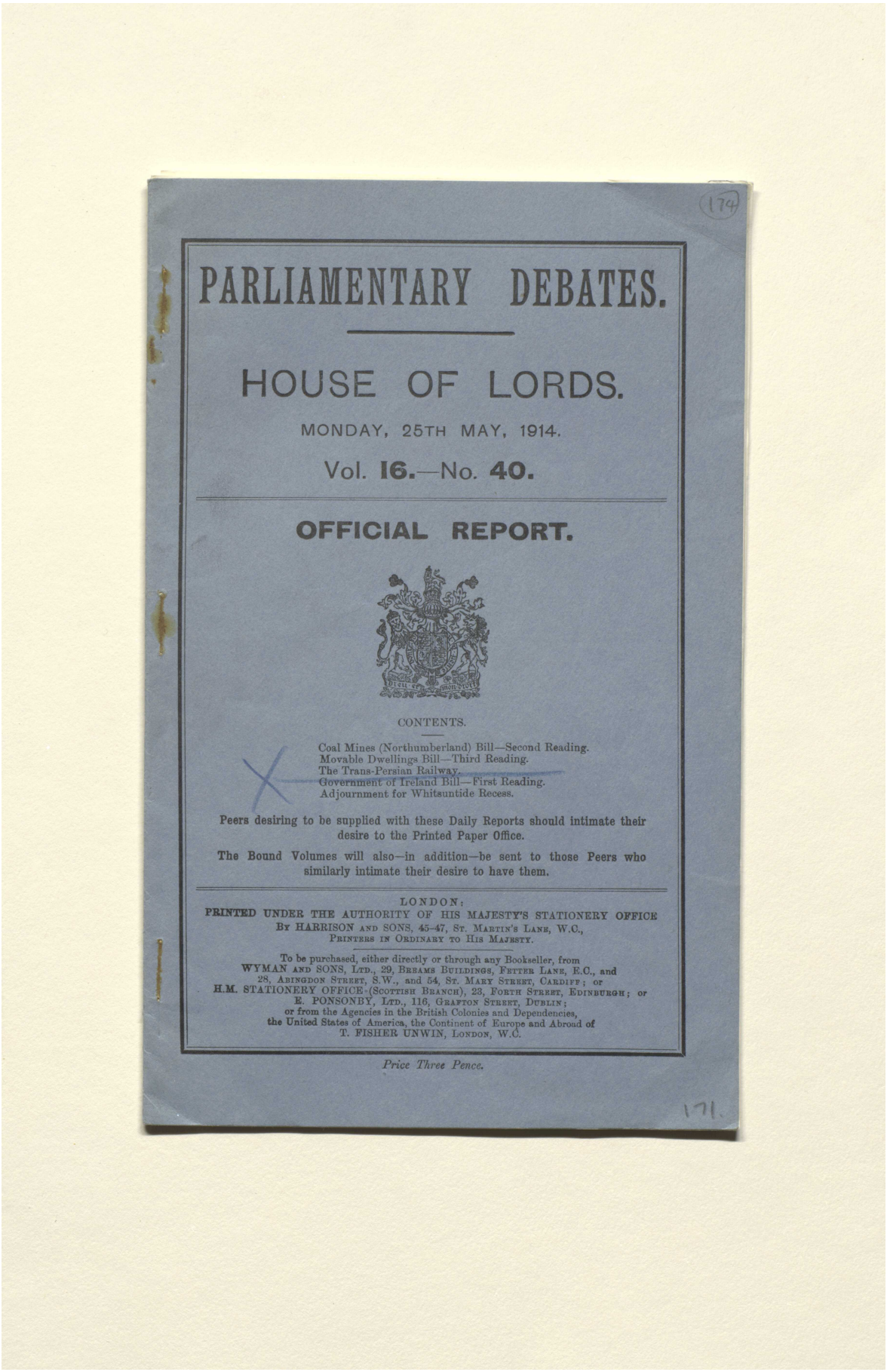

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, 25TH MAY, 1914.

Vol. 16.—No. 40.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

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Movable Dwellings Bill—Third Reading.
The Trans-Persian Railway.
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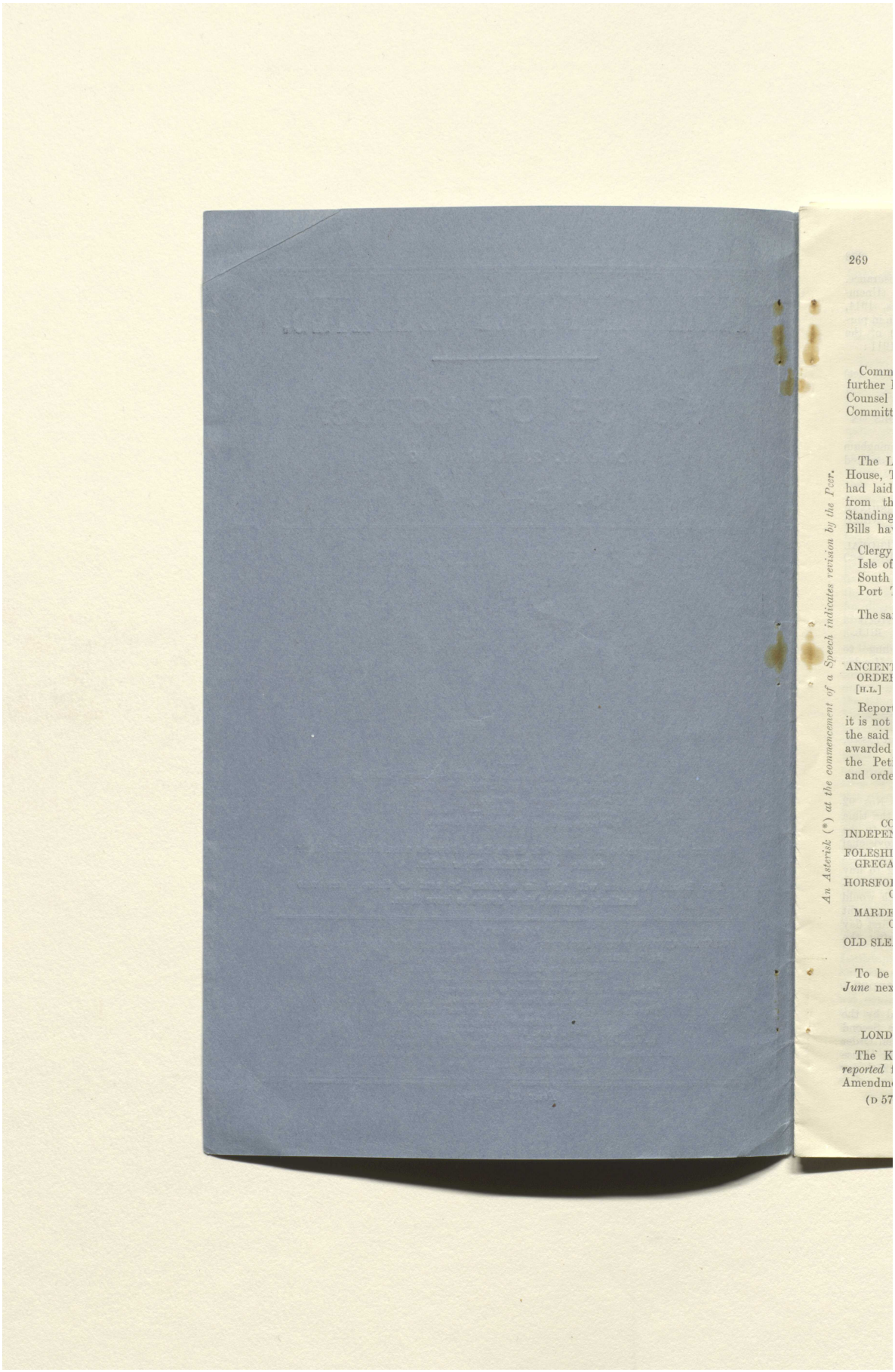

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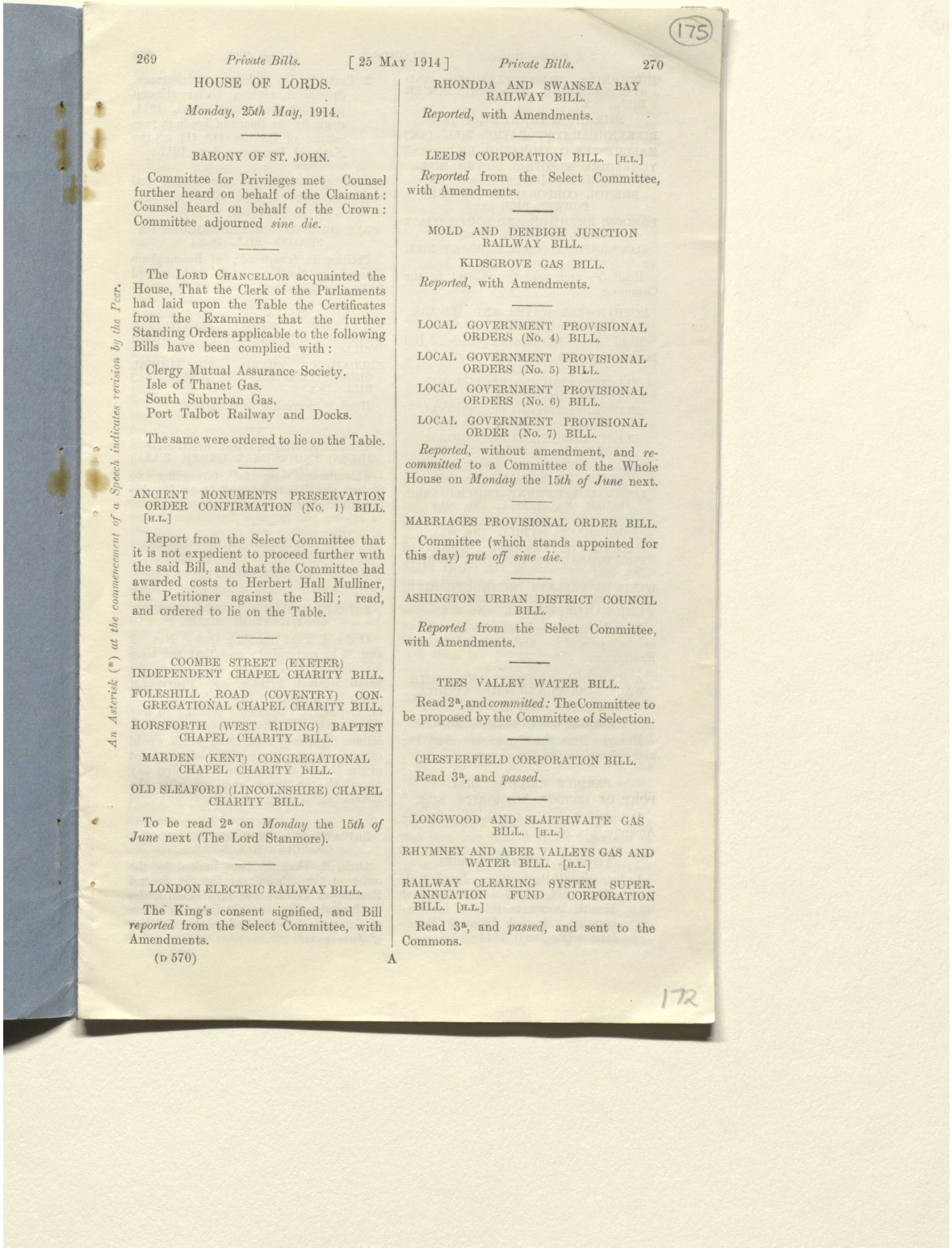

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 25th May, 1914.

BARONY OF ST. JOHN.

Committee for Privileges met Counsel further heard on behalf of the Claimant: Counsel heard on behalf of the Crown: Committee adjourned *sine die*.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:

Clergy Mutual Assurance Society.
Isle of Thanet Gas.
South Suburban Gas.
Port Talbot Railway and Docks.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS PRESERVATION ORDER CONFIRMATION (No. 1) BILL. [H.L.]

Report from the Select Committee that it is not expedient to proceed further with the said Bill, and that the Committee had awarded costs to Herbert Hall Mulliner, the Petitioner against the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

COOMBE STREET (EXETER) INDEPENDENT CHAPEL CHARITY BILL.

FOLESHILL ROAD (COVENTRY) CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL CHARITY BILL.

HORSFORTH (WEST RIDING) BAPTIST CHAPEL CHARITY BILL.

MARDEN (KENT) CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL CHARITY BILL.

OLD SLEAFORD (LINCOLNSHIRE) CHAPEL CHARITY BILL.

To be read 2ª on *Monday* the 15*th of June* next (The Lord Stanmore).

LONDON ELECTRIC RAILWAY BILL.

The King's consent signified, and Bill *reported* from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

RHONDDA AND SWANSEA BAY RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments.

LEEDS CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

MOLD AND DENBIGH JUNCTION RAILWAY BILL.

KIDSGROVE GAS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 7) BILL.

Reported, without amendment, and *re-committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* the 15*th of June* next.

MARRIAGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Committee (which stands appointed for this day) *put off sine die*.

ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL.

Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

TEES VALLEY WATER BILL.

Read 2ª, and *committed*: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

CHESTERFIELD CORPORATION BILL.

Read 3ª, and *passed*.

LONGWOOD AND SLAITHWAITE GAS BILL. [H.L.]

RHYMNEY AND ABER VALLEYS GAS AND WATER BILL. [H.L.]

RAILWAY CLEARING SYSTEM SUPERANNUATION FUND CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

Read 3ª, and *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Peer.

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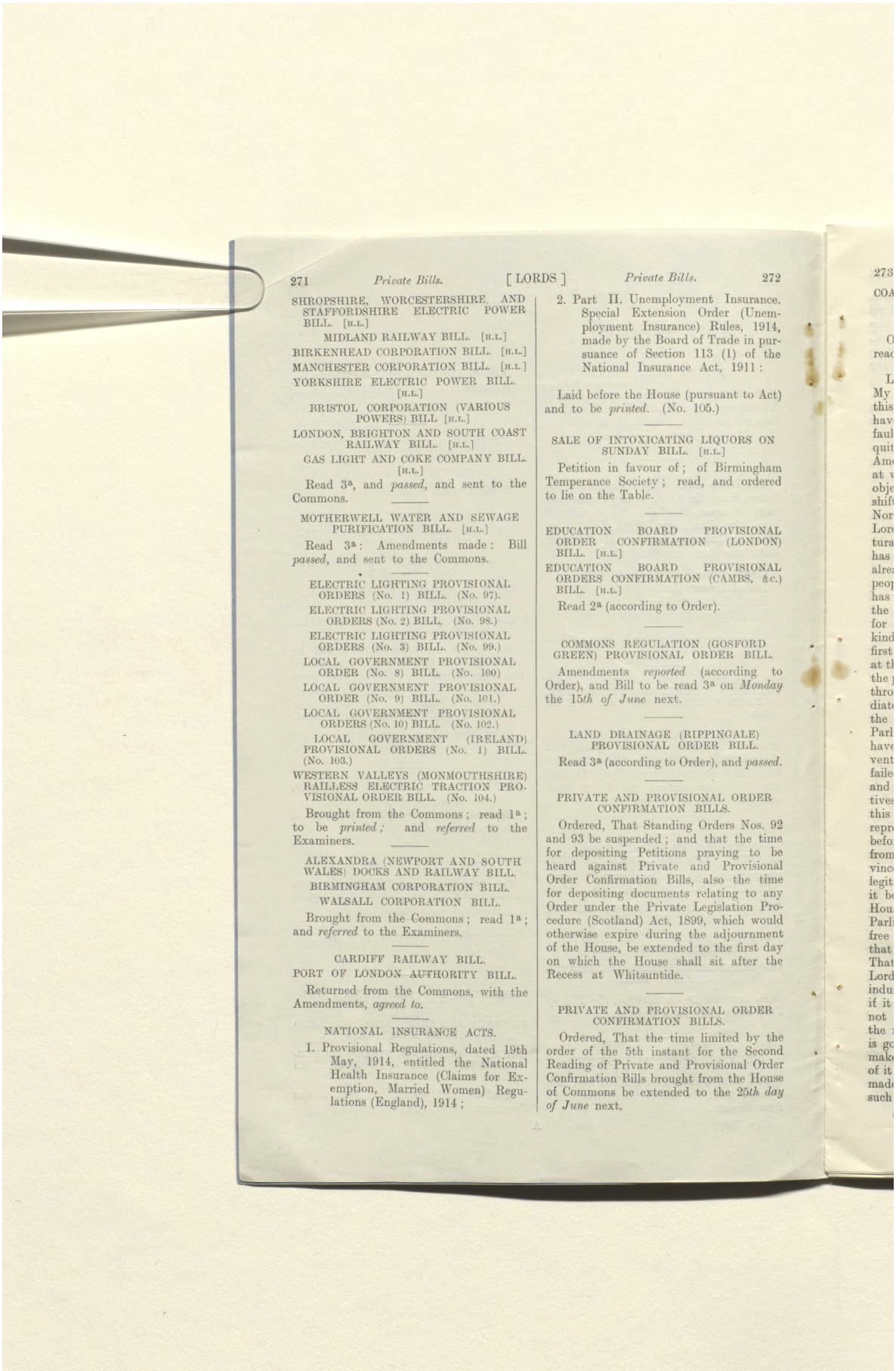

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SHROPSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE, AND STAFFORDSHIRE ELECTRIC POWER BILL. [H.L.]

MIDLAND RAILWAY BILL. [H.L.]

BIRKENHEAD CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

MANCHESTER CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

YORKSHIRE ELECTRIC POWER BILL. [H.L.]

BRISTOL CORPORATION (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL [H.L.]

LONDON, BRIGHTON AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY BILL. [H.L.]

GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY BILL. [H.L.]

Read 3ª, and *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

MOTHERWELL WATER AND SEWAGE PURIFICATION BILL. [H.L.]

Read 3ª: Amendments made: Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL. (No. 97).

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL. (No. 98.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL. (No. 99.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 8) BILL. (No. 100)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 9) BILL. (No. 101.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL. (No. 102.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL. (No. 103.)

WESTERN VALLEYS (MONMOUTHSHIRE) RAILLESS ELECTRIC TRACTION PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL. (No. 104.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be *printed*; and *referred* to the Examiners.

ALEXANDRA (NEWPORT AND SOUTH WALES) DOCKS AND RAILWAY BILL.

BIRMINGHAM CORPORATION BILL.

WALSALL CORPORATION BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and *referred* to the Examiners.

CARDIFF RAILWAY BILL.

PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY BILL.

Returned from the Commons, with the Amendments, *agreed to*.

NATIONAL INSURANCE ACTS.

1. Provisional Regulations, dated 19th May, 1914, entitled the National Health Insurance (Claims for Exemption, Married Women) Regulations (England), 1914;

2. Part II. Unemployment Insurance. Special Extension Order (Unemployment Insurance) Rules, 1914, made by the Board of Trade in pursuance of Section 113 (1) of the National Insurance Act, 1911:

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and to be *printed*. (No. 105.)

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL. [H.L.]

Petition in favour of; of Birmingham Temperance Society; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

EDUCATION BOARD PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (LONDON) BILL. [H.L.]

EDUCATION BOARD PROVISIONAL ORDERS CONFIRMATION (CAMBS, &c.) BILL. [H.L.]

Read 2ª (according to Order).

COMMONS REGULATION (GOSFORD GREEN) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª on *Monday* the 15*th of June* next.

LAND DRAINAGE (RIPPINGALE) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read 3ª (according to Order), and *passed*.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing Petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess at Whitsuntide.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That the time limited by the order of the 5th instant for the Second Reading of Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills brought from the House of Commons be extended to the 25*th day of June* next.

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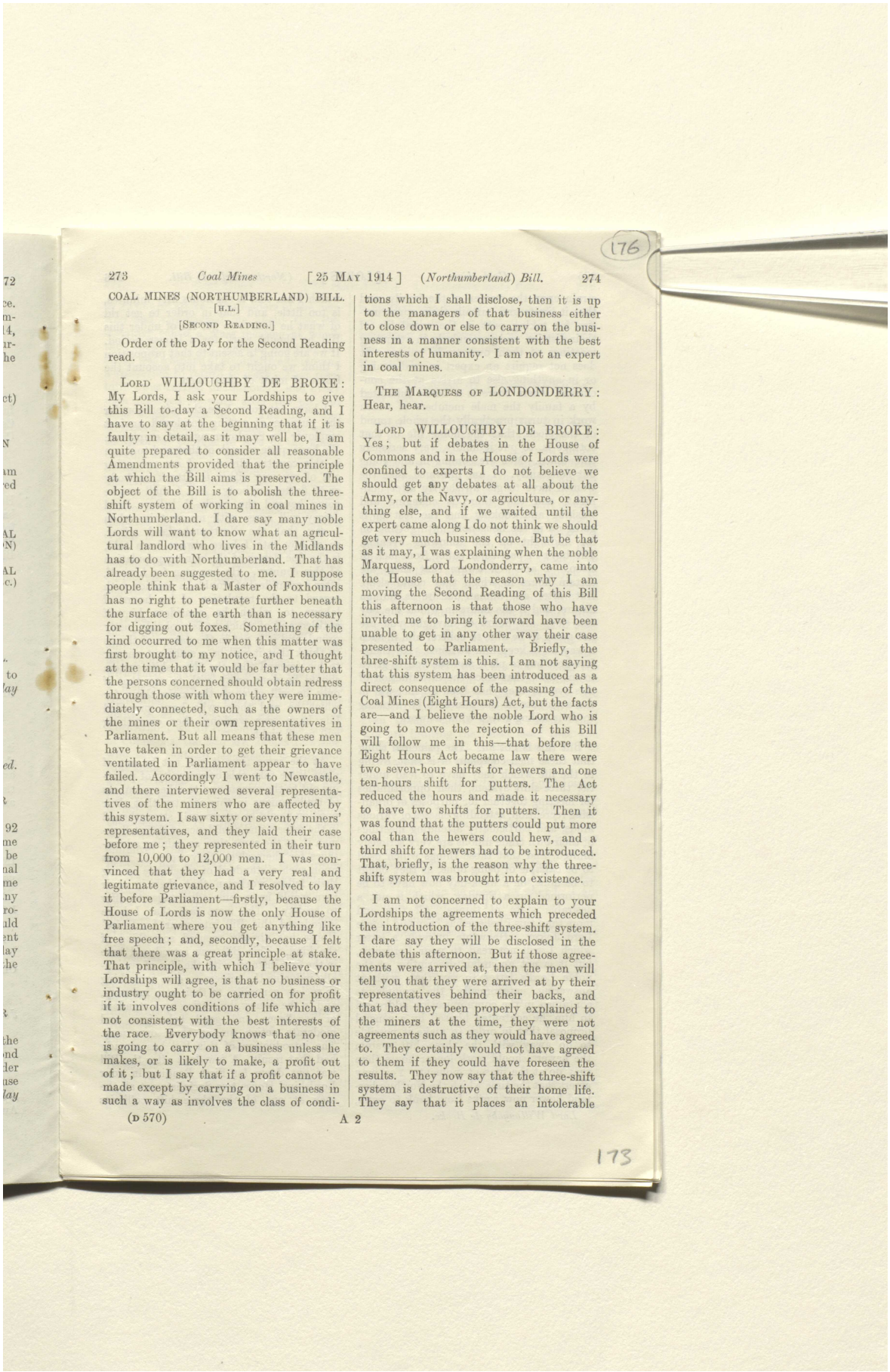

COAL MINES (NORTHUMBERLAND) BILL.
[H.L.]
[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: My Lords, I ask your Lordships to give this Bill to-day a Second Reading, and I have to say at the beginning that if it is faulty in detail, as it may well be, I am quite prepared to consider all reasonable Amendments provided that the principle at which the Bill aims is preserved. The object of the Bill is to abolish the three-shift system of working in coal mines in Northumberland. I dare say many noble Lords will want to know what an agricultural landlord who lives in the Midlands has to do with Northumberland. That has already been suggested to me. I suppose people think that a Master of Foxhounds has no right to penetrate further beneath the surface of the earth than is necessary for digging out foxes. Something of the kind occurred to me when this matter was first brought to my notice, and I thought at the time that it would be far better that the persons concerned should obtain redress through those with whom they were immediately connected, such as the owners of the mines or their own representatives in Parliament. But all means that these men have taken in order to get their grievance ventilated in Parliament appear to have failed. Accordingly I went to Newcastle, and there interviewed several representatives of the miners who are affected by this system. I saw sixty or seventy miners' representatives, and they laid their case before me; they represented in their turn from 10,000 to 12,000 men. I was convinced that they had a very real and legitimate grievance, and I resolved to lay it before Parliament—firstly, because the House of Lords is now the only House of Parliament where you get anything like free speech; and, secondly, because I felt that there was a great principle at stake. That principle, with which I believe your Lordships will agree, is that no business or industry ought to be carried on for profit if it involves conditions of life which are not consistent with the best interests of the race. Everybody knows that no one is going to carry on a business unless he makes, or is likely to make, a profit out of it; but I say that if a profit cannot be made except by carrying on a business in such a way as involves the class of conditions which I shall disclose, then it is up to the managers of that business either to close down or else to carry on the business in a manner consistent with the best interests of humanity. I am not an expert in coal mines.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: Hear, hear.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: Yes; but if debates in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords were confined to experts I do not believe we should get any debates at all about the Army, or the Navy, or agriculture, or anything else, and if we waited until the expert came along I do not think we should get very much business done. But be that as it may, I was explaining when the noble Marquess, Lord Londonderry, came into the House that the reason why I am moving the Second Reading of this Bill this afternoon is that those who have invited me to bring it forward have been unable to get in any other way their case presented to Parliament. Briefly, the three-shift system is this. I am not saying that this system has been introduced as a direct consequence of the passing of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Act, but the facts are—and I believe the noble Lord who is going to move the rejection of this Bill will follow me in this—that before the Eight Hours Act became law there were two seven-hour shifts for hewers and one ten-hours shift for putters. The Act reduced the hours and made it necessary to have two shifts for putters. Then it was found that the putters could put more coal than the hewers could hew, and a third shift for hewers had to be introduced. That, briefly, is the reason why the three-shift system was brought into existence.

I am not concerned to explain to your Lordships the agreements which preceded the introduction of the three-shift system. I dare say they will be disclosed in the debate this afternoon. But if those agreements were arrived at, then the men will tell you that they were arrived at by their representatives behind their backs, and that had they been properly explained to the miners at the time, they were not agreements such as they would have agreed to. They certainly would not have agreed to them if they could have foreseen the results. They now say that the three-shift system is destructive of their home life. They say that it places an intolerable

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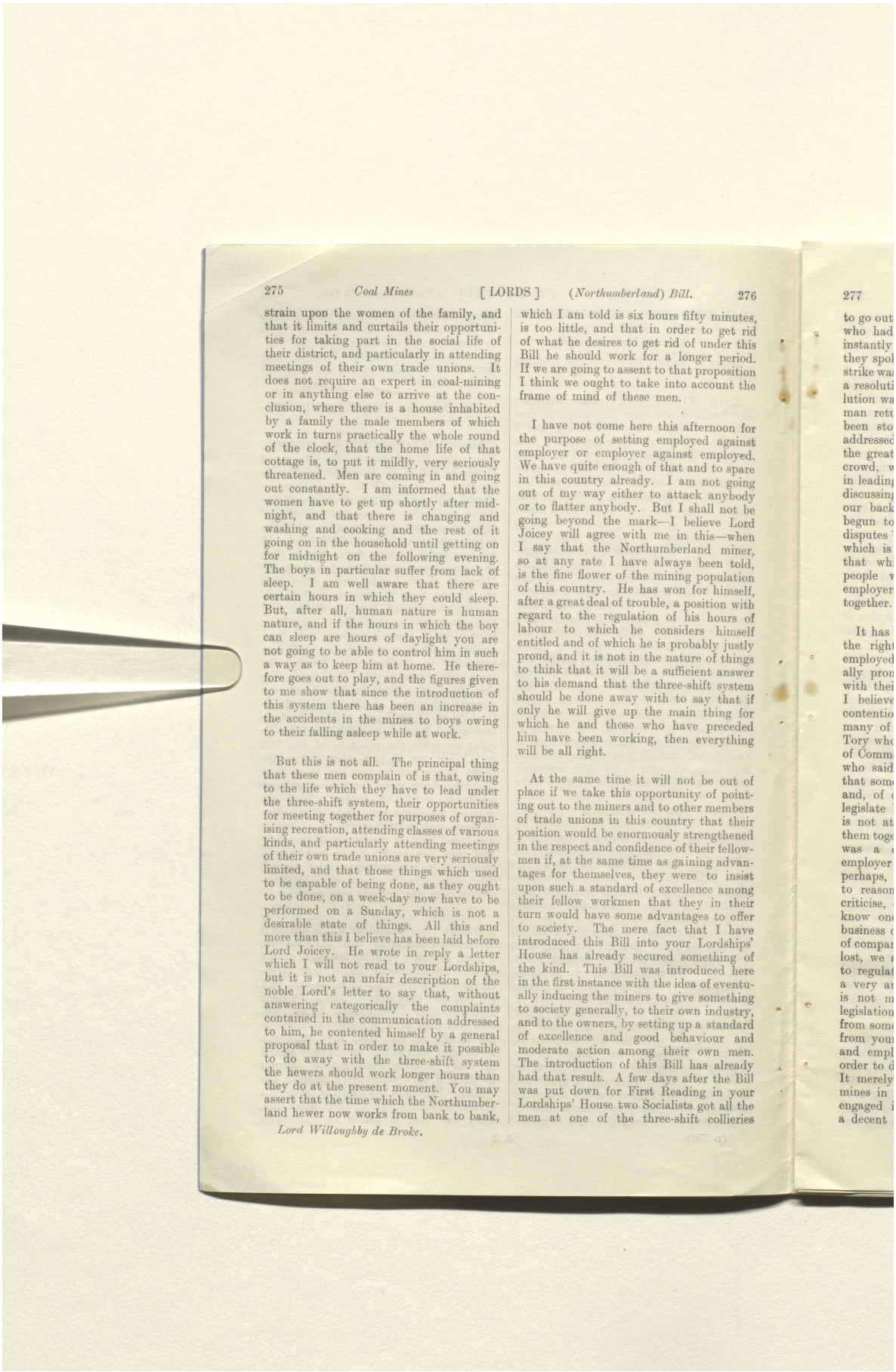

strain upon the women of the family, and that it limits and curtails their opportunities for taking part in the social life of their district, and particularly in attending meetings of their own trade unions. It does not require an expert in coal-mining or in anything else to arrive at the conclusion, where there is a house inhabited by a family the male members of which work in turns practically the whole round of the clock, that the home life of that cottage is, to put it mildly, very seriously threatened. Men are coming in and going out constantly. I am informed that the women have to get up shortly after midnight, and that there is changing and washing and cooking and the rest of it going on in the household until getting on for midnight on the following evening. The boys in particular suffer from lack of sleep. I am well aware that there are certain hours in which they could sleep. But, after all, human nature is human nature, and if the hours in which the boy can sleep are hours of daylight you are not going to be able to control him in such a way as to keep him at home. He therefore goes out to play, and the figures given to me show that since the introduction of this system there has been an increase in the accidents in the mines to boys owing to their falling asleep while at work.

But this is not all. The principal thing that these men complain of is that, owing to the life which they have to lead under the three-shift system, their opportunities for meeting together for purposes of organising recreation, attending classes of various kinds, and particularly attending meetings of their own trade unions are very seriously limited, and that those things which used to be capable of being done, as they ought to be done, on a week-day now have to be performed on a Sunday, which is not a desirable state of things. All this and more than this I believe has been laid before Lord Joicey. He wrote in reply a letter which I will not read to your Lordships, but it is not an unfair description of the noble Lord's letter to say that, without answering categorically the complaints contained in the communication addressed to him, he contented himself by a general proposal that in order to make it possible to do away with the three-shift system the hewers should work longer hours than they do at the present moment. You may assert that the time which the Northumberland hewer now works from bank to bank, which I am told is six hours fifty minutes, is too little, and that in order to get rid of what he desires to get rid of under this Bill he should work for a longer period. If we are going to assent to that proposition I think we ought to take into account the frame of mind of these men.

I have not come here this afternoon for the purpose of setting employed against employer or employer against employed. We have quite enough of that and to spare in this country already. I am not going out of my way either to attack anybody or to flatter anybody. But I shall not be going beyond the mark—I believe Lord Joicey will agree with me in this—when I say that the Northumberland miner, so at any rate I have always been told, is the fine flower of the mining population of this country. He has won for himself, after a great deal of trouble, a position with regard to the regulation of his hours of labour to which he considers himself entitled and of which he is probably justly proud, and it is not in the nature of things to think that it will be a sufficient answer to his demand that the three-shift system should be done away with to say that if only he will give up the main thing for which he and those who have preceded him have been working, then everything will be all right.

At the same time it will not be out of place if we take this opportunity of pointing out to the miners and to other members of trade unions in this country that their position would be enormously strengthened in the respect and confidence of their fellowmen if, at the same time as gaining advantages for themselves, they were to insist upon such a standard of excellence among their fellow workmen that they in their turn would have some advantages to offer to society. The mere fact that I have introduced this Bill into your Lordships' House has already secured something of the kind. This Bill was introduced here in the first instance with the idea of eventually inducing the miners to give something to society generally, to their own industry, and to the owners, by setting up a standard of excellence and good behaviour and moderate action among their own men. The introduction of this Bill has already had that result. A few days after the Bill was put down for First Reading in your Lordships' House two Socialists got all the men at one of the three-shift collieries

Lord Willoughby de Broke.

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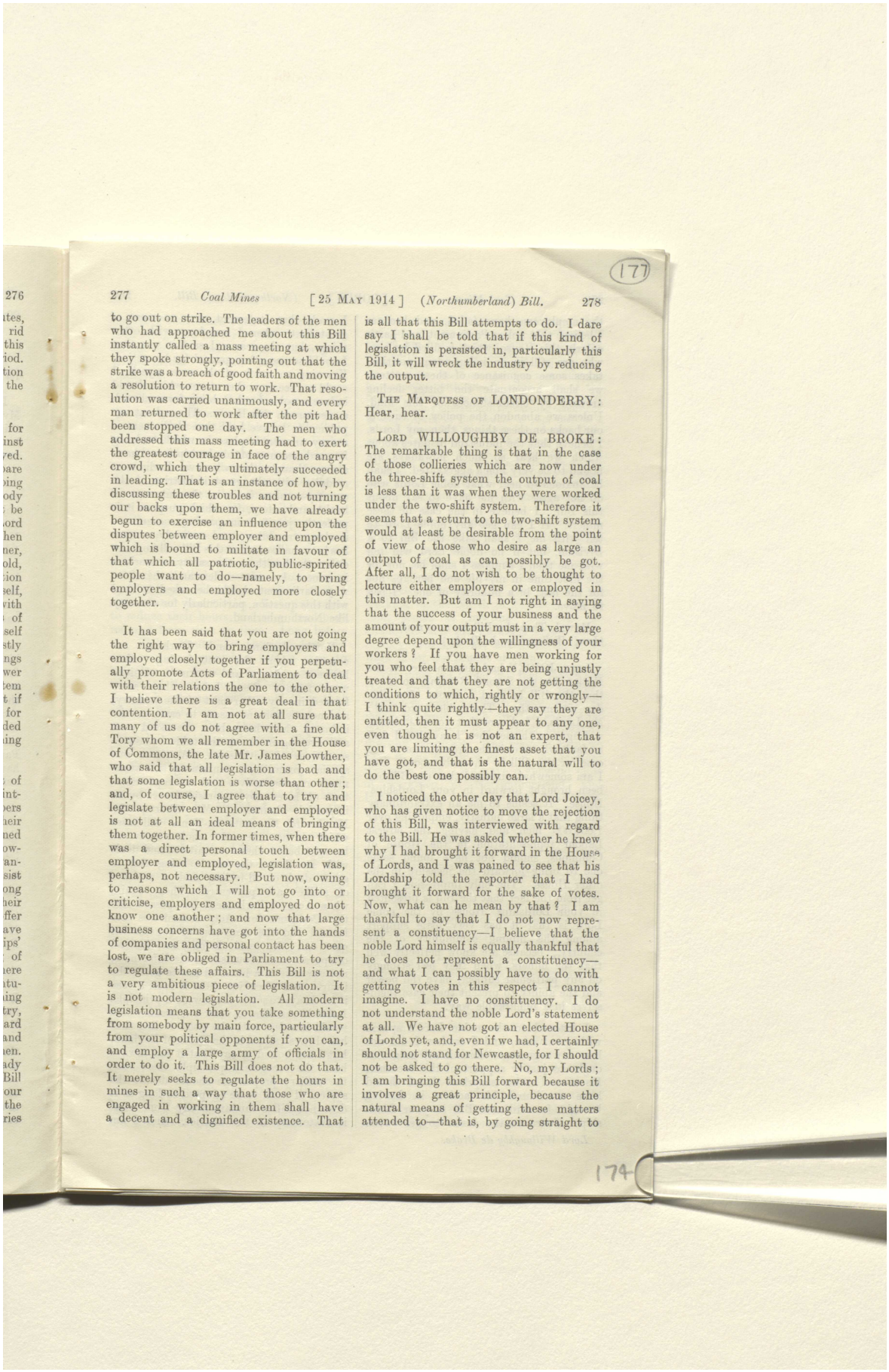

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to go out on strike. The leaders of the men who had approached me about this Bill instantly called a mass meeting at which they spoke strongly, pointing out that the strike was a breach of good faith and moving a resolution to return to work. That resolution was carried unanimously, and every man returned to work after the pit had been stopped one day. The men who addressed this mass meeting had to exert the greatest courage in face of the angry crowd, which they ultimately succeeded in leading. That is an instance of how, by discussing these troubles and not turning our backs upon them, we have already begun to exercise an influence upon the disputes between employer and employed which is bound to militate in favour of that which all patriotic, public-spirited people want to do—namely, to bring employers and employed more closely together.

It has been said that you are not going the right way to bring employers and employed closely together if you perpetually promote Acts of Parliament to deal with their relations the one to the other. I believe there is a great deal in that contention. I am not at all sure that many of us do not agree with a fine old Tory whom we all remember in the House of Commons, the late Mr. James Lowther, who said that all legislation is bad and that some legislation is worse than other; and, of course, I agree that to try and legislate between employer and employed is not at all an ideal means of bringing them together. In former times, when there was a direct personal touch between employer and employed, legislation was, perhaps, not necessary. But now, owing to reasons which I will not go into or criticise, employers and employed do not know one another; and now that large business concerns have got into the hands of companies and personal contact has been lost, we are obliged in Parliament to try to regulate these affairs. This Bill is not a very ambitious piece of legislation. It is not modern legislation. All modern legislation means that you take something from somebody by main force, particularly from your political opponents if you can, and employ a large army of officials in order to do it. This Bill does not do that. It merely seeks to regulate the hours in mines in such a way that those who are engaged in working in them shall have a decent and a dignified existence. That is all that this Bill attempts to do. I dare say I shall be told that if this kind of legislation is persisted in, particularly this Bill, it will wreck the industry by reducing the output.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: Hear, hear.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: The remarkable thing is that in the case of those collieries which are now under the three-shift system the output of coal is less than it was when they were worked under the two-shift system. Therefore it seems that a return to the two-shift system would at least be desirable from the point of view of those who desire as large an output of coal as can possibly be got. After all, I do not wish to be thought to lecture either employers or employed in this matter. But am I not right in saying that the success of your business and the amount of your output must in a very large degree depend upon the willingness of your workers? If you have men working for you who feel that they are being unjustly treated and that they are not getting the conditions to which, rightly or wrongly—I think quite rightly—they say they are entitled, then it must appear to any one, even though he is not an expert, that you are limiting the finest asset that you have got, and that is the natural will to do the best one possibly can.

I noticed the other day that Lord Joicey, who has given notice to move the rejection of this Bill, was interviewed with regard to the Bill. He was asked whether he knew why I had brought it forward in the House of Lords, and I was pained to see that his Lordship told the reporter that I had brought it forward for the sake of votes. Now, what can he mean by that? I am thankful to say that I do not now represent a constituency—I believe that the noble Lord himself is equally thankful that he does not represent a constituency—and what I can possibly have to do with getting votes in this respect I cannot imagine. I have no constituency. I do not understand the noble Lord's statement at all. We have not got an elected House of Lords yet, and, even if we had, I certainly should not stand for Newcastle, for I should not be asked to go there. No, my Lords; I am bringing this Bill forward because it involves a great principle, because the natural means of getting these matters attended to—that is, by going straight to

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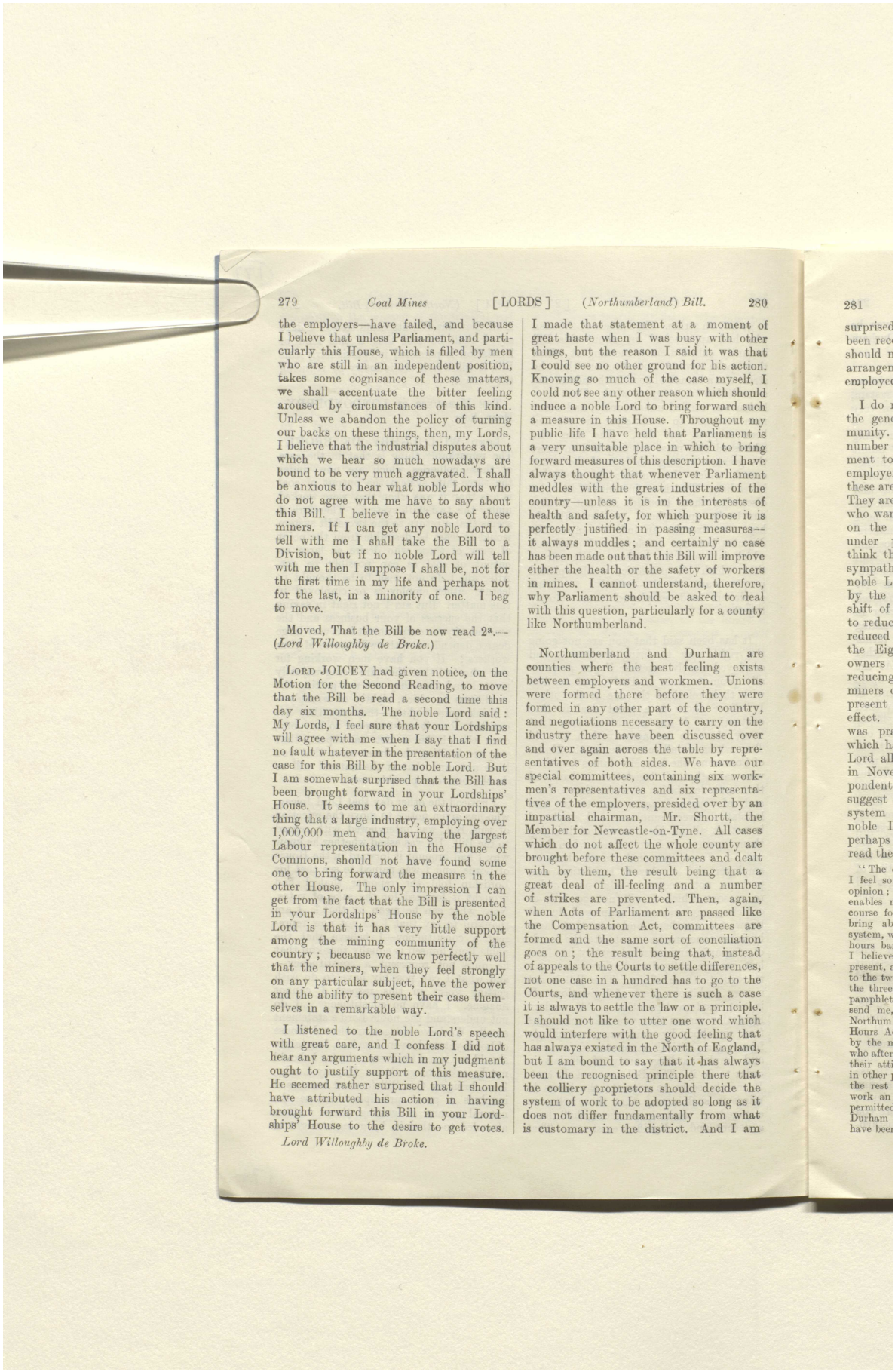

the employers—have failed, and because I believe that unless Parliament, and particularly this House, which is filled by men who are still in an independent position, takes some cognisance of these matters, we shall accentuate the bitter feeling aroused by circumstances of this kind. Unless we abandon the policy of turning our backs on these things, then, my Lords, I believe that the industrial disputes about which we hear so much nowadays are bound to be very much aggravated. I shall be anxious to hear what noble Lords who do not agree with me have to say about this Bill. I believe in the case of these miners. If I can get any noble Lord to tell with me I shall take the Bill to a Division, but if no noble Lord will tell with me then I suppose I shall be, not for the first time in my life and perhaps not for the last, in a minority of one. I beg to move.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Willoughby de Broke.*)

LORD JOICEY had given notice, on the Motion for the Second Reading, to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. The noble Lord said: My Lords, I feel sure that your Lordships will agree with me when I say that I find no fault whatever in the presentation of the case for this Bill by the noble Lord. But I am somewhat surprised that the Bill has been brought forward in your Lordships' House. It seems to me an extraordinary thing that a large industry, employing over 1,000,000 men and having the largest Labour representation in the House of Commons, should not have found some one to bring forward the measure in the other House. The only impression I can get from the fact that the Bill is presented in your Lordships' House by the noble Lord is that it has very little support among the mining community of the country; because we know perfectly well that the miners, when they feel strongly on any particular subject, have the power and the ability to present their case themselves in a remarkable way.

I listened to the noble Lord's speech with great care, and I confess I did not hear any arguments which in my judgment ought to justify support of this measure. He seemed rather surprised that I should have attributed his action in having brought forward this Bill in your Lordships' House to the desire to get votes. I made that statement at a moment of great haste when I was busy with other things, but the reason I said it was that I could see no other ground for his action. Knowing so much of the case myself, I could not see any other reason which should induce a noble Lord to bring forward such a measure in this House. Throughout my public life I have held that Parliament is a very unsuitable place in which to bring forward measures of this description. I have always thought that whenever Parliament meddles with the great industries of the country—unless it is in the interests of health and safety, for which purpose it is perfectly justified in passing measures—it always muddles; and certainly no case has been made out that this Bill will improve either the health or the safety of workers in mines. I cannot understand, therefore, why Parliament should be asked to deal with this question, particularly for a county like Northumberland.

Northumberland and Durham are counties where the best feeling exists between employers and workmen. Unions were formed there before they were formed in any other part of the country, and negotiations necessary to carry on the industry there have been discussed over and over again across the table by representatives of both sides. We have our special committees, containing six workmen's representatives and six representatives of the employers, presided over by an impartial chairman, Mr. Shortt, the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne. All cases which do not affect the whole county are brought before these committees and dealt with by them, the result being that a great deal of ill-feeling and a number of strikes are prevented. Then, again, when Acts of Parliament are passed like the Compensation Act, committees are formed and the same sort of conciliation goes on; the result being that, instead of appeals to the Courts to settle differences, not one case in a hundred has to go to the Courts, and whenever there is such a case it is always to settle the law or a principle. I should not like to utter one word which would interfere with the good feeling that has always existed in the North of England, but I am bound to say that it has always been the recognised principle there that the colliery proprietors should decide the system of work to be adopted so long as it does not differ fundamentally from what is customary in the district. And I am

Lord Willoughby de Broke.

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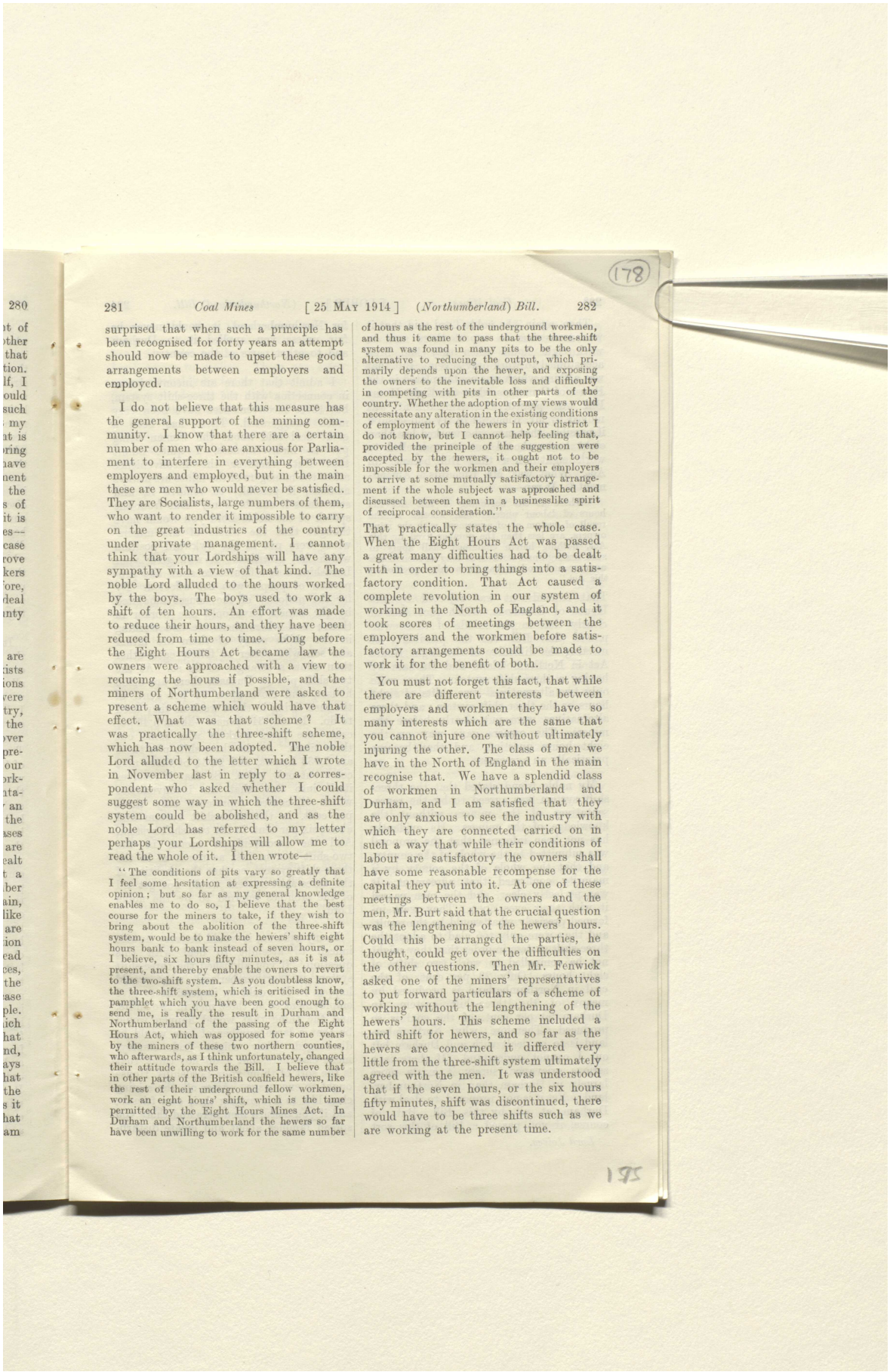

surprised that when such a principle has been recognised for forty years an attempt should now be made to upset these good arrangements between employers and employed.

I do not believe that this measure has the general support of the mining community. I know that there are a certain number of men who are anxious for Parliament to interfere in everything between employers and employed, but in the main these are men who would never be satisfied. They are Socialists, large numbers of them, who want to render it impossible to carry on the great industries of the country under private management. I cannot think that your Lordships will have any sympathy with a view of that kind. The noble Lord alluded to the hours worked by the boys. The boys used to work a shift of ten hours. An effort was made to reduce their hours, and they have been reduced from time to time. Long before the Eight Hours Act became law the owners were approached with a view to reducing the hours if possible, and the miners of Northumberland were asked to present a scheme which would have that effect. What was that scheme? It was practically the three-shift scheme, which has now been adopted. The noble Lord alluded to the letter which I wrote in November last in reply to a correspondent who asked whether I could suggest some way in which the three-shift system could be abolished, and as the noble Lord has referred to my letter perhaps your Lordships will allow me to read the whole of it. I then wrote—

"The conditions of pits vary so greatly that I feel some hesitation at expressing a definite opinion; but so far as my general knowledge enables me to do so, I believe that the best course for the miners to take, if they wish to bring about the abolition of the three-shift system, would be to make the hewers' shift eight hours bank to bank instead of seven hours, or I believe, six hours fifty minutes, as it is at present, and thereby enable the owners to revert to the two-shift system. As you doubtless know, the three-shift system, which is criticised in the pamphlet which you have been good enough to send me, is really the result in Durham and Northumberland of the passing of the Eight Hours Act, which was opposed for some years by the miners of these two northern counties, who afterwards, as I think unfortunately, changed their attitude towards the Bill. I believe that in other parts of the British coalfield hewers, like the rest of their underground fellow workmen, work an eight hours' shift, which is the time permitted by the Eight Hours Mines Act. In Durham and Northumberland the hewers so far have been unwilling to work for the same number of hours as the rest of the underground workmen, and thus it came to pass that the three-shift system was found in many pits to be the only alternative to reducing the output, which primarily depends upon the hewer, and exposing the owners to the inevitable loss and difficulty in competing with pits in other parts of the country. Whether the adoption of my views would necessitate any alteration in the existing conditions of employment of the hewers in your district I do not know, but I cannot help feeling that, provided the principle of the suggestion were accepted by the hewers, it ought not to be impossible for the workmen and their employers to arrive at some mutually satisfactory arrangement if the whole subject was approached and discussed between them in a businesslike spirit of reciprocal consideration."

That practically states the whole case. When the Eight Hours Act was passed a great many difficulties had to be dealt with in order to bring things into a satisfactory condition. That Act caused a complete revolution in our system of working in the North of England, and it took scores of meetings between the employers and the workmen before satisfactory arrangements could be made to work it for the benefit of both.

You must not forget this fact, that while there are different interests between employers and workmen they have so many interests which are the same that you cannot injure one without ultimately injuring the other. The class of men we have in the North of England in the main recognise that. We have a splendid class of workmen in Northumberland and Durham, and I am satisfied that they are only anxious to see the industry with which they are connected carried on in such a way that while their conditions of labour are satisfactory the owners shall have some reasonable recompense for the capital they put into it. At one of these meetings between the owners and the men, Mr. Burt said that the crucial question was the lengthening of the hewers' hours. Could this be arranged the parties, he thought, could get over the difficulties on the other questions. Then Mr. Fenwick asked one of the miners' representatives to put forward particulars of a scheme of working without the lengthening of the hewers' hours. This scheme included a third shift for hewers, and so far as the hewers are concerned it differed very little from the three-shift system ultimately agreed with the men. It was understood that if the seven hours, or the six hours fifty minutes, shift was discontinued, there would have to be three shifts such as we are working at the present time.

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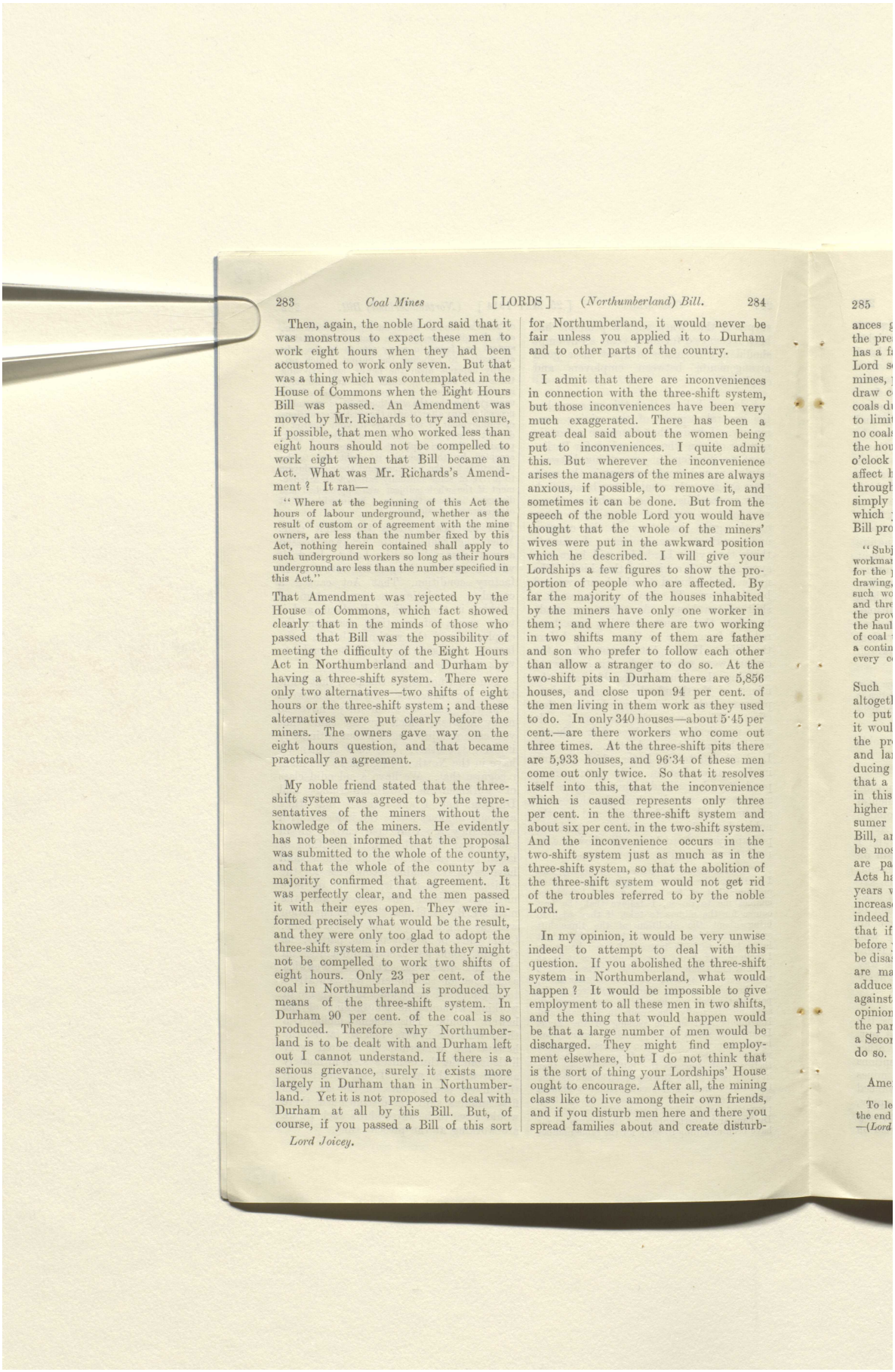

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Then, again, the noble Lord said that it was monstrous to expect these men to work eight hours when they had been accustomed to work only seven. But that was a thing which was contemplated in the House of Commons when the Eight Hours Bill was passed. An Amendment was moved by Mr. Richards to try and ensure, if possible, that men who worked less than eight hours should not be compelled to work eight when that Bill became an Act. What was Mr. Richards's Amendment? It ran—

"Where at the beginning of this Act the hours of labour underground, whether as the result of custom or of agreement with the mine owners, are less than the number fixed by this Act, nothing herein contained shall apply to such underground workers so long as their hours underground are less than the number specified in this Act."

That Amendment was rejected by the House of Commons, which fact showed clearly that in the minds of those who passed that Bill was the possibility of meeting the difficulty of the Eight Hours Act in Northumberland and Durham by having a three-shift system. There were only two alternatives—two shifts of eight hours or the three-shift system; and these alternatives were put clearly before the miners. The owners gave way on the eight hours question, and that became practically an agreement.

My noble friend stated that the three-shift system was agreed to by the representatives of the miners without the knowledge of the miners. He evidently has not been informed that the proposal was submitted to the whole of the county, and that the whole of the county by a majority confirmed that agreement. It was perfectly clear, and the men passed it with their eyes open. They were informed precisely what would be the result, and they were only too glad to adopt the three-shift system in order that they might not be compelled to work two shifts of eight hours. Only 23 per cent. of the coal in Northumberland is produced by means of the three-shift system. In Durham 90 per cent. of the coal is so produced. Therefore why Northumberland is to be dealt with and Durham left out I cannot understand. If there is a serious grievance, surely it exists more largely in Durham than in Northumberland. Yet it is not proposed to deal with Durham at all by this Bill. But, of course, if you passed a Bill of this sort for Northumberland, it would never be fair unless you applied it to Durham and to other parts of the country.

I admit that there are inconveniences in connection with the three-shift system, but those inconveniences have been very much exaggerated. There has been a great deal said about the women being put to inconveniences. I quite admit this. But wherever the inconvenience arises the managers of the mines are always anxious, if possible, to remove it, and sometimes it can be done. But from the speech of the noble Lord you would have thought that the whole of the miners' wives were put in the awkward position which he described. I will give your Lordships a few figures to show the proportion of people who are affected. By far the majority of the houses inhabited by the miners have only one worker in them; and where there are two working in two shifts many of them are father and son who prefer to follow each other than allow a stranger to do so. At the two-shift pits in Durham there are 5,856 houses, and close upon 94 per cent. of the men living in them work as they used to do. In only 340 houses—about 5·45 per cent.—are there workers who come out three times. At the three-shift pits there are 5,933 houses, and 96·34 of these men come out only twice. So that it resolves itself into this, that the inconvenience which is caused represents only three per cent. in the three-shift system and about six per cent. in the two-shift system. And the inconvenience occurs in the two-shift system just as much as in the three-shift system, so that the abolition of the three-shift system would not get rid of the troubles referred to by the noble Lord.

In my opinion, it would be very unwise indeed to attempt to deal with this question. If you abolished the three-shift system in Northumberland, what would happen? It would be impossible to give employment to all these men in two shifts, and the thing that would happen would be that a large number of men would be discharged. They might find employment elsewhere, but I do not think that is the sort of thing your Lordships' House ought to encourage. After all, the mining class like to live among their own friends, and if you disturb men here and there you spread families about and create disturb-

Lord Joicey.

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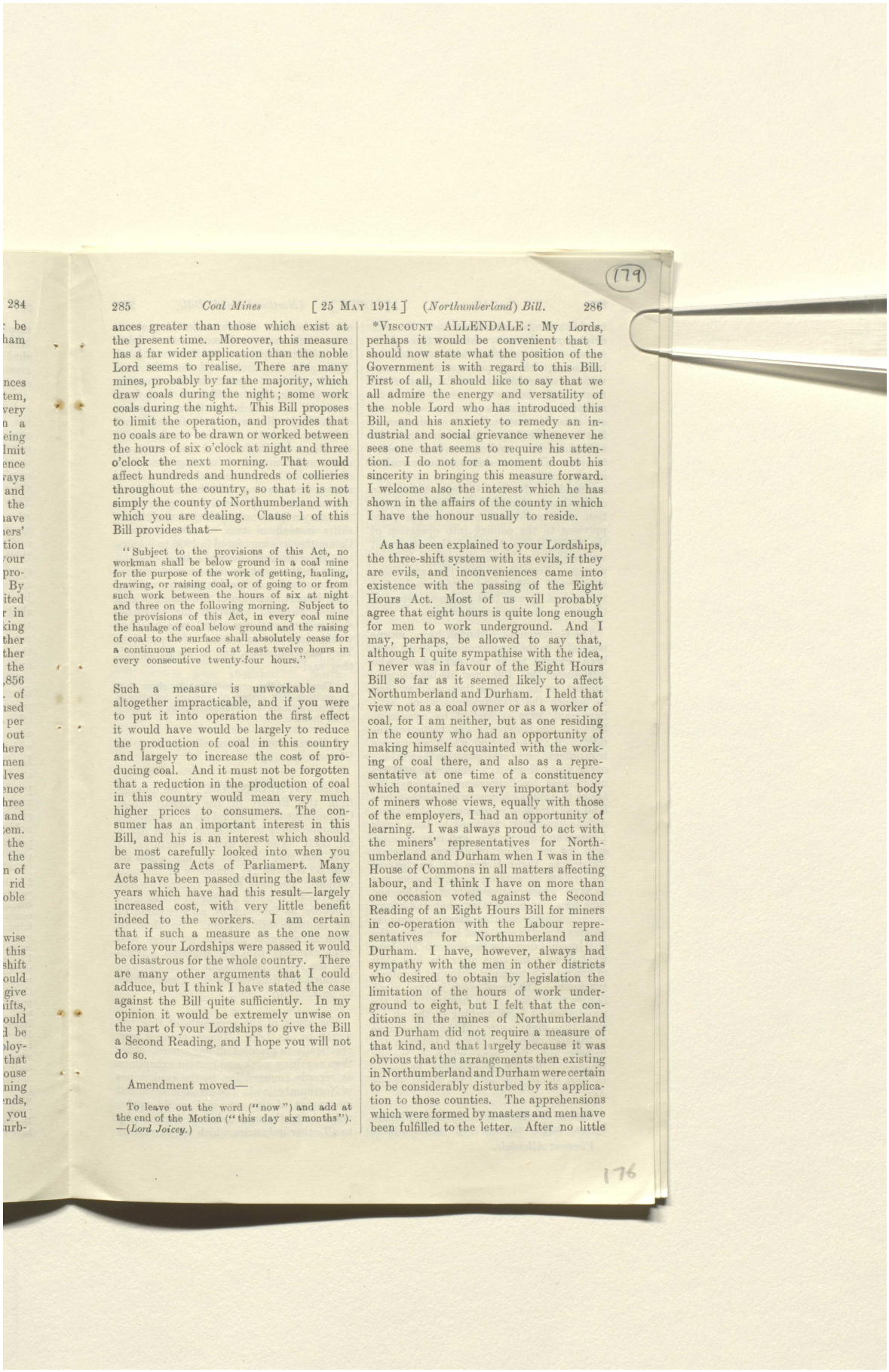

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ances greater than those which exist at the present time. Moreover, this measure has a far wider application than the noble Lord seems to realise. There are many mines, probably by far the majority, which draw coals during the night; some work coals during the night. This Bill proposes to limit the operation, and provides that no coals are to be drawn or worked between the hours of six o'clock at night and three o'clock the next morning. That would affect hundreds and hundreds of collieries throughout the country, so that it is not simply the county of Northumberland with which you are dealing. Clause 1 of this Bill provides that—

"Subject to the provisions of this Act, no workman shall be below ground in a coal mine for the purpose of the work of getting, hauling, drawing, or raising coal, or of going to or from such work between the hours of six at night and three on the following morning. Subject to the provisions of this Act, in every coal mine the haulage of coal below ground and the raising of coal to the surface shall absolutely cease for a continuous period of at least twelve hours in every consecutive twenty-four hours."

Such a measure is unworkable and altogether impracticable, and if you were to put it into operation the first effect it would have would be largely to reduce the production of coal in this country and largely to increase the cost of producing coal. And it must not be forgotten that a reduction in the production of coal in this country would mean very much higher prices to consumers. The consumer has an important interest in this Bill, and his is an interest which should be most carefully looked into when you are passing Acts of Parliament. Many Acts have been passed during the last few years which have had this result—largely increased cost, with very little benefit indeed to the workers. I am certain that if such a measure as the one now before your Lordships were passed it would be disastrous for the whole country. There are many other arguments that I could adduce, but I think I have stated the case against the Bill quite sufficiently. In my opinion it would be extremely unwise on the part of your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading, and I hope you will not do so.

Amendment moved—

To leave out the word ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months"). —(*Lord Joicey.*)

*VISCOUNT ALLENDALE: My Lords, perhaps it would be convenient that I should now state what the position of the Government is with regard to this Bill. First of all, I should like to say that we all admire the energy and versatility of the noble Lord who has introduced this Bill, and his anxiety to remedy an industrial and social grievance whenever he sees one that seems to require his attention. I do not for a moment doubt his sincerity in bringing this measure forward. I welcome also the interest which he has shown in the affairs of the county in which I have the honour usually to reside.

As has been explained to your Lordships, the three-shift system with its evils, if they are evils, and inconveniences came into existence with the passing of the Eight Hours Act. Most of us will probably agree that eight hours is quite long enough for men to work underground. And I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that, although I quite sympathise with the idea, I never was in favour of the Eight Hours Bill so far as it seemed likely to affect Northumberland and Durham. I held that view not as a coal owner or as a worker of coal, for I am neither, but as one residing in the county who had an opportunity of making himself acquainted with the working of coal there, and also as a representative at one time of a constituency which contained a very important body of miners whose views, equally with those of the employers, I had an opportunity of learning. I was always proud to act with the miners' representatives for Northumberland and Durham when I was in the House of Commons in all matters affecting labour, and I think I have on more than one occasion voted against the Second Reading of an Eight Hours Bill for miners in co-operation with the Labour representatives for Northumberland and Durham. I have, however, always had sympathy with the men in other districts who desired to obtain by legislation the limitation of the hours of work underground to eight, but I felt that the conditions in the mines of Northumberland and Durham did not require a measure of that kind, and that largely because it was obvious that the arrangements then existing in Northumberland and Durham were certain to be considerably disturbed by its application to those counties. The apprehensions which were formed by masters and men have been fulfilled to the letter. After no little

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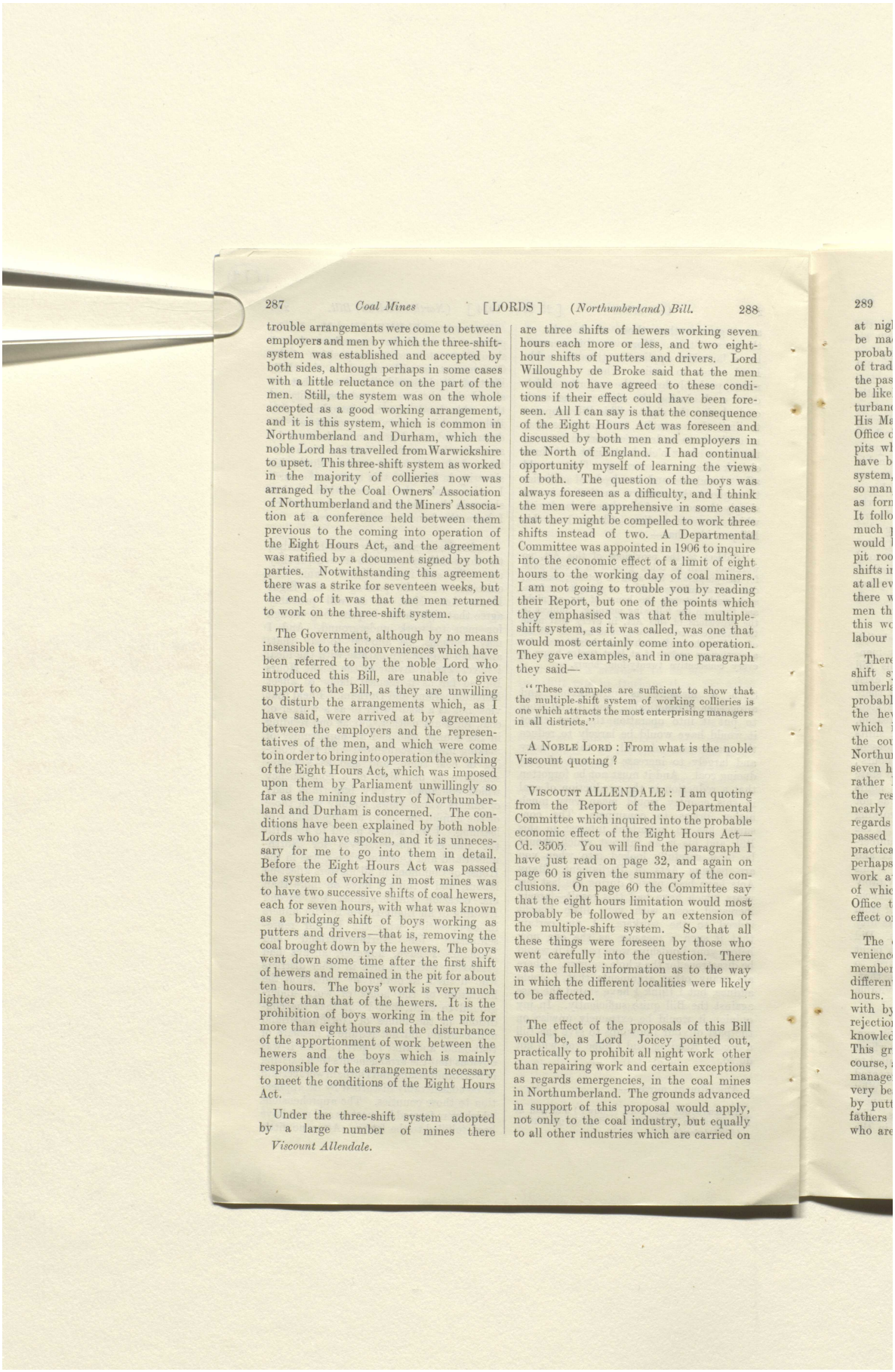

trouble arrangements were come to between employers and men by which the three-shift-system was established and accepted by both sides, although perhaps in some cases with a little reluctance on the part of the men. Still, the system was on the whole accepted as a good working arrangement, and it is this system, which is common in Northumberland and Durham, which the noble Lord has travelled from Warwickshire to upset. This three-shift system as worked in the majority of collieries now was arranged by the Coal Owners' Association of Northumberland and the Miners' Association at a conference held between them previous to the coming into operation of the Eight Hours Act, and the agreement was ratified by a document signed by both parties. Notwithstanding this agreement there was a strike for seventeen weeks, but the end of it was that the men returned to work on the three-shift system.

The Government, although by no means insensible to the inconveniences which have been referred to by the noble Lord who introduced this Bill, are unable to give support to the Bill, as they are unwilling to disturb the arrangements which, as I have said, were arrived at by agreement between the employers and the representatives of the men, and which were come to in order to bring into operation the working of the Eight Hours Act, which was imposed upon them by Parliament unwillingly so far as the mining industry of Northumberland and Durham is concerned. The conditions have been explained by both noble Lords who have spoken, and it is unnecessary for me to go into them in detail. Before the Eight Hours Act was passed the system of working in most mines was to have two successive shifts of coal hewers, each for seven hours, with what was known as a bridging shift of boys working as putters and drivers—that is, removing the coal brought down by the hewers. The boys went down some time after the first shift of hewers and remained in the pit for about ten hours. The boys' work is very much lighter than that of the hewers. It is the prohibition of boys working in the pit for more than eight hours and the disturbance of the apportionment of work between the hewers and the boys which is mainly responsible for the arrangements necessary to meet the conditions of the Eight Hours Act.

Under the three-shift system adopted by a large number of mines there

are three shifts of hewers working seven hours each more or less, and two eight-hour shifts of putters and drivers. Lord Willoughby de Broke said that the men would not have agreed to these conditions if their effect could have been foreseen. All I can say is that the consequence of the Eight Hours Act was foreseen and discussed by both men and employers in the North of England. I had continual opportunity myself of learning the views of both. The question of the boys was always foreseen as a difficulty, and I think the men were apprehensive in some cases that they might be compelled to work three shifts instead of two. A Departmental Committee was appointed in 1906 to inquire into the economic effect of a limit of eight hours to the working day of coal miners. I am not going to trouble you by reading their Report, but one of the points which they emphasised was that the multiple-shift system, as it was called, was one that would most certainly come into operation. They gave examples, and in one paragraph they said—

"These examples are sufficient to show that the multiple-shift system of working collieries is one which attracts the most enterprising managers in all districts."

A NOBLE LORD: From what is the noble Viscount quoting?

VISCOUNT ALLENDALE: I am quoting from the Report of the Departmental Committee which inquired into the probable economic effect of the Eight Hours Act—Cd. 3505. You will find the paragraph I have just read on page 32, and again on page 60 is given the summary of the conclusions. On page 60 the Committee say that the eight hours limitation would most probably be followed by an extension of the multiple-shift system. So that all these things were foreseen by those who went carefully into the question. There was the fullest information as to the way in which the different localities were likely to be affected.

The effect of the proposals of this Bill would be, as Lord Joicey pointed out, practically to prohibit all night work other than repairing work and certain exceptions as regards emergencies, in the coal mines in Northumberland. The grounds advanced in support of this proposal would apply, not only to the coal industry, but equally to all other industries which are carried on

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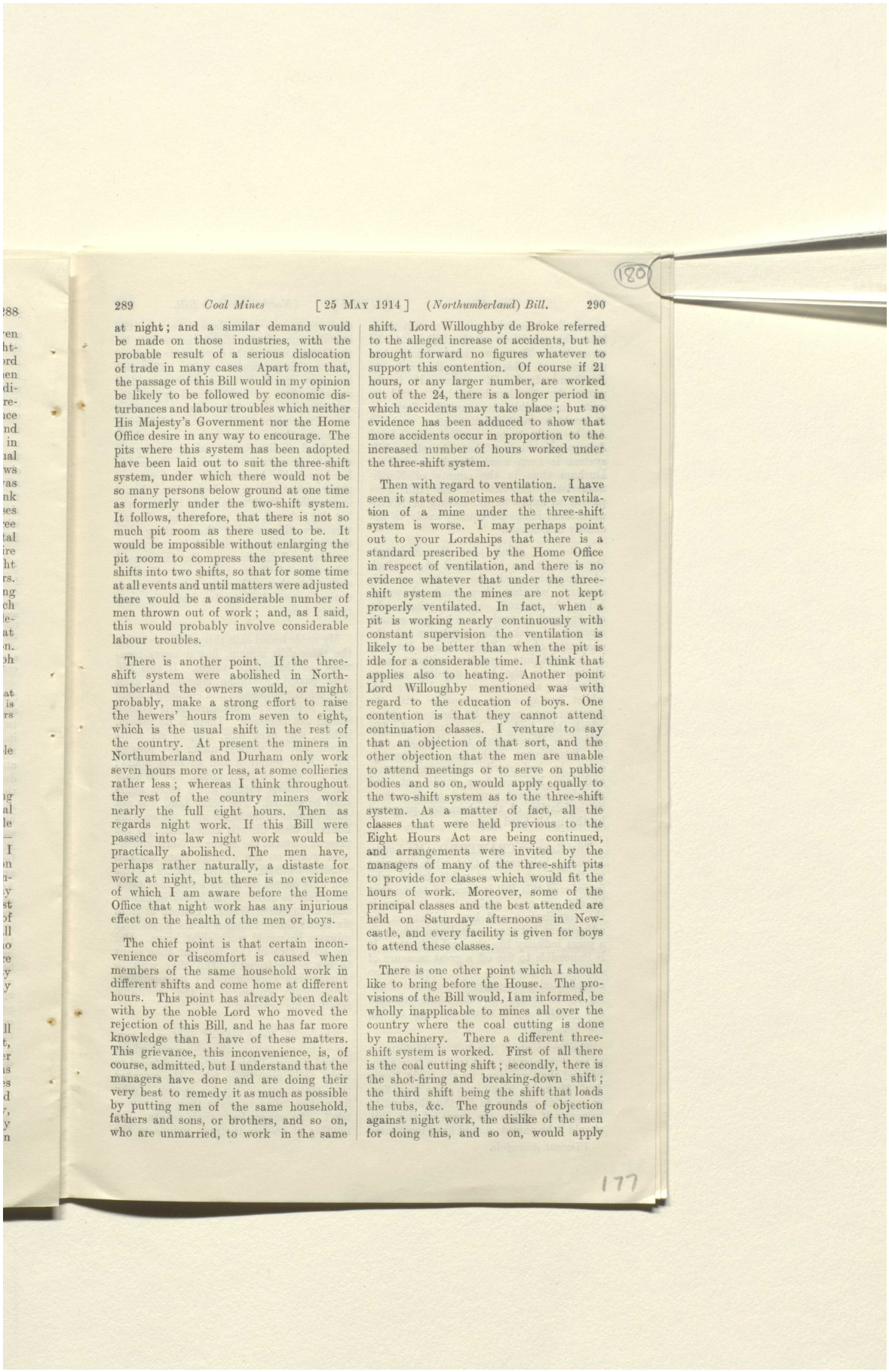

at night; and a similar demand would be made on those industries, with the probable result of a serious dislocation of trade in many cases Apart from that, the passage of this Bill would in my opinion be likely to be followed by economic disturbances and labour troubles which neither His Majesty's Government nor the Home Office desire in any way to encourage. The pits where this system has been adopted have been laid out to suit the three-shift system, under which there would not be so many persons below ground at one time as formerly under the two-shift system. It follows, therefore, that there is not so much pit room as there used to be. It would be impossible without enlarging the pit room to compress the present three shifts into two shifts, so that for some time at all events and until matters were adjusted there would be a considerable number of men thrown out of work; and, as I said, this would probably involve considerable labour troubles.

There is another point. If the three-shift system were abolished in Northumberland the owners would, or might probably, make a strong effort to raise the hewers' hours from seven to eight, which is the usual shift in the rest of the country. At present the miners in Northumberland and Durham only work seven hours more or less, at some collieries rather less; whereas I think throughout the rest of the country miners work nearly the full eight hours. Then as regards night work. If this Bill were passed into law night work would be practically abolished. The men have, perhaps rather naturally, a distaste for work at night, but there is no evidence of which I am aware before the Home Office that night work has any injurious effect on the health of the men or boys.

The chief point is that certain inconvenience or discomfort is caused when members of the same household work in different shifts and come home at different hours. This point has already been dealt with by the noble Lord who moved the rejection of this Bill, and he has far more knowledge than I have of these matters. This grievance, this inconvenience, is, of course, admitted, but I understand that the managers have done and are doing their very best to remedy it as much as possible by putting men of the same household, fathers and sons, or brothers, and so on, who are unmarried, to work in the same shift. Lord Willoughby de Broke referred to the alleged increase of accidents, but he brought forward no figures whatever to support this contention. Of course if 21 hours, or any larger number, are worked out of the 24, there is a longer period in which accidents may take place; but no evidence has been adduced to show that more accidents occur in proportion to the increased number of hours worked under the three-shift system.

Then with regard to ventilation. I have seen it stated sometimes that the ventilation of a mine under the three-shift system is worse. I may perhaps point out to your Lordships that there is a standard prescribed by the Home Office in respect of ventilation, and there is no evidence whatever that under the three-shift system the mines are not kept properly ventilated. In fact, when a pit is working nearly continuously with constant supervision the ventilation is likely to be better than when the pit is idle for a considerable time. I think that applies also to heating. Another point Lord Willoughby mentioned was with regard to the education of boys. One contention is that they cannot attend continuation classes. I venture to say that an objection of that sort, and the other objection that the men are unable to attend meetings or to serve on public bodies and so on, would apply equally to the two-shift system as to the three-shift system. As a matter of fact, all the classes that were held previous to the Eight Hours Act are being continued, and arrangements were invited by the managers of many of the three-shift pits to provide for classes which would fit the hours of work. Moreover, some of the principal classes and the best attended are held on Saturday afternoons in Newcastle, and every facility is given for boys to attend these classes.

There is one other point which I should like to bring before the House. The provisions of the Bill would, I am informed, be wholly inapplicable to mines all over the country where the coal cutting is done by machinery. There a different three-shift system is worked. First of all there is the coal cutting shift; secondly, there is the shot-firing and breaking-down shift; the third shift being the shift that loads the tubs, &c. The grounds of objection against night work, the dislike of the men for doing this, and so on, would apply

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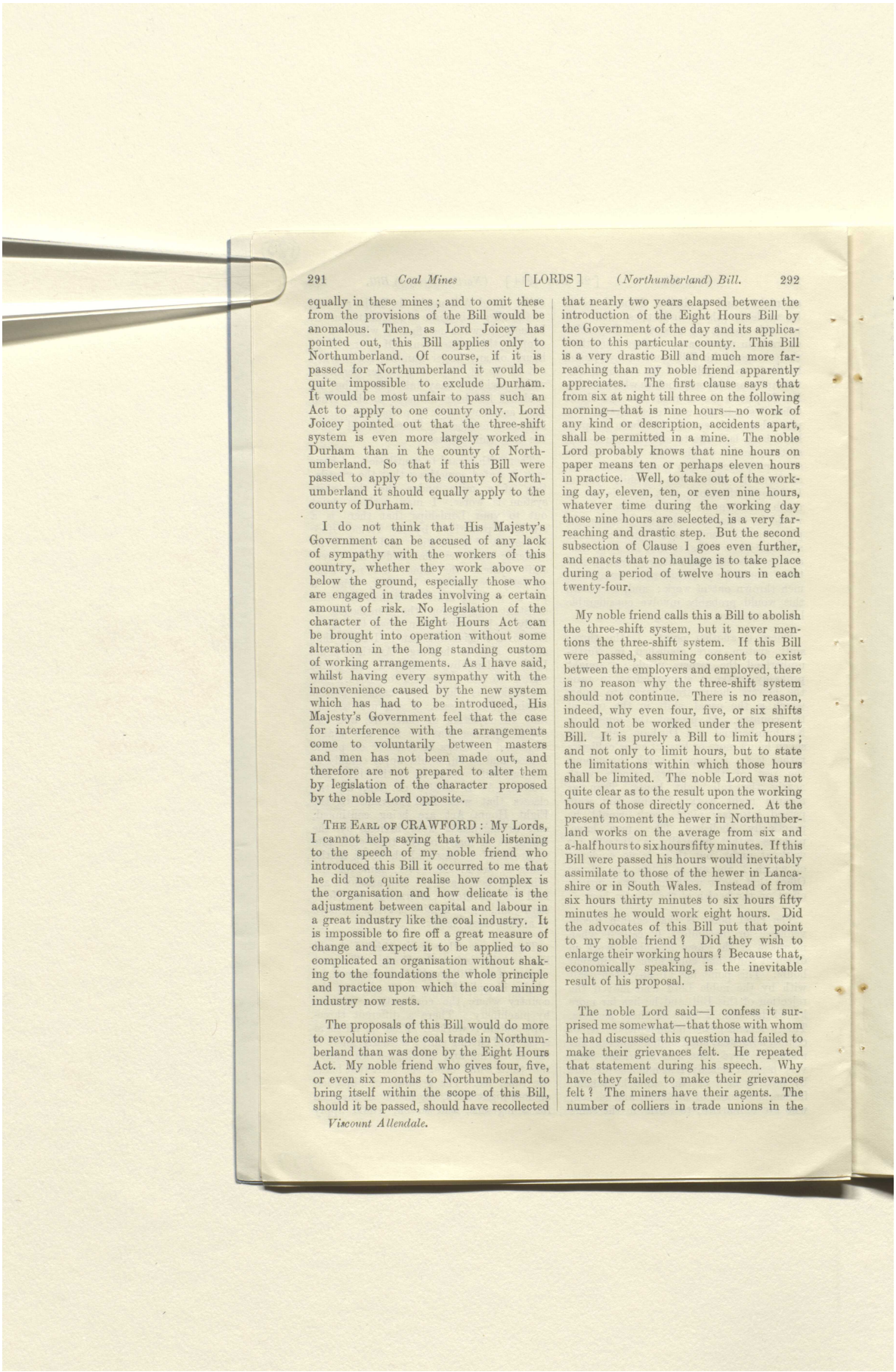

equally in these mines; and to omit these from the provisions of the Bill would be anomalous. Then, as Lord Joicey has pointed out, this Bill applies only to Northumberland. Of course, if it is passed for Northumberland it would be quite impossible to exclude Durham. It would be most unfair to pass such an Act to apply to one county only. Lord Joicey pointed out that the three-shift system is even more largely worked in Durham than in the county of Northumberland. So that if this Bill were passed to apply to the county of Northumberland it should equally apply to the county of Durham.

I do not think that His Majesty's Government can be accused of any lack of sympathy with the workers of this country, whether they work above or below the ground, especially those who are engaged in trades involving a certain amount of risk. No legislation of the character of the Eight Hours Act can be brought into operation without some alteration in the long standing custom of working arrangements. As I have said, whilst having every sympathy with the inconvenience caused by the new system which has had to be introduced, His Majesty's Government feel that the case for interference with the arrangements come to voluntarily between masters and men has not been made out, and therefore are not prepared to alter them by legislation of the character proposed by the noble Lord opposite.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD: My Lords, I cannot help saying that while listening to the speech of my noble friend who introduced this Bill it occurred to me that he did not quite realise how complex is the organisation and how delicate is the adjustment between capital and labour in a great industry like the coal industry. It is impossible to fire off a great measure of change and expect it to be applied to so complicated an organisation without shaking to the foundations the whole principle and practice upon which the coal mining industry now rests.

The proposals of this Bill would do more to revolutionise the coal trade in Northumberland than was done by the Eight Hours Act. My noble friend who gives four, five, or even six months to Northumberland to bring itself within the scope of this Bill, should it be passed, should have recollected that nearly two years elapsed between the introduction of the Eight Hours Bill by the Government of the day and its application to this particular county. This Bill is a very drastic Bill and much more far-reaching than my noble friend apparently appreciates. The first clause says that from six at night till three on the following morning—that is nine hours—no work of any kind or description, accidents apart, shall be permitted in a mine. The noble Lord probably knows that nine hours on paper means ten or perhaps eleven hours in practice. Well, to take out of the working day, eleven, ten, or even nine hours, whatever time during the working day those nine hours are selected, is a very far-reaching and drastic step. But the second subsection of Clause 1 goes even further, and enacts that no haulage is to take place during a period of twelve hours in each twenty-four.

My noble friend calls this a Bill to abolish the three-shift system, but it never mentions the three-shift system. If this Bill were passed, assuming consent to exist between the employers and employed, there is no reason why the three-shift system should not continue. There is no reason, indeed, why even four, five, or six shifts should not be worked under the present Bill. It is purely a Bill to limit hours; and not only to limit hours, but to state the limitations within which those hours shall be limited. The noble Lord was not quite clear as to the result upon the working hours of those directly concerned. At the present moment the hewer in Northumberland works on the average from six and a-half hours to six hours fifty minutes. If this Bill were passed his hours would inevitably assimilate to those of the hewer in Lancashire or in South Wales. Instead of from six hours thirty minutes to six hours fifty minutes he would work eight hours. Did the advocates of this Bill put that point to my noble friend? Did they wish to enlarge their working hours? Because that, economically speaking, is the inevitable result of his proposal.

The noble Lord said—I confess it surprised me somewhat—that those with whom he had discussed this question had failed to make their grievances felt. He repeated that statement during his speech. Why have they failed to make their grievances felt? The miners have their agents. The number of colliers in trade unions in the

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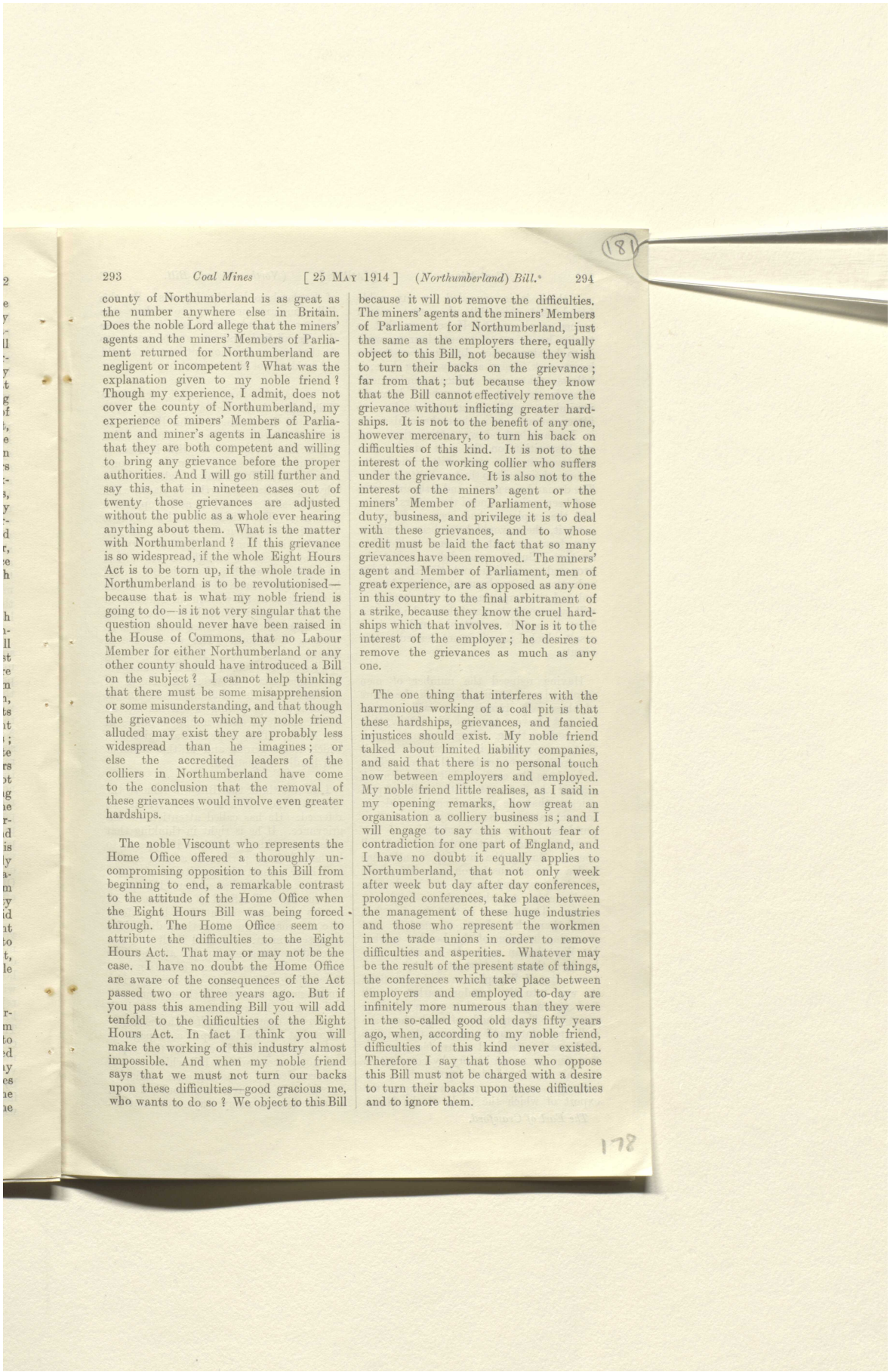

county of Northumberland is as great as the number anywhere else in Britain. Does the noble Lord allege that the miners' agents and the miners' Members of Parliament returned for Northumberland are negligent or incompetent? What was the explanation given to my noble friend? Though my experience, I admit, does not cover the county of Northumberland, my experience of miners' Members of Parliament and miner's agents in Lancashire is that they are both competent and willing to bring any grievance before the proper authorities. And I will go still further and say this, that in nineteen cases out of twenty those grievances are adjusted without the public as a whole ever hearing anything about them. What is the matter with Northumberland? If this grievance is so widespread, if the whole Eight Hours Act is to be torn up, if the whole trade in Northumberland is to be revolutionised—because that is what my noble friend is going to do—is it not very singular that the question should never have been raised in the House of Commons, that no Labour Member for either Northumberland or any other county should have introduced a Bill on the subject? I cannot help thinking that there must be some misapprehension or some misunderstanding, and that though the grievances to which my noble friend alluded may exist they are probably less widespread than he imagines; or else the accredited leaders of the colliers in Northumberland have come to the conclusion that the removal of these grievances would involve even greater hardships.

The noble Viscount who represents the Home Office offered a thoroughly uncompromising opposition to this Bill from beginning to end, a remarkable contrast to the attitude of the Home Office when the Eight Hours Bill was being forced through. The Home Office seem to attribute the difficulties to the Eight Hours Act. That may or may not be the case. I have no doubt the Home Office are aware of the consequences of the Act passed two or three years ago. But if you pass this amending Bill you will add tenfold to the difficulties of the Eight Hours Act. In fact I think you will make the working of this industry almost impossible. And when my noble friend says that we must not turn our backs upon these difficulties—good gracious me, who wants to do so? We object to this Bill because it will not remove the difficulties. The miners' agents and the miners' Members of Parliament for Northumberland, just the same as the employers there, equally object to this Bill, not because they wish to turn their backs on the grievance; far from that; but because they know that the Bill cannot effectively remove the grievance without inflicting greater hardships. It is not to the benefit of any one, however mercenary, to turn his back on difficulties of this kind. It is not to the interest of the working collier who suffers under the grievance. It is also not to the interest of the miners' agent or the miners' Member of Parliament, whose duty, business, and privilege it is to deal with these grievances, and to whose credit must be laid the fact that so many grievances have been removed. The miners' agent and Member of Parliament, men of great experience, are as opposed as any one in this country to the final arbitrament of a strike, because they know the cruel hardships which that involves. Nor is it to the interest of the employer; he desires to remove the grievances as much as any one.

The one thing that interferes with the harmonious working of a coal pit is that these hardships, grievances, and fancied injustices should exist. My noble friend talked about limited liability companies, and said that there is no personal touch now between employers and employed. My noble friend little realises, as I said in my opening remarks, how great an organisation a colliery business is; and I will engage to say this without fear of contradiction for one part of England, and I have no doubt it equally applies to Northumberland, that not only week after week but day after day conferences, prolonged conferences, take place between the management of these huge industries and those who represent the workmen in the trade unions in order to remove difficulties and asperities. Whatever may be the result of the present state of things, the conferences which take place between employers and employed to-day are infinitely more numerous than they were in the so-called good old days fifty years ago, when, according to my noble friend, difficulties of this kind never existed. Therefore I say that those who oppose this Bill must not be charged with a desire to turn their backs upon these difficulties and to ignore them.

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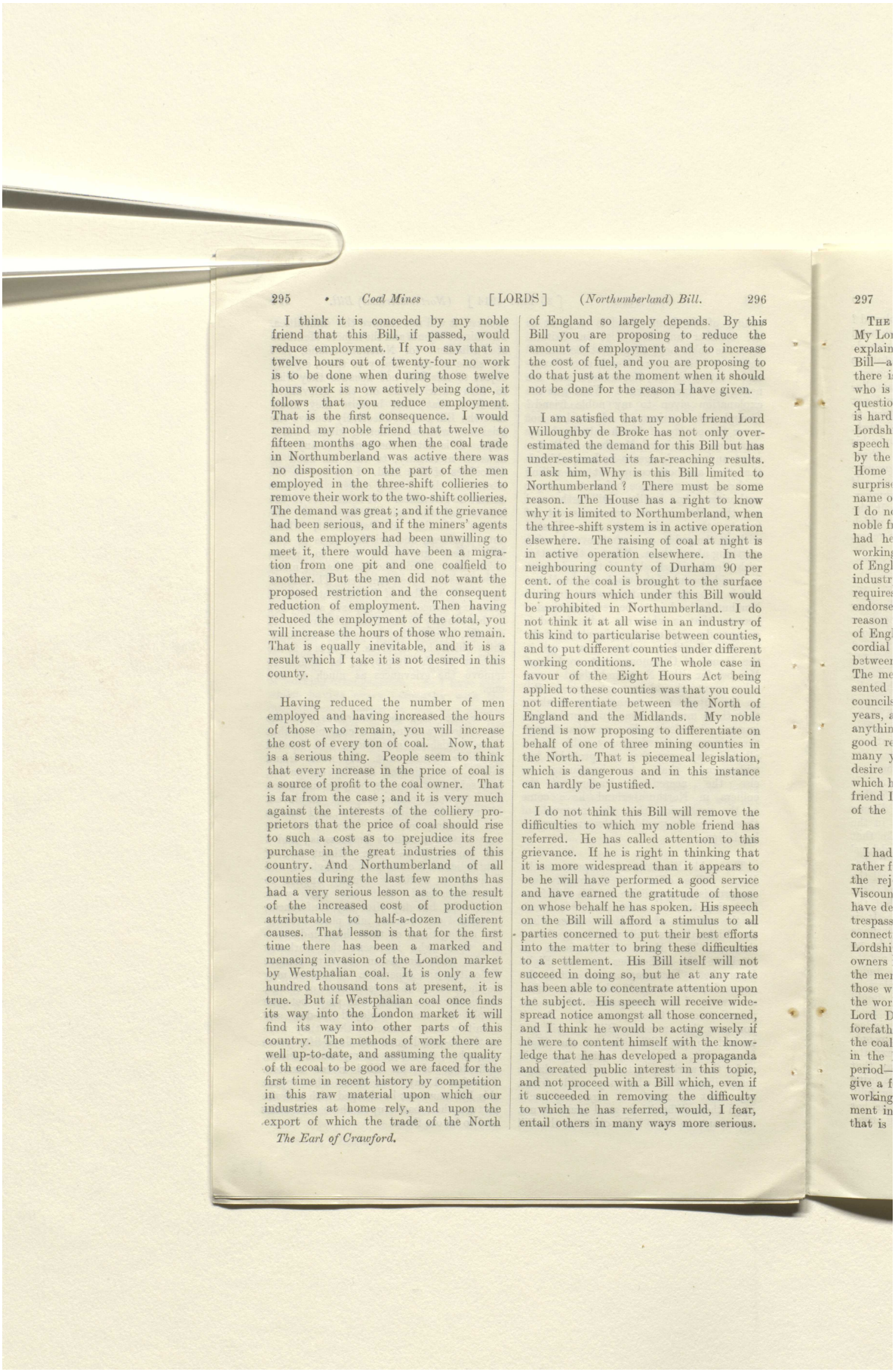

I think it is conceded by my noble friend that this Bill, if passed, would reduce employment. If you say that in twelve hours out of twenty-four no work is to be done when during those twelve hours work is now actively being done, it follows that you reduce employment. That is the first consequence. I would remind my noble friend that twelve to fifteen months ago when the coal trade in Northumberland was active there was no disposition on the part of the men employed in the three-shift collieries to remove their work to the two-shift collieries. The demand was great; and if the grievance had been serious, and if the miners' agents and the employers had been unwilling to meet it, there would have been a migration from one pit and one coalfield to another. But the men did not want the proposed restriction and the consequent reduction of employment. Then having reduced the employment of the total, you will increase the hours of those who remain. That is equally inevitable, and it is a result which I take it is not desired in this county.

Having reduced the number of men employed and having increased the hours of those who remain, you will increase the cost of every ton of coal. Now, that is a serious thing. People seem to think that every increase in the price of coal is a source of profit to the coal owner. That is far from the case; and it is very much against the interests of the colliery proprietors that the price of coal should rise to such a cost as to prejudice its free purchase in the great industries of this country. And Northumberland of all counties during the last few months has had a very serious lesson as to the result of the increased cost of production attributable to half-a-dozen different causes. That lesson is that for the first time there has been a marked and menacing invasion of the London market by Westphalian coal. It is only a few hundred thousand tons at present, it is true. But if Westphalian coal once finds its way into the London market it will find its way into other parts of this country. The methods of work there are well up-to-date, and assuming the quality of th ecoal to be good we are faced for the first time in recent history by competition in this raw material upon which our industries at home rely, and upon the export of which the trade of the North of England so largely depends. By this Bill you are proposing to reduce the amount of employment and to increase the cost of fuel, and you are proposing to do that just at the moment when it should not be done for the reason I have given.

I am satisfied that my noble friend Lord Willoughby de Broke has not only overestimated the demand for this Bill but has under-estimated its far-reaching results. I ask him, Why is this Bill limited to Northumberland? There must be some reason. The House has a right to know why it is limited to Northumberland, when the three-shift system is in active operation elsewhere. The raising of coal at night is in active operation elsewhere. In the neighbouring county of Durham 90 per cent. of the coal is brought to the surface during hours which under this Bill would be prohibited in Northumberland. I do not think it at all wise in an industry of this kind to particularise between counties, and to put different counties under different working conditions. The whole case in favour of the Eight Hours Act being applied to these counties was that you could not differentiate between the North of England and the Midlands. My noble friend is now proposing to differentiate on behalf of one of three mining counties in the North. That is piecemeal legislation, which is dangerous and in this instance can hardly be justified.

I do not think this Bill will remove the difficulties to which my noble friend has referred. He has called attention to this grievance. If he is right in thinking that it is more widespread than it appears to be he will have performed a good service and have earned the gratitude of those on whose behalf he has spoken. His speech on the Bill will afford a stimulus to all parties concerned to put their best efforts into the matter to bring these difficulties to a settlement. His Bill itself will not succeed in doing so, but he at any rate has been able to concentrate attention upon the subject. His speech will receive widespread notice amongst all those concerned, and I think he would be acting wisely if he were to content himself with the knowledge that he has developed a propaganda and created public interest in this topic, and not proceed with a Bill which, even if it succeeded in removing the difficulty to which he has referred, would, I fear, entail others in many ways more serious.

The Earl of Crawford.

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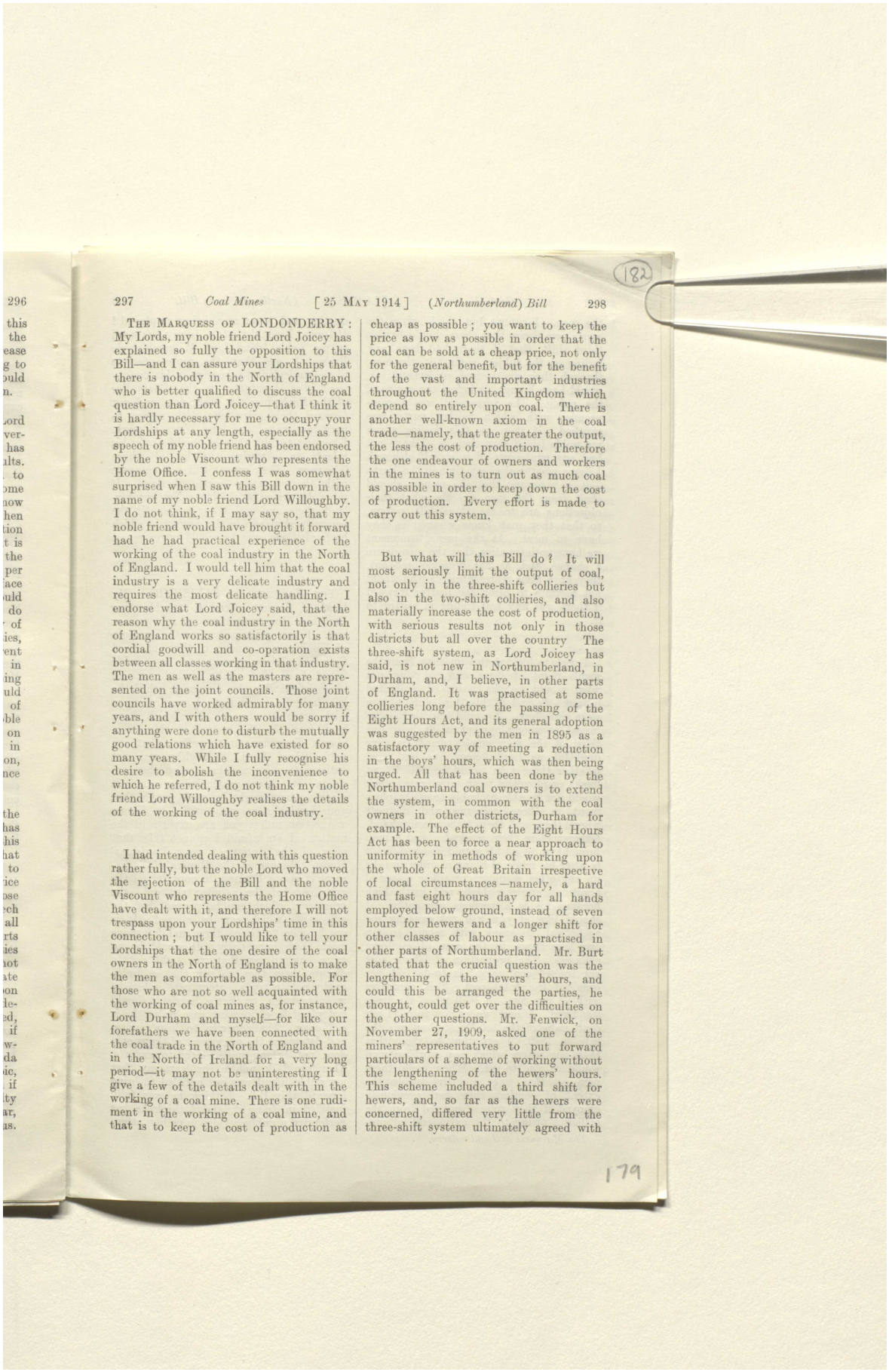

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, my noble friend Lord Joicey has explained so fully the opposition to this Bill—and I can assure your Lordships that there is nobody in the North of England who is better qualified to discuss the coal question than Lord Joicey—that I think it is hardly necessary for me to occupy your Lordships at any length, especially as the speech of my noble friend has been endorsed by the noble Viscount who represents the Home Office. I confess I was somewhat surprised when I saw this Bill down in the name of my noble friend Lord Willoughby. I do not think, if I may say so, that my noble friend would have brought it forward had he had practical experience of the working of the coal industry in the North of England. I would tell him that the coal industry is a very delicate industry and requires the most delicate handling. I endorse what Lord Joicey said, that the reason why the coal industry in the North of England works so satisfactorily is that cordial goodwill and co-operation exists between all classes working in that industry. The men as well as the masters are represented on the joint councils. Those joint councils have worked admirably for many years, and I with others would be sorry if anything were done to disturb the mutually good relations which have existed for so many years. While I fully recognise his desire to abolish the inconvenience to which he referred, I do not think my noble friend Lord Willoughby realises the details of the working of the coal industry.

I had intended dealing with this question rather fully, but the noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill and the noble Viscount who represents the Home Office have dealt with it, and therefore I will not trespass upon your Lordships' time in this connection; but I would like to tell your Lordships that the one desire of the coal owners in the North of England is to make the men as comfortable as possible. For those who are not so well acquainted with the working of coal mines as, for instance, Lord Durham and myself—for like our forefathers we have been connected with the coal trade in the North of England and in the North of Ireland for a very long period—it may not be uninteresting if I give a few of the details dealt with in the working of a coal mine. There is one rudiment in the working of a coal mine, and that is to keep the cost of production as cheap as possible; you want to keep the price as low as possible in order that the coal can be sold at a cheap price, not only for the general benefit, but for the benefit of the vast and important industries throughout the United Kingdom which depend so entirely upon coal. There is another well-known axiom in the coal trade—namely, that the greater the output, the less the cost of production. Therefore the one endeavour of owners and workers in the mines is to turn out as much coal as possible in order to keep down the cost of production. Every effort is made to carry out this system.

But what will this Bill do? It will most seriously limit the output of coal, not only in the three-shift collieries but also in the two-shift collieries, and also materially increase the cost of production, with serious results not only in those districts but all over the country. The three-shift system, as Lord Joicey has said, is not new in Northumberland, in Durham, and, I believe, in other parts of England. It was practised at some collieries long before the passing of the Eight Hours Act, and its general adoption was suggested by the men in 1895 as a satisfactory way of meeting a reduction in the boys' hours, which was then being urged. All that has been done by the Northumberland coal owners is to extend the system, in common with the coal owners in other districts, Durham for example. The effect of the Eight Hours Act has been to force a near approach to uniformity in methods of working upon the whole of Great Britain irrespective of local circumstances—namely, a hard and fast eight hours day for all hands employed below ground, instead of seven hours for hewers and a longer shift for other classes of labour as practised in other parts of Northumberland. Mr. Burt stated that the crucial question was the lengthening of the hewers' hours, and could this be arranged the parties, he thought, could get over the difficulties on the other questions. Mr. Fenwick, on November 27, 1909, asked one of the miners' representatives to put forward particulars of a scheme of working without the lengthening of the hewers' hours. This scheme included a third shift for hewers, and, so far as the hewers were concerned, differed very little from the three-shift system ultimately agreed with

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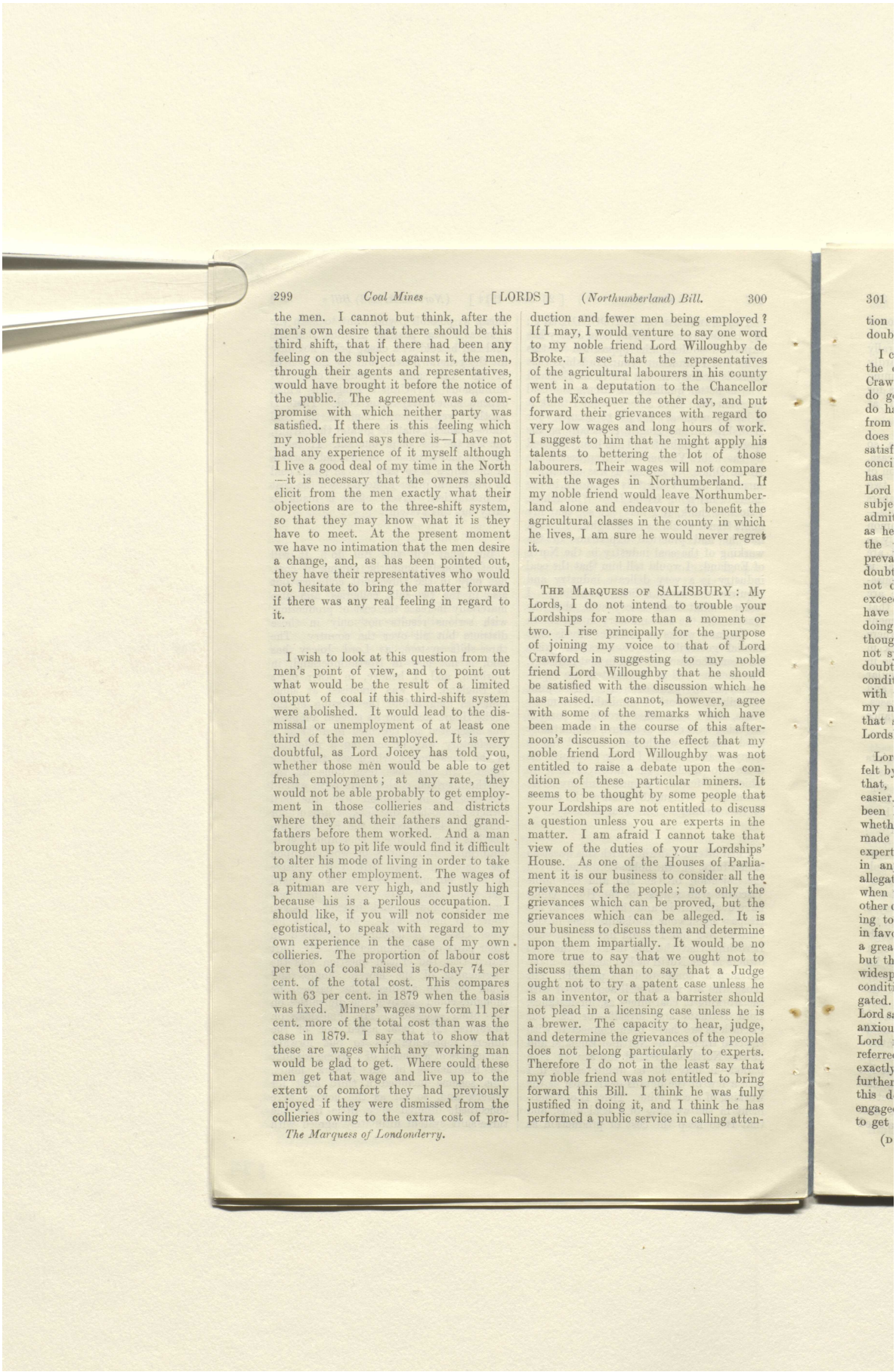

the men. I cannot but think, after the men's own desire that there should be this third shift, that if there had been any feeling on the subject against it, the men, through their agents and representatives, would have brought it before the notice of the public. The agreement was a compromise with which neither party was satisfied. If there is this feeling which my noble friend says there is—I have not had any experience of it myself although I live a good deal of my time in the North—it is necessary that the owners should elicit from the men exactly what their objections are to the three-shift system, so that they may know what it is they have to meet. At the present moment we have no intimation that the men desire a change, and, as has been pointed out, they have their representatives who would not hesitate to bring the matter forward if there was any real feeling in regard to it.

I wish to look at this question from the men's point of view, and to point out what would be the result of a limited output of coal if this third-shift system were abolished. It would lead to the dismissal or unemployment of at least one third of the men employed. It is very doubtful, as Lord Joicey has told you, whether those men would be able to get fresh employment; at any rate, they would not be able probably to get employment in those collieries and districts where they and their fathers and grandfathers before them worked. And a man brought up to pit life would find it difficult to alter his mode of living in order to take up any other employment. The wages of a pitman are very high, and justly high because his is a perilous occupation. I should like, if you will not consider me egotistical, to speak with regard to my own experience in the case of my own collieries. The proportion of labour cost per ton of coal raised is to-day 74 per cent. of the total cost. This compares with 63 per cent. in 1879 when the basis was fixed. Miners' wages now form 11 per cent. more of the total cost than was the case in 1879. I say that to show that these are wages which any working man would be glad to get. Where could these men get that wage and live up to the extent of comfort they had previously enjoyed if they were dismissed from the collieries owing to the extra cost of production and fewer men being employed? If I may, I would venture to say one word to my noble friend Lord Willoughby de Broke. I see that the representatives of the agricultural labourers in his county went in a deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day, and put forward their grievances with regard to very low wages and long hours of work. I suggest to him that he might apply his talents to bettering the lot of those labourers. Their wages will not compare with the wages in Northumberland. If my noble friend would leave Northumberland alone and endeavour to benefit the agricultural classes in the county in which he lives, I am sure he would never regret it.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I do not intend to trouble your Lordships for more than a moment or two. I rise principally for the purpose of joining my voice to that of Lord Crawford in suggesting to my noble friend Lord Willoughby that he should be satisfied with the discussion which he has raised. I cannot, however, agree with some of the remarks which have been made in the course of this afternoon's discussion to the effect that my noble friend Lord Willoughby was not entitled to raise a debate upon the condition of these particular miners. It seems to be thought by some people that your Lordships are not entitled to discuss a question unless you are experts in the matter. I am afraid I cannot take that view of the duties of your Lordships' House. As one of the Houses of Parliament it is our business to consider all the grievances of the people; not only the grievances which can be proved, but the grievances which can be alleged. It is our business to discuss them and determine upon them impartially. It would be no more true to say that we ought not to discuss them than to say that a Judge ought not to try a patent case unless he is an inventor, or that a barrister should not plead in a licensing case unless he is a brewer. The capacity to hear, judge, and determine the grievances of the people does not belong particularly to experts. Therefore I do not in the least say that my noble friend was not entitled to bring forward this Bill. I think he was fully justified in doing it, and I think he has performed a public service in calling atten-

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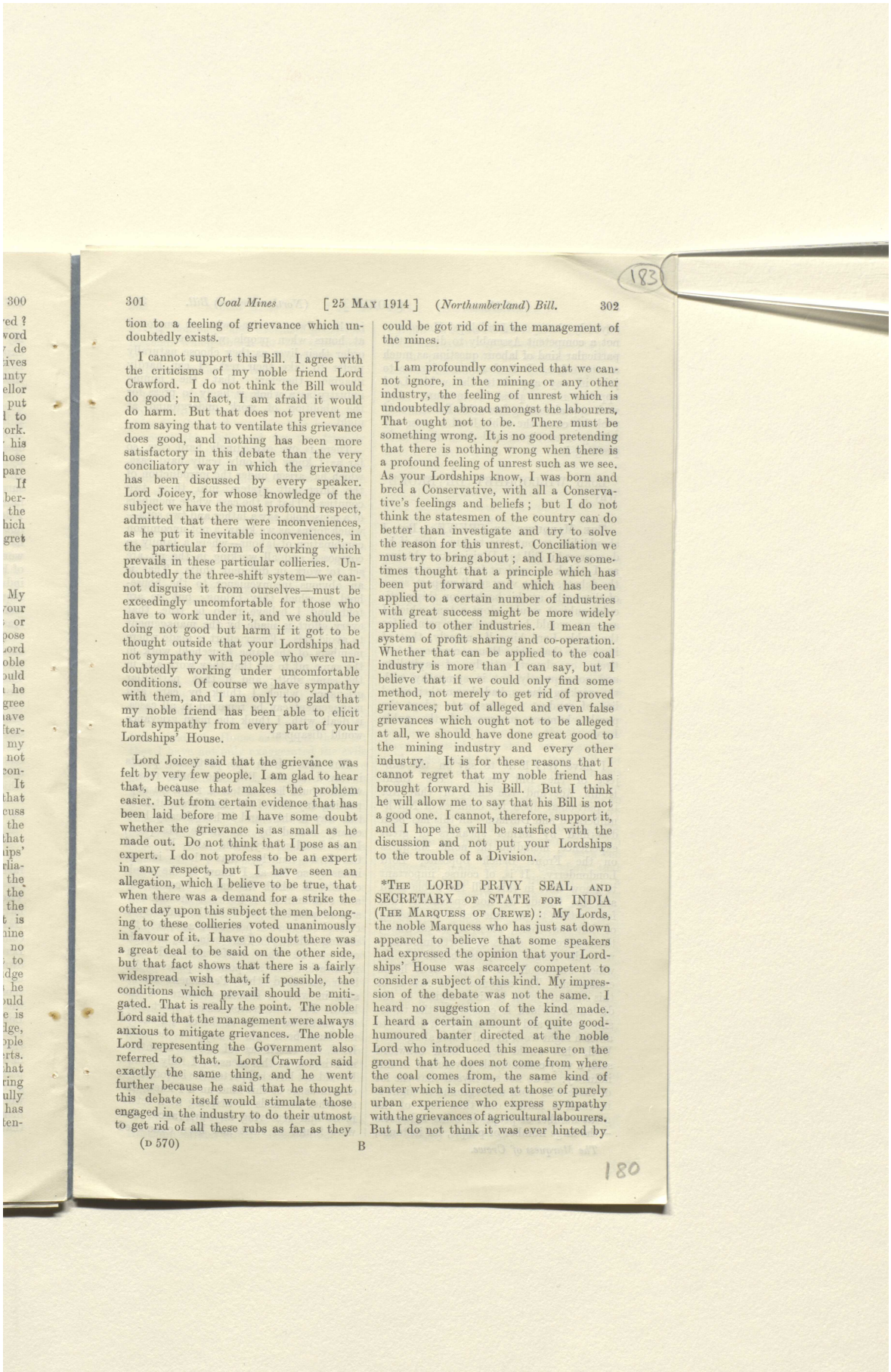

tion to a feeling of grievance which undoubtedly exists.

I cannot support this Bill. I agree with the criticisms of my noble friend Lord Crawford. I do not think the Bill would do good; in fact, I am afraid it would do harm. But that does not prevent me from saying that to ventilate this grievance does good, and nothing has been more satisfactory in this debate than the very conciliatory way in which the grievance has been discussed by every speaker. Lord Joicey, for whose knowledge of the subject we have the most profound respect, admitted that there were inconveniences, as he put it inevitable inconveniences, in the particular form of working which prevails in these particular collieries. Undoubtedly the three-shift system—we cannot disguise it from ourselves—must be exceedingly uncomfortable for those who have to work under it, and we should be doing not good but harm if it got to be thought outside that your Lordships had not sympathy with people who were undoubtedly working under uncomfortable conditions. Of course we have sympathy with them, and I am only too glad that my noble friend has been able to elicit that sympathy from every part of your Lordships' House.

Lord Joicey said that the grievance was felt by very few people. I am glad to hear that, because that makes the problem easier. But from certain evidence that has been laid before me I have some doubt whether the grievance is as small as he made out. Do not think that I pose as an expert. I do not profess to be an expert in any respect, but I have seen an allegation, which I believe to be true, that when there was a demand for a strike the other day upon this subject the men belonging to these collieries voted unanimously in favour of it. I have no doubt there was a great deal to be said on the other side, but that fact shows that there is a fairly widespread wish that, if possible, the conditions which prevail should be mitigated. That is really the point. The noble Lord said that the management were always anxious to mitigate grievances. The noble Lord representing the Government also referred to that. Lord Crawford said exactly the same thing, and he went further because he said that he thought this debate itself would stimulate those engaged in the industry to do their utmost to get rid of all these rubs as far as they could be got rid of in the management of the mines.

I am profoundly convinced that we cannot ignore, in the mining or any other industry, the feeling of unrest which is undoubtedly abroad amongst the labourers, That ought not to be. There must be something wrong. It is no good pretending that there is nothing wrong when there is a profound feeling of unrest such as we see. As your Lordships know, I was born and bred a Conservative, with all a Conservative's feelings and beliefs; but I do not think the statesmen of the country can do better than investigate and try to solve the reason for this unrest. Conciliation we must try to bring about; and I have sometimes thought that a principle which has been put forward and which has been applied to a certain number of industries with great success might be more widely applied to other industries. I mean the system of profit sharing and co-operation. Whether that can be applied to the coal industry is more than I can say, but I believe that if we could only find some method, not merely to get rid of proved grievances, but of alleged and even false grievances which ought not to be alleged at all, we should have done great good to the mining industry and every other industry. It is for these reasons that I cannot regret that my noble friend has brought forward his Bill. But I think he will allow me to say that his Bill is not a good one. I cannot, therefore, support it, and I hope he will be satisfied with the discussion and not put your Lordships to the trouble of a Division.

*THE LORD PRIVY SEAL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (THE MARQUESS OF CREWE): My Lords, the noble Marquess who has just sat down appeared to believe that some speakers had expressed the opinion that your Lordships' House was scarcely competent to consider a subject of this kind. My impression of the debate was not the same. I heard no suggestion of the kind made. I heard a certain amount of quite good-humoured banter directed at the noble Lord who introduced this measure on the ground that he does not come from where the coal comes from, the same kind of banter which is directed at those of purely urban experience who express sympathy with the grievances of agricultural labourers. But I do not think it was ever hinted by

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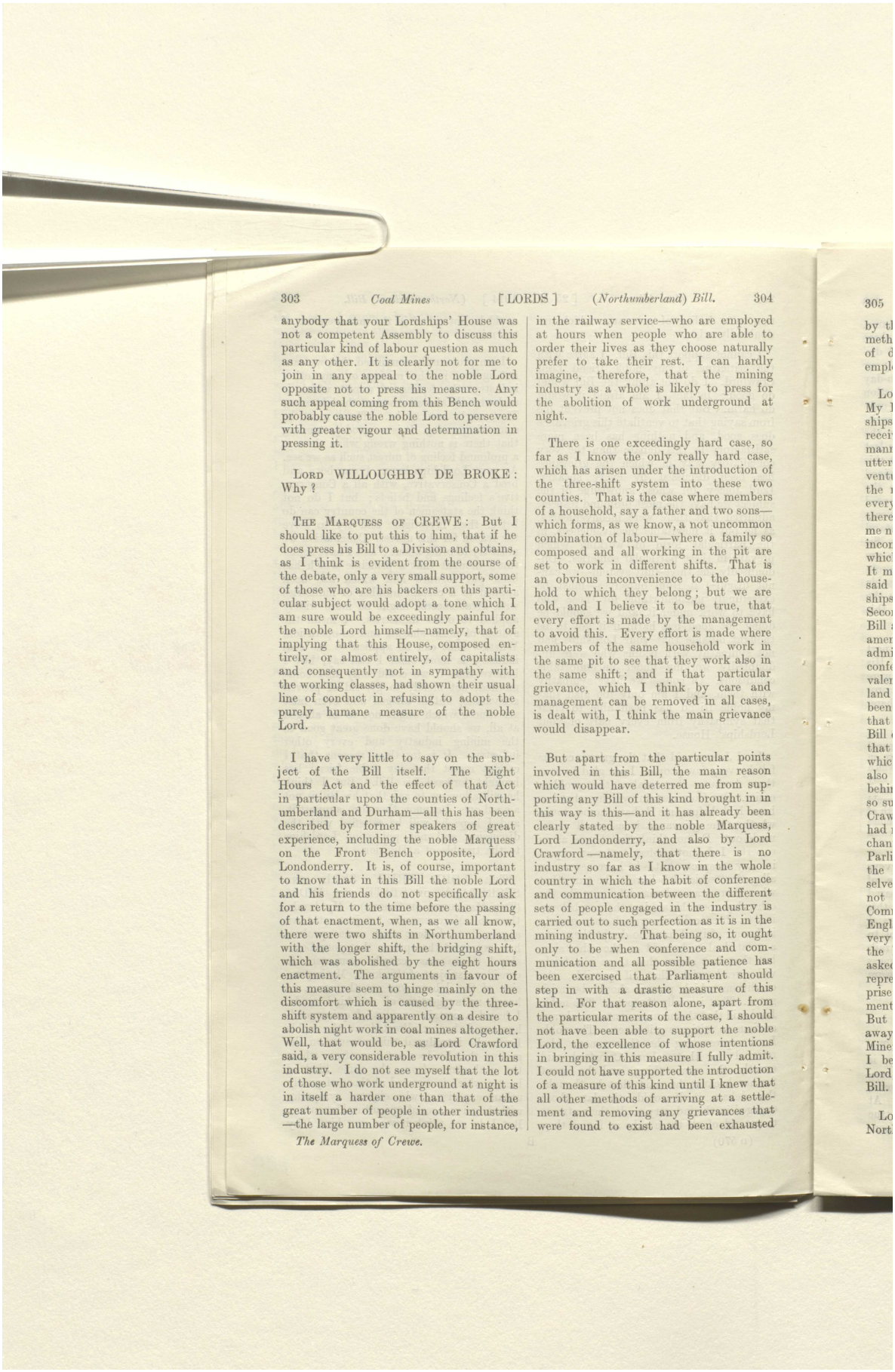

303 *Coal Mines* [LORDS] *(Northumberland) Bill.* 304

anybody that your Lordships' House was not a competent Assembly to discuss this particular kind of labour question as much as any other. It is clearly not for me to join in any appeal to the noble Lord opposite not to press his measure. Any such appeal coming from this Bench would probably cause the noble Lord to persevere with greater vigour and determination in pressing it.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: Why?

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: But I should like to put this to him, that if he does press his Bill to a Division and obtains, as I think is evident from the course of the debate, only a very small support, some of those who are his backers on this particular subject would adopt a tone which I am sure would be exceedingly painful for the noble Lord himself—namely, that of implying that this House, composed entirely, or almost entirely, of capitalists and consequently not in sympathy with the working classes, had shown their usual line of conduct in refusing to adopt the purely humane measure of the noble Lord.

I have very little to say on the subject of the Bill itself. The Eight Hours Act and the effect of that Act in particular upon the counties of Northumberland and Durham—all this has been described by former speakers of great experience, including the noble Marquess on the Front Bench opposite, Lord Londonderry. It is, of course, important to know that in this Bill the noble Lord and his friends do not specifically ask for a return to the time before the passing of that enactment, when, as we all know, there were two shifts in Northumberland with the longer shift, the bridging shift, which was abolished by the eight hours enactment. The arguments in favour of this measure seem to hinge mainly on the discomfort which is caused by the three-shift system and apparently on a desire to abolish night work in coal mines altogether. Well, that would be, as Lord Crawford said, a very considerable revolution in this industry. I do not see myself that the lot of those who work underground at night is in itself a harder one than that of the great number of people in other industries—the large number of people, for instance, in the railway service—who are employed at hours when people who are able to order their lives as they choose naturally prefer to take their rest. I can hardly imagine, therefore, that the mining industry as a whole is likely to press for the abolition of work underground at night.

There is one exceedingly hard case, so far as I know the only really hard case, which has arisen under the introduction of the three-shift system into these two counties. That is the case where members of a household, say a father and two sons—which forms, as we know, a not uncommon combination of labour—where a family so composed and all working in the pit are set to work in different shifts. That is an obvious inconvenience to the household to which they belong; but we are told, and I believe it to be true, that every effort is made by the management to avoid this. Every effort is made where members of the same household work in the same pit to see that they work also in the same shift; and if that particular grievance, which I think by care and management can be removed in all cases, is dealt with, I think the main grievance would disappear.

But apart from the particular points involved in this Bill, the main reason which would have deterred me from supporting any Bill of this kind brought in in this way is this—and it has already been clearly stated by the noble Marquess, Lord Londonderry, and also by Lord Crawford—namely, that there is no industry so far as I know in the whole country in which the habit of conference and communication between the different sets of people engaged in the industry is carried out to such perfection as it is in the mining industry. That being so, it ought only to be when conference and communication and all possible patience has been exercised that Parliament should step in with a drastic measure of this kind. For that reason alone, apart from the particular merits of the case, I should not have been able to support the noble Lord, the excellence of whose intentions in bringing in this measure I fully admit. I could not have supported the introduction of a measure of this kind until I knew that all other methods of arriving at a settlement and removing any grievances that were found to exist had been exhausted

The Marquess of Crewe.

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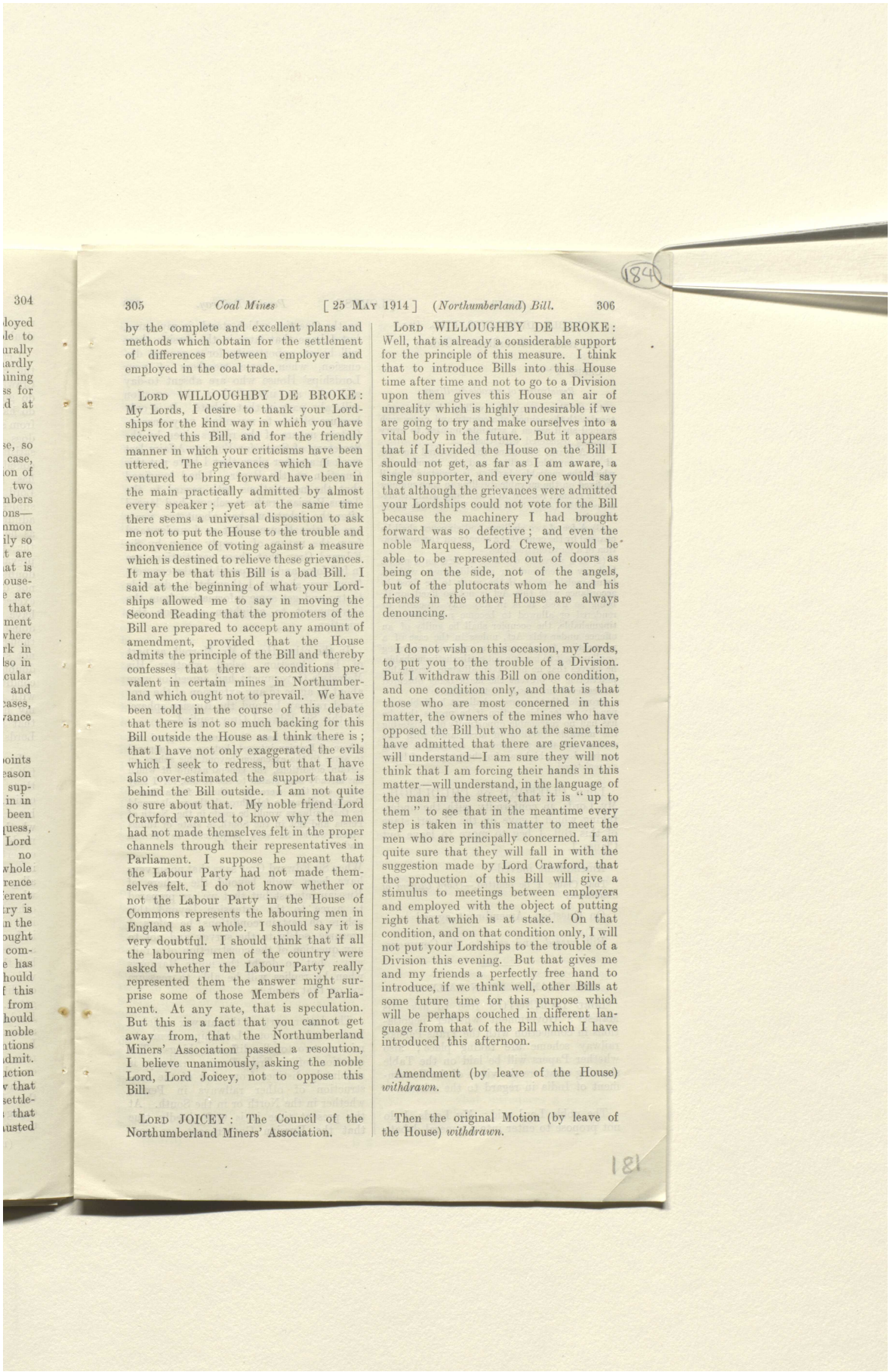

by the complete and excellent plans and methods which obtain for the settlement of differences between employer and employed in the coal trade.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: My Lords, I desire to thank your Lordships for the kind way in which you have received this Bill, and for the friendly manner in which your criticisms have been uttered. The grievances which I have ventured to bring forward have been in the main practically admitted by almost every speaker; yet at the same time there seems a universal disposition to ask me not to put the House to the trouble and inconvenience of voting against a measure which is destined to relieve these grievances. It may be that this Bill is a bad Bill. I said at the beginning of what your Lordships allowed me to say in moving the Second Reading that the promoters of the Bill are prepared to accept any amount of amendment, provided that the House admits the principle of the Bill and thereby confesses that there are conditions prevalent in certain mines in Northumberland which ought not to prevail. We have been told in the course of this debate that there is not so much backing for this Bill outside the House as I think there is; that I have not only exaggerated the evils which I seek to redress, but that I have also over-estimated the support that is behind the Bill outside. I am not quite so sure about that. My noble friend Lord Crawford wanted to know why the men had not made themselves felt in the proper channels through their representatives in Parliament. I suppose he meant that the Labour Party had not made themselves felt. I do not know whether or not the Labour Party in the House of Commons represents the labouring men in England as a whole. I should say it is very doubtful. I should think that if all the labouring men of the country were asked whether the Labour Party really represented them the answer might surprise some of those Members of Parliament. At any rate, that is speculation. But this is a fact that you cannot get away from, that the Northumberland Miners' Association passed a resolution, I believe unanimously, asking the noble Lord, Lord Joicey, not to oppose this Bill.

LORD JOICEY: The Council of the Northumberland Miners' Association.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE: Well, that is already a considerable support for the principle of this measure. I think that to introduce Bills into this House time after time and not to go to a Division upon them gives this House an air of unreality which is highly undesirable if we are going to try and make ourselves into a vital body in the future. But it appears that if I divided the House on the Bill I should not get, as far as I am aware, a single supporter, and every one would say that although the grievances were admitted your Lordships could not vote for the Bill because the machinery I had brought forward was so defective; and even the noble Marquess, Lord Crewe, would be able to be represented out of doors as being on the side, not of the angels, but of the plutocrats whom he and his friends in the other House are always denouncing.

I do not wish on this occasion, my Lords, to put you to the trouble of a Division. But I withdraw this Bill on one condition, and one condition only, and that is that those who are most concerned in this matter, the owners of the mines who have opposed the Bill but who at the same time have admitted that there are grievances, will understand—I am sure they will not think that I am forcing their hands in this matter—will understand, in the language of the man in the street, that it is "up to them" to see that in the meantime every step is taken in this matter to meet the men who are principally concerned. I am quite sure that they will fall in with the suggestion made by Lord Crawford, that the production of this Bill will give a stimulus to meetings between employers and employed with the object of putting right that which is at stake. On that condition, and on that condition only, I will not put your Lordships to the trouble of a Division this evening. But that gives me and my friends a perfectly free hand to introduce, if we think well, other Bills at some future time for this purpose which will be perhaps couched in different language from that of the Bill which I have introduced this afternoon.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Then the original Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

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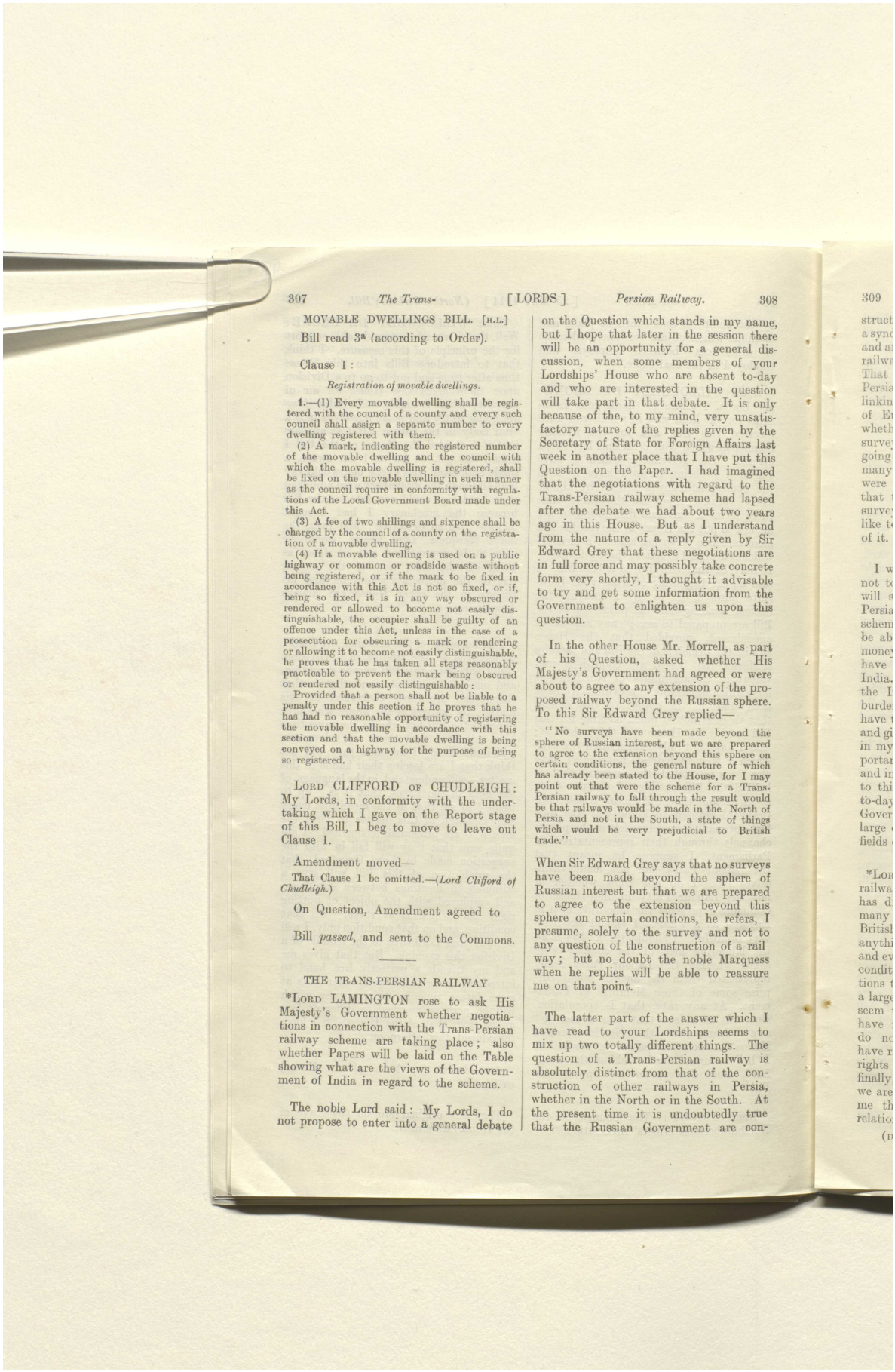
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [184v] (368/442)



MOVABLE DWELLINGS BILL. [H.L.]

Bill read 3ª (according to Order).

Clause 1:

Registration of movable dwellings.

1.—(1) Every movable dwelling shall be registered with the council of a county and every such council shall assign a separate number to every dwelling registered with them.

(2) A mark, indicating the registered number of the movable dwelling and the council with which the movable dwelling is registered, shall be fixed on the movable dwelling in such manner as the council require in conformity with regulations of the Local Government Board made under this Act.

(3) A fee of two shillings and sixpence shall be charged by the council of a county on the registration of a movable dwelling.

(4) If a movable dwelling is used on a public highway or common or roadside waste without being registered, or if the mark to be fixed in accordance with this Act is not so fixed, or if, being so fixed, it is in any way obscured or rendered or allowed to become not easily distinguishable, the occupier shall be guilty of an offence under this Act, unless in the case of a prosecution for obscuring a mark or rendering or allowing it to become not easily distinguishable, he proves that he has taken all steps reasonably practicable to prevent the mark being obscured or rendered not easily distinguishable:

Provided that a person shall not be liable to a penalty under this section if he proves that he has had no reasonable opportunity of registering the movable dwelling in accordance with this section and that the movable dwelling is being conveyed on a highway for the purpose of being so registered.

LORD CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH: My Lords, in conformity with the undertaking which I gave on the Report stage of this Bill, I beg to move to leave out Clause 1.

Amendment moved—

That Clause 1 be omitted.—(*Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to

Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

THE TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY

*LORD LAMINGTON rose to ask His Majesty's Government whether negotiations in connection with the Trans-Persian railway scheme are taking place; also whether Papers will be laid on the Table showing what are the views of the Government of India in regard to the scheme.

The noble Lord said: My Lords, I do not propose to enter into a general debate on the Question which stands in my name, but I hope that later in the session there will be an opportunity for a general discussion, when some members of your Lordships' House who are absent to-day and who are interested in the question will take part in that debate. It is only because of the, to my mind, very unsatisfactory nature of the replies given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs last week in another place that I have put this Question on the Paper. I had imagined that the negotiations with regard to the Trans-Persian railway scheme had lapsed after the debate we had about two years ago in this House. But as I understand from the nature of a reply given by Sir Edward Grey that these negotiations are in full force and may possibly take concrete form very shortly, I thought it advisable to try and get some information from the Government to enlighten us upon this question.

In the other House Mr. Morrell, as part of his Question, asked whether His Majesty's Government had agreed or were about to agree to any extension of the proposed railway beyond the Russian sphere. To this Sir Edward Grey replied—

"No surveys have been made beyond the sphere of Russian interest, but we are prepared to agree to the extension beyond this sphere on certain conditions, the general nature of which has already been stated to the House, for I may point out that were the scheme for a Trans-Persian railway to fall through the result would be that railways would be made in the North of Persia and not in the South, a state of things which would be very prejudicial to British trade."

When Sir Edward Grey says that no surveys have been made beyond the sphere of Russian interest but that we are prepared to agree to the extension beyond this sphere on certain conditions, he refers, I presume, solely to the survey and not to any question of the construction of a railway; but no doubt the noble Marquess when he replies will be able to reassure me on that point.

The latter part of the answer which I have read to your Lordships seems to mix up two totally different things. The question of a Trans-Persian railway is absolutely distinct from that of the construction of other railways in Persia, whether in the North or in the South. At the present time it is undoubtedly true that the Russian Government are con-

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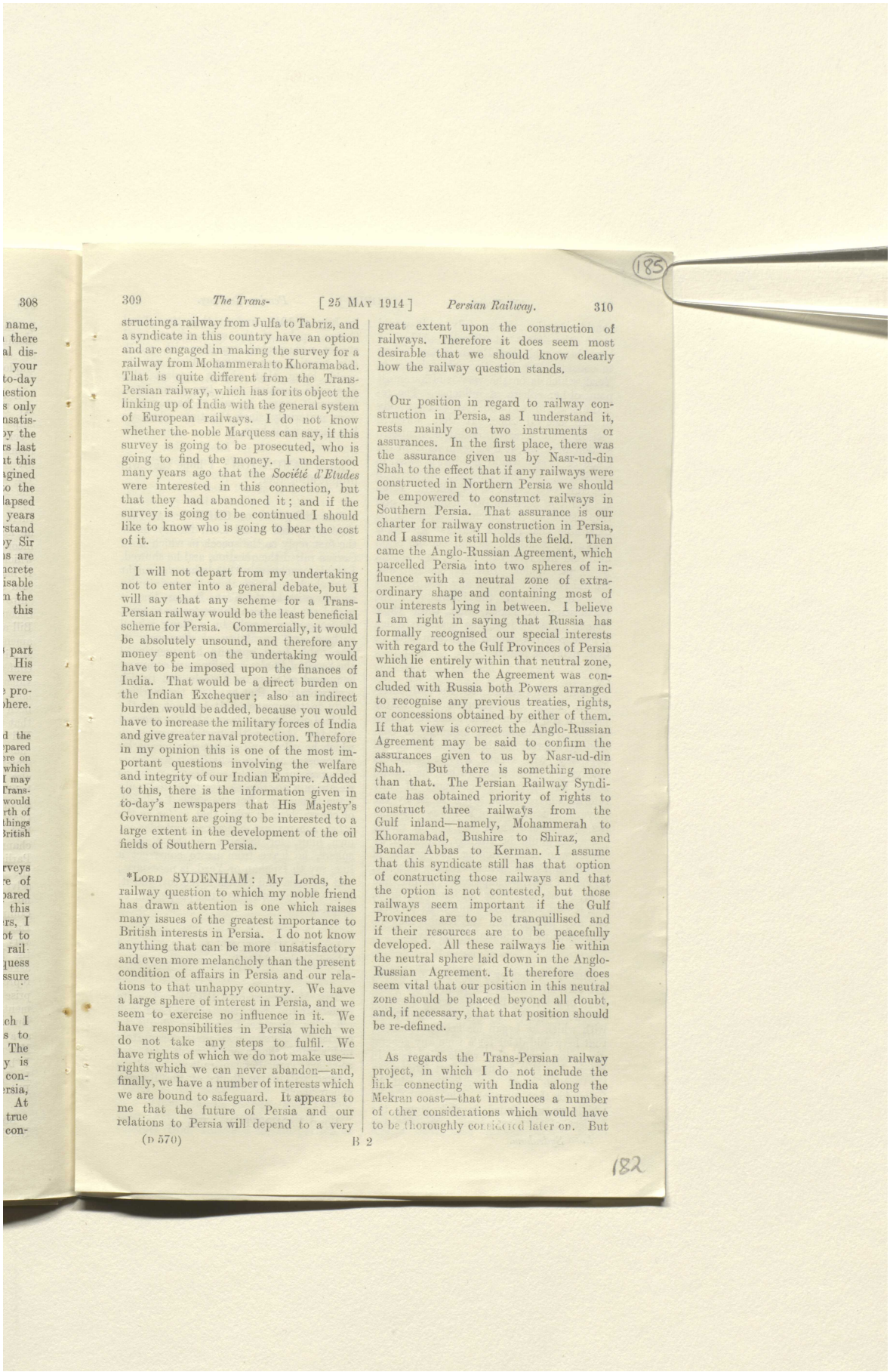

structing a railway from Julfa to Tabriz, and a syndicate in this country have an option and are engaged in making the survey for a railway from Mohammerah to Khoramabad. That is quite different from the Trans-Persian railway, which has for its object the linking up of India with the general system of European railways. I do not know whether the noble Marquess can say, if this survey is going to be prosecuted, who is going to find the money. I understood many years ago that the *Société d'Etudes* were interested in this connection, but that they had abandoned it; and if the survey is going to be continued I should like to know who is going to bear the cost of it.

I will not depart from my undertaking not to enter into a general debate, but I will say that any scheme for a Trans-Persian railway would be the least beneficial scheme for Persia. Commercially, it would be absolutely unsound, and therefore any money spent on the undertaking would have to be imposed upon the finances of India. That would be a direct burden on the Indian Exchequer; also an indirect burden would be added, because you would have to increase the military forces of India and give greater naval protection. Therefore in my opinion this is one of the most important questions involving the welfare and integrity of our Indian Empire. Added to this, there is the information given in to-day's newspapers that His Majesty's Government are going to be interested to a large extent in the development of the oil fields of Southern Persia.

*LORD SYDENHAM: My Lords, the railway question to which my noble friend has drawn attention is one which raises many issues of the greatest importance to British interests in Persia. I do not know anything that can be more unsatisfactory and even more melancholy than the present condition of affairs in Persia and our relations to that unhappy country. We have a large sphere of interest in Persia, and we seem to exercise no influence in it. We have responsibilities in Persia which we do not take any steps to fulfil. We have rights of which we do not make use—rights which we can never abandon—and, finally, we have a number of interests which we are bound to safeguard. It appears to me that the future of Persia and our relations to Persia will depend to a very great extent upon the construction of railways. Therefore it does seem most desirable that we should know clearly how the railway question stands.

Our position in regard to railway construction in Persia, as I understand it, rests mainly on two instruments or assurances. In the first place, there was the assurance given us by Nasr-ud-din Shah to the effect that if any railways were constructed in Northern Persia we should be empowered to construct railways in Southern Persia. That assurance is our charter for railway construction in Persia, and I assume it still holds the field. Then came the Anglo-Russian Agreement, which parcelled Persia into two spheres of influence with a neutral zone of extraordinary shape and containing most of our interests lying in between. I believe I am right in saying that Russia has formally recognised our special interests with regard to the Gulf Provinces of Persia which lie entirely within that neutral zone, and that when the Agreement was concluded with Russia both Powers arranged to recognise any previous treaties, rights, or concessions obtained by either of them. If that view is correct the Anglo-Russian Agreement may be said to confirm the assurances given to us by Nasr-ud-din Shah. But there is something more than that. The Persian Railway Syndicate has obtained priority of rights to construct three railways from the Gulf inland—namely, Mohammerah to Khoramabad, Bushire to Shiraz, and Bandar Abbas to Kerman. I assume that this syndicate still has that option of constructing those railways and that the option is not contested, but those railways seem important if the Gulf Provinces are to be tranquillised and if their resources are to be peacefully developed. All these railways lie within the neutral sphere laid down in the Anglo-Russian Agreement. It therefore does seem vital that our position in this neutral zone should be placed beyond all doubt, and, if necessary, that that position should be re-defined.

As regards the Trans-Persian railway project, in which I do not include the link connecting with India along the Mekran coast—that introduces a number of other considerations which would have to be thoroughly considered later on. But

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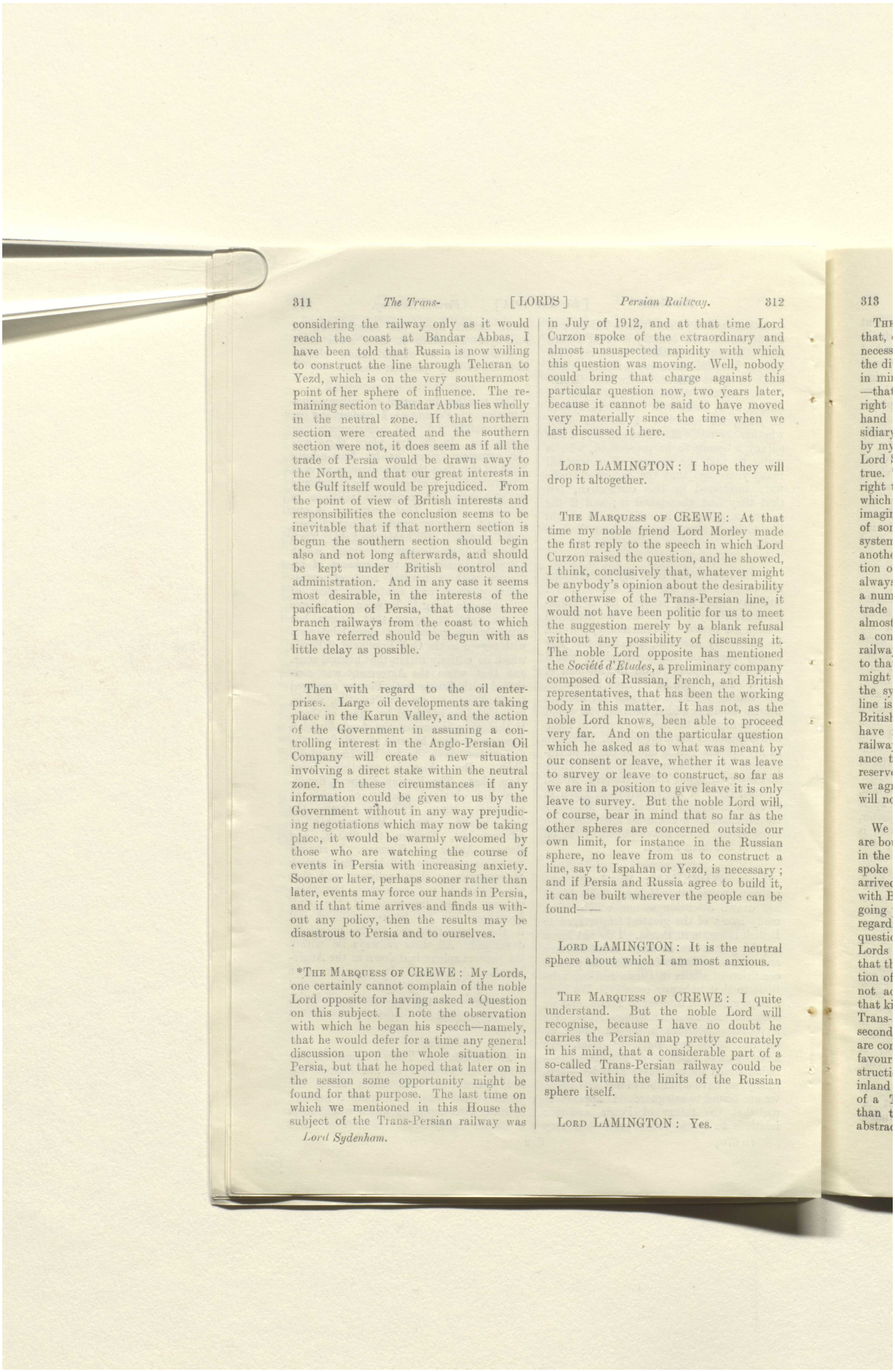
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [185v] (370/442)



considering the railway only as it would reach the coast at Bandar Abbas, I have been told that Russia is now willing to construct the line through Teheran to Yezd, which is on the very southernmost point of her sphere of influence. The remaining section to Bandar Abbas lies wholly in the neutral zone. If that northern section were created and the southern section were not, it does seem as if all the trade of Persia would be drawn away to the North, and that our great interests in the Gulf itself would be prejudiced. From the point of view of British interests and responsibilities the conclusion seems to be inevitable that if that northern section is begun the southern section should begin also and not long afterwards, and should be kept under British control and administration. And in any case it seems most desirable, in the interests of the pacification of Persia, that those three branch railways from the coast to which I have referred should be begun with as little delay as possible.

Then with regard to the oil enterprises. Large oil developments are taking place in the Karun Valley, and the action of the Government in assuming a controlling interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company will create a new situation involving a direct stake within the neutral zone. In these circumstances if any information could be given to us by the Government without in any way prejudicing negotiations which may now be taking place, it would be warmly welcomed by those who are watching the course of events in Persia with increasing anxiety. Sooner or later, perhaps sooner rather than later, events may force our hands in Persia, and if that time arrives and finds us without any policy, then the results may be disastrous to Persia and to ourselves.

*THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: My Lords, one certainly cannot complain of the noble Lord opposite for having asked a Question on this subject. I note the observation with which he began his speech—namely, that he would defer for a time any general discussion upon the whole situation in Persia, but that he hoped that later on in the session some opportunity might be found for that purpose. The last time on which we mentioned in this House the subject of the Trans-Persian railway was in July of 1912, and at that time Lord Curzon spoke of the extraordinary and almost unsuspected rapidity with which this question was moving. Well, nobody could bring that charge against this particular question now, two years later, because it cannot be said to have moved very materially since the time when we last discussed it here.

LORD LAMINGTON: I hope they will drop it altogether.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: At that time my noble friend Lord Morley made the first reply to the speech in which Lord Curzon raised the question, and he showed, I think, conclusively that, whatever might be anybody's opinion about the desirability or otherwise of the Trans-Persian line, it would not have been politic for us to meet the suggestion merely by a blank refusal without any possibility of discussing it. The noble Lord opposite has mentioned the *Société d'Etudes*, a preliminary company composed of Russian, French, and British representatives, that has been the working body in this matter. It has not, as the noble Lord knows, been able to proceed very far. And on the particular question which he asked as to what was meant by our consent or leave, whether it was leave to survey or leave to construct, so far as we are in a position to give leave it is only leave to survey. But the noble Lord will, of course, bear in mind that so far as the other spheres are concerned outside our own limit, for instance in the Russian sphere, no leave from us to construct a line, say to Ispahan or Yezd, is necessary; and if Persia and Russia agree to build it, it can be built wherever the people can be found——

LORD LAMINGTON: It is the neutral sphere about which I am most anxious.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: I quite understand. But the noble Lord will recognise, because I have no doubt he carries the Persian map pretty accurately in his mind, that a considerable part of a so-called Trans-Persian railway could be started within the limits of the Russian sphere itself.

LORD LAMINGTON: Yes.

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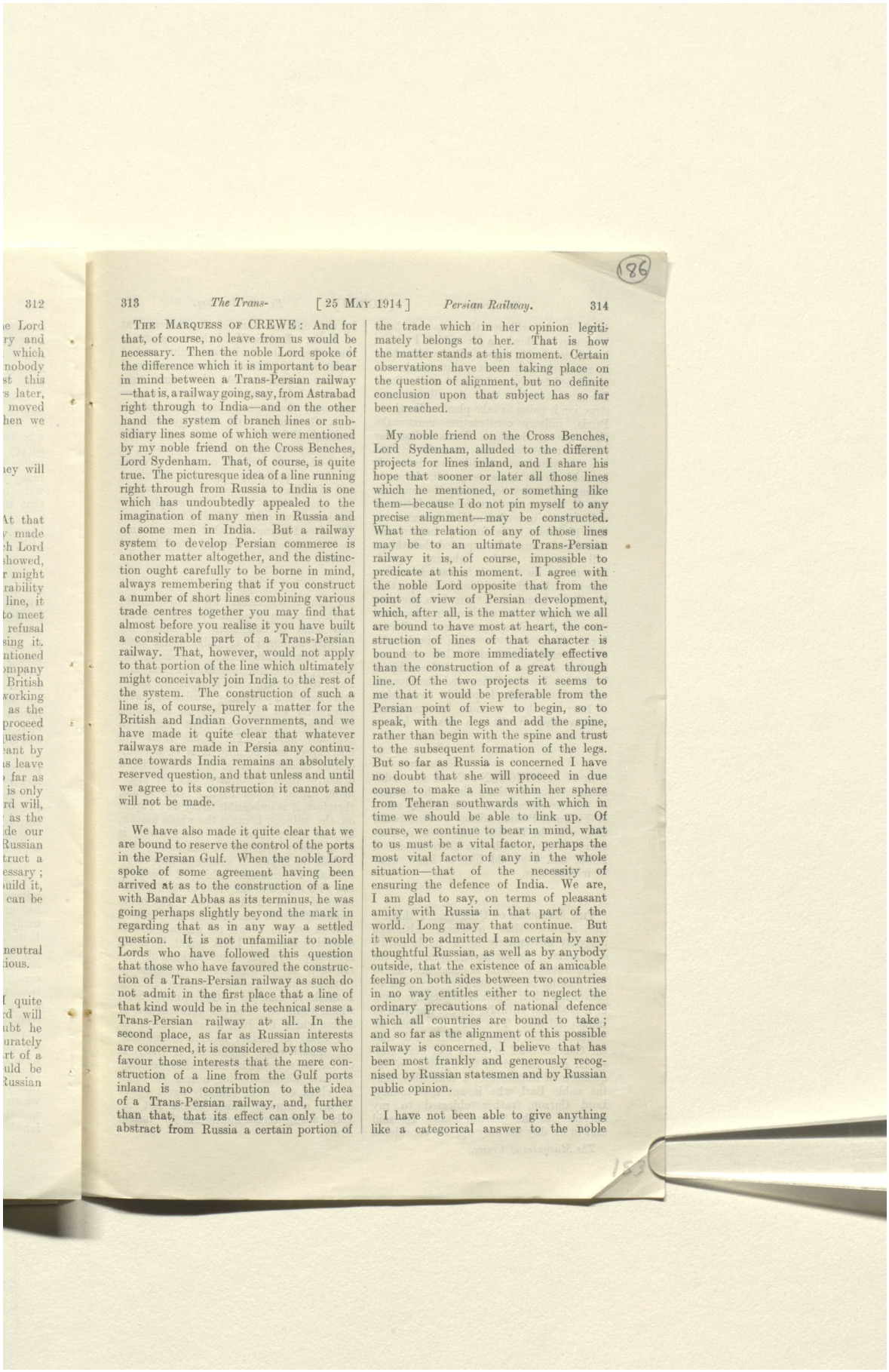

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: And for that, of course, no leave from us would be necessary. Then the noble Lord spoke of the difference which it is important to bear in mind between a Trans-Persian railway—that is, a railway going, say, from Astrabad right through to India—and on the other hand the system of branch lines or subsidiary lines some of which were mentioned by my noble friend on the Cross Benches, Lord Sydenham. That, of course, is quite true. The picturesque idea of a line running right through from Russia to India is one which has undoubtedly appealed to the imagination of many men in Russia and of some men in India. But a railway system to develop Persian commerce is another matter altogether, and the distinction ought carefully to be borne in mind, always remembering that if you construct a number of short lines combining various trade centres together you may find that almost before you realise it you have built a considerable part of a Trans-Persian railway. That, however, would not apply to that portion of the line which ultimately might conceivably join India to the rest of the system. The construction of such a line is, of course, purely a matter for the British and Indian Governments, and we have made it quite clear that whatever railways are made in Persia any continuance towards India remains an absolutely reserved question, and that unless and until we agree to its construction it cannot and will not be made.

We have also made it quite clear that we are bound to reserve the control of the ports in the Persian Gulf. When the noble Lord spoke of some agreement having been arrived at as to the construction of a line with Bandar Abbas as its terminus, he was going perhaps slightly beyond the mark in regarding that as in any way a settled question. It is not unfamiliar to noble Lords who have followed this question that those who have favoured the construction of a Trans-Persian railway as such do not admit in the first place that a line of that kind would be in the technical sense a Trans-Persian railway at all. In the second place, as far as Russian interests are concerned, it is considered by those who favour those interests that the mere construction of a line from the Gulf ports inland is no contribution to the idea of a Trans-Persian railway, and, further than that, that its effect can only be to abstract from Russia a certain portion of the trade which in her opinion legitimately belongs to her. That is how the matter stands at this moment. Certain observations have been taking place on the question of alignment, but no definite conclusion upon that subject has so far been reached.

My noble friend on the Cross Benches, Lord Sydenham, alluded to the different projects for lines inland, and I share his hope that sooner or later all those lines which he mentioned, or something like them—because I do not pin myself to any precise alignment—may be constructed. What the relation of any of those lines may be to an ultimate Trans-Persian railway it is, of course, impossible to predicate at this moment. I agree with the noble Lord opposite that from the point of view of Persian development, which, after all, is the matter which we all are bound to have most at heart, the construction of lines of that character is bound to be more immediately effective than the construction of a great through line. Of the two projects it seems to me that it would be preferable from the Persian point of view to begin, so to speak, with the legs and add the spine, rather than begin with the spine and trust to the subsequent formation of the legs. But so far as Russia is concerned I have no doubt that she will proceed in due course to make a line within her sphere from Teheran southwards with which in time we should be able to link up. Of course, we continue to bear in mind, what to us must be a vital factor, perhaps the most vital factor of any in the whole situation—that of the necessity of ensuring the defence of India. We are, I am glad to say, on terms of pleasant amity with Russia in that part of the world. Long may that continue. But it would be admitted I am certain by any thoughtful Russian, as well as by anybody outside, that the existence of an amicable feeling on both sides between two countries in no way entitles either to neglect the ordinary precautions of national defence which all countries are bound to take; and so far as the alignment of this possible railway is concerned, I believe that has been most frankly and generously recognised by Russian statesmen and by Russian public opinion.

I have not been able to give anything like a categorical answer to the noble

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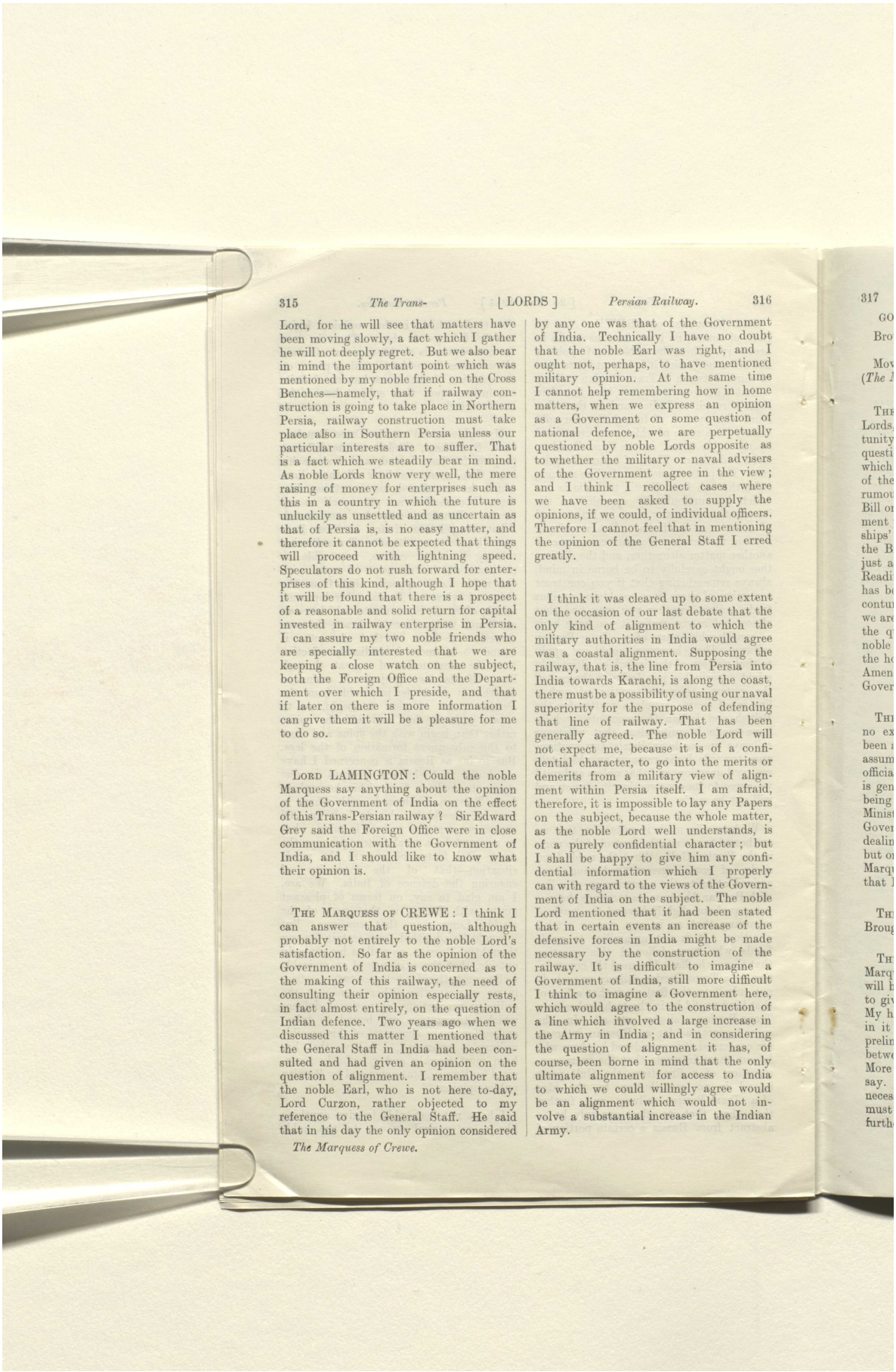

Lord, for he will see that matters have been moving slowly, a fact which I gather he will not deeply regret. But we also bear in mind the important point which was mentioned by my noble friend on the Cross Benches—namely, that if railway construction is going to take place in Northern Persia, railway construction must take place also in Southern Persia unless our particular interests are to suffer. That is a fact which we steadily bear in mind. As noble Lords know very well, the mere raising of money for enterprises such as this in a country in which the future is unluckily as unsettled and as uncertain as that of Persia is, is no easy matter, and therefore it cannot be expected that things will proceed with lightning speed. Speculators do not rush forward for enterprises of this kind, although I hope that it will be found that there is a prospect of a reasonable and solid return for capital invested in railway enterprise in Persia. I can assure my two noble friends who are specially interested that we are keeping a close watch on the subject, both the Foreign Office and the Department over which I preside, and that if later on there is more information I can give them it will be a pleasure for me to do so.

LORD LAMINGTON: Could the noble Marquess say anything about the opinion of the Government of India on the effect of this Trans-Persian railway? Sir Edward Grey said the Foreign Office were in close communication with the Government of India, and I should like to know what their opinion is.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: I think I can answer that question, although probably not entirely to the noble Lord's satisfaction. So far as the opinion of the Government of India is concerned as to the making of this railway, the need of consulting their opinion especially rests, in fact almost entirely, on the question of Indian defence. Two years ago when we discussed this matter I mentioned that the General Staff in India had been consulted and had given an opinion on the question of alignment. I remember that the noble Earl, who is not here to-day, Lord Curzon, rather objected to my reference to the General Staff. He said that in his day the only opinion considered by any one was that of the Government of India. Technically I have no doubt that the noble Earl was right, and I ought not, perhaps, to have mentioned military opinion. At the same time I cannot help remembering how in home matters, when we express an opinion as a Government on some question of national defence, we are perpetually questioned by noble Lords opposite as to whether the military or naval advisers of the Government agree in the view; and I think I recollect cases where we have been asked to supply the opinions, if we could, of individual officers. Therefore I cannot feel that in mentioning the opinion of the General Staff I erred greatly.

I think it was cleared up to some extent on the occasion of our last debate that the only kind of alignment to which the military authorities in India would agree was a coastal alignment. Supposing the railway, that is, the line from Persia into India towards Karachi, is along the coast, there must be a possibility of using our naval superiority for the purpose of defending that line of railway. That has been generally agreed. The noble Lord will not expect me, because it is of a confidential character, to go into the merits or demerits from a military view of alignment within Persia itself. I am afraid, therefore, it is impossible to lay any Papers on the subject, because the whole matter, as the noble Lord well understands, is of a purely confidential character; but I shall be happy to give him any confidential information which I properly can with regard to the views of the Government of India on the subject. The noble Lord mentioned that it had been stated that in certain events an increase of the defensive forces in India might be made necessary by the construction of the railway. It is difficult to imagine a Government of India, still more difficult I think to imagine a Government here, which would agree to the construction of a line which involved a large increase in the Army in India; and in considering the question of alignment it has, of course, been borne in mind that the only ultimate alignment for access to India to which we could willingly agree would be an alignment which would not involve a substantial increase in the Indian Army.

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GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 1ª.—(*The Marquess of Crewe.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I should like to take this opportunity of asking the noble Marquess a question. This is the first occasion on which we have been in this session seised of the Government of Ireland Bill, but a rumour has reached us that there is another Bill on the same subject which the Government propose to introduce into your Lordships' House, a measure vitally altering the Bill to which the noble Marquess has just asked your Lordships to give a First Reading. Generally speaking this House has been treated by the Government with contumely, but on the present occasion we are exalted to a very high honour; and the question I should like to put to the noble Marquess is, How soon may we have the honour of seeing what is known as the Amending Bill which in another place the Government have foreshadowed?

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: I can take no exception to the question which has been asked by the noble Marquess. He has assumed, if I may say so, a sort of semi-official ignorance of a fact which I think is generally recognised as public property, being founded on a statement by the Prime Minister—that it is the intention of the Government to bring in a second Bill dealing with the same subject as this Bill, but on somewhat different lines. The noble Marquess asks me to tell the House when that Bill will be brought up.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Brought in.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: The noble Marquess is quite right—when that Bill will be brought in. I am not in a position to give a definite answer to that question. My hope is that when that Bill is brought in it will be brought in as the result of preliminary conversation and agreement between the different parties concerned. More than that at this moment I cannot say. That implies, of course, that in the necessarily considerable interval which must elapse before it can be brought in further efforts will be made to arrive at such agreement as can be translated into the terms of a Bill.

We are now about to adjourn, if the House agrees, for a considerable period of repose. The suggestion is that the House should meet again on June 15, but I do not propose to put down for Second Reading either this measure or any other measure of importance during the first week after the House reassembles. It is possible, however, that in the subsequent week—the week commencing on June 22—I may ask your Lordships to take the Second Reading of one or other of our important Government Bills. That is all the information which I can give to the noble Marquess at this moment.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am much obliged to the noble Marquess. I will only add, in order to avoid misconception, that with regard to the dates he foreshadows—the second week after the reassembling of your Lordships' House—it is impossible in the absence of my noble friend Lord Lansdowne to enter into any engagement or agreement of any sort or kind as to when these Bills will be effectively taken.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: Before the noble Marquess who leads the Opposition left London I had an opportunity of some conversation with him, and we agreed that we on this side would not attempt before we adjourned for the Whitsuntide recess to name any particular date on which the measures will be taken, but I thought it courteous to noble Lords opposite to state the course which we shall probably wish to take when we reassemble.

On Question, Bill read 1ª, and to be *printed*. (No. 106.)

COUNCIL OF INDIA BILL. [H.L.]

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: I ask your Lordships to give a First Reading to a Bill to amend the law as to the Council of India, and for other purposes connected therewith. This is the measure about which I made some observations to your Lordships during last session.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 1ª.—(*The Marquess of Crewe.*)

On Question, Bill read 1ª, and to be *printed*. (No. 107.)

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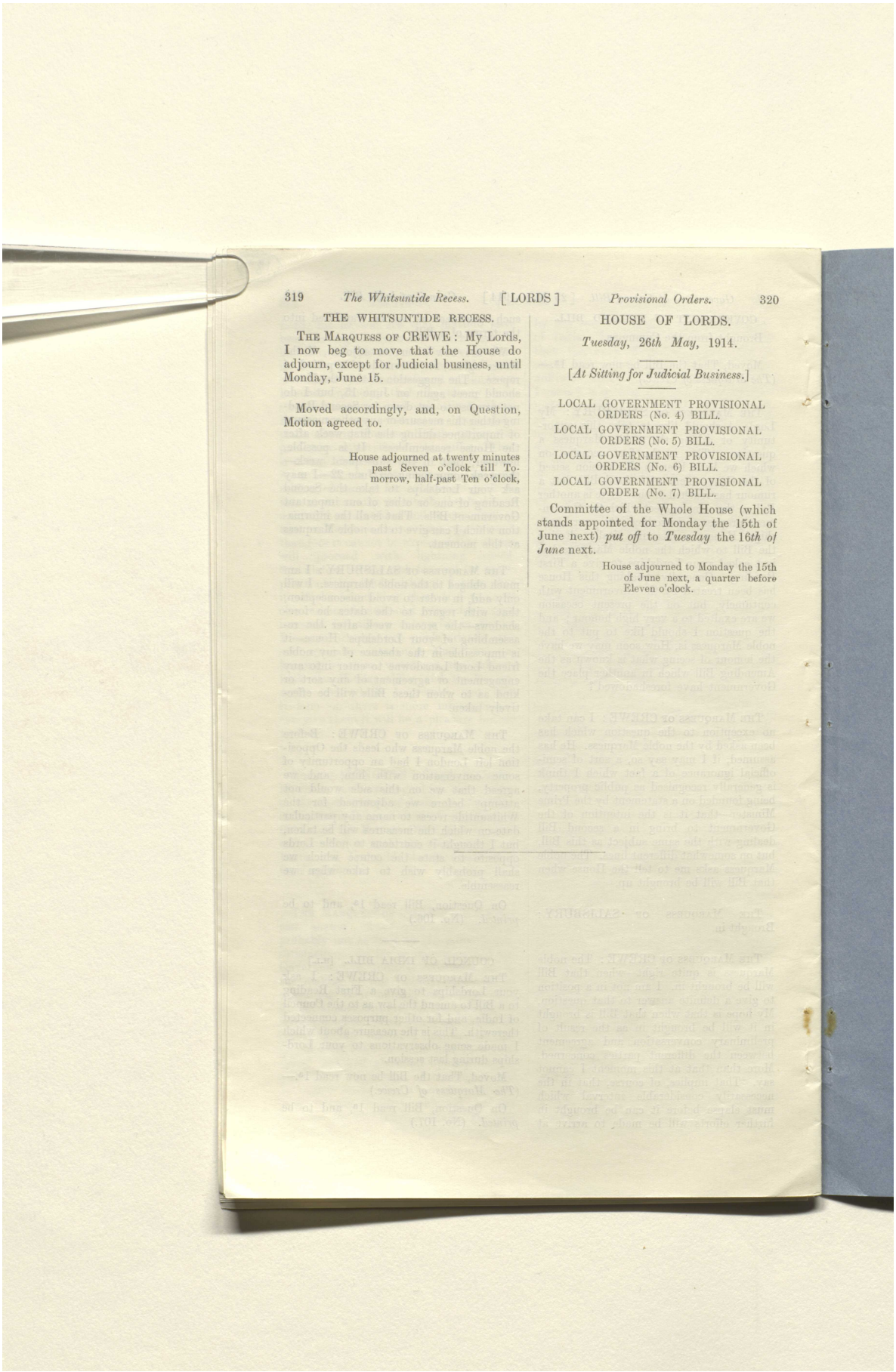

THE WHITSUNTIDE RECESS.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: My Lords, I now beg to move that the House do adjourn, except for Judicial business, until Monday, June 15.

Moved accordingly, and, on Question, Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Seven o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock,

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 26th May, 1914.

[*At Sitting for Judicial Business.*]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 7) BILL.

Committee of the Whole House (which stands appointed for Monday the 15th of June next) *put off* to *Tuesday* the 16*th of June* next.

House adjourned to Monday the 15th of June next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

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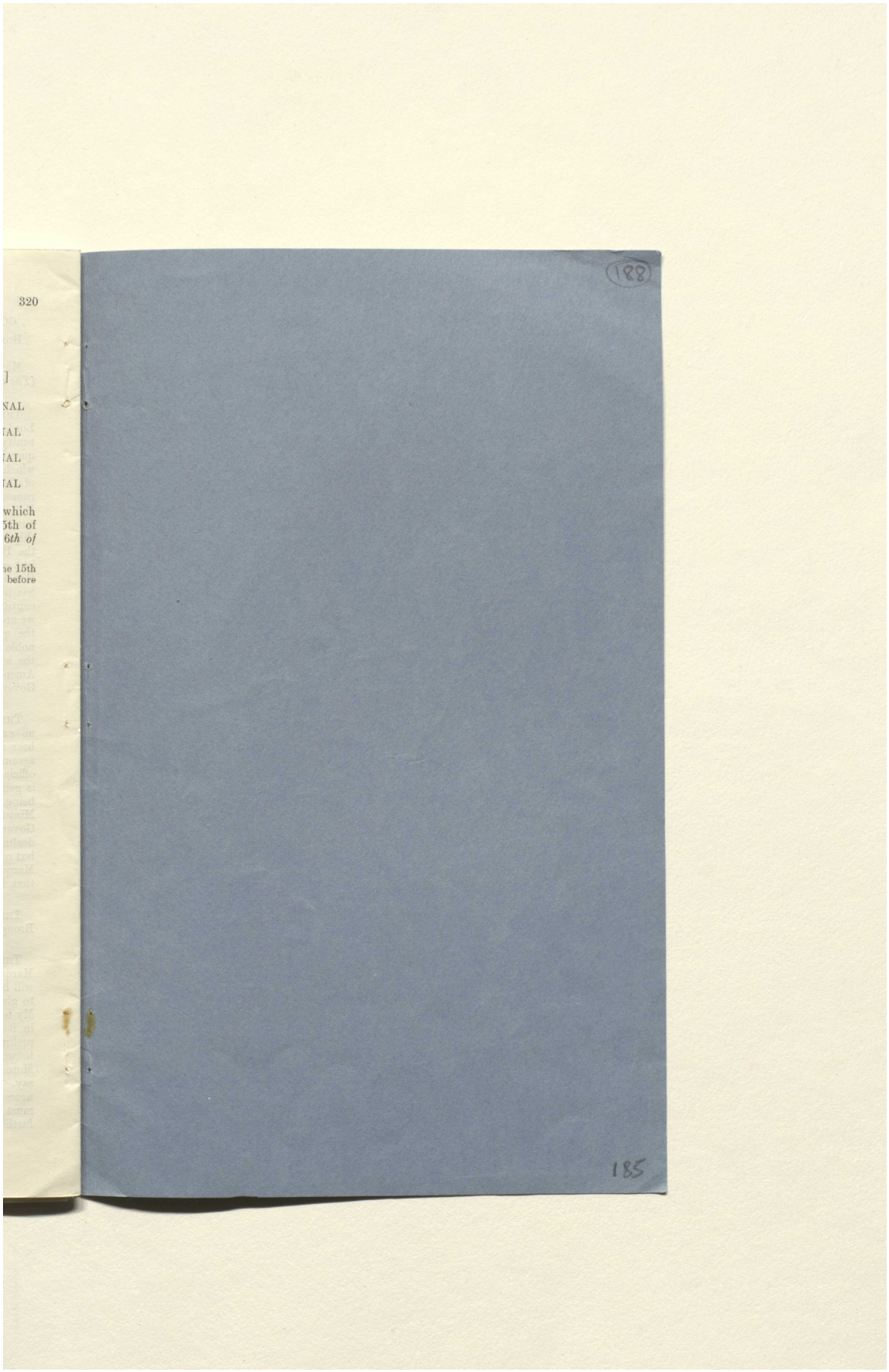

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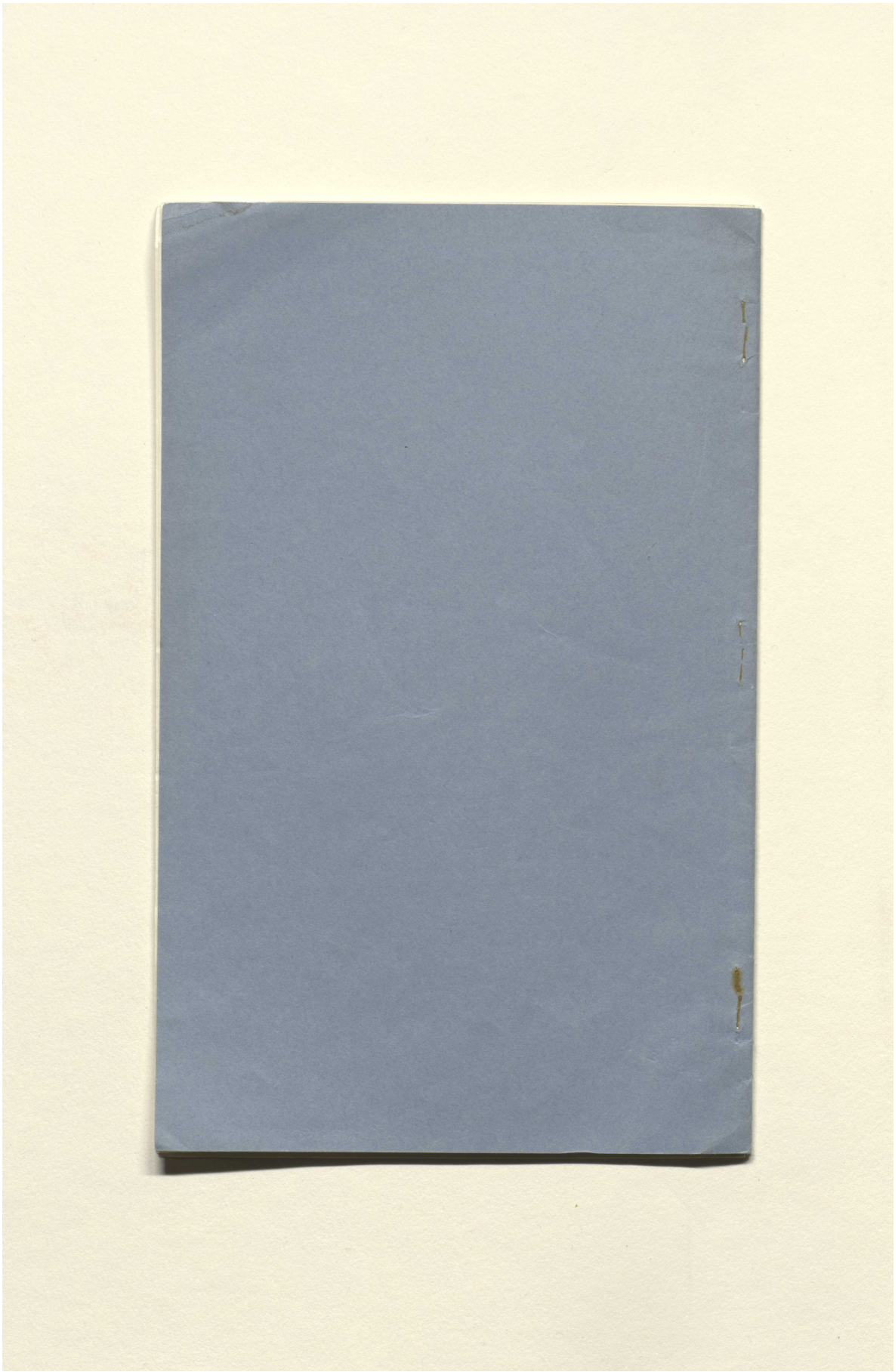

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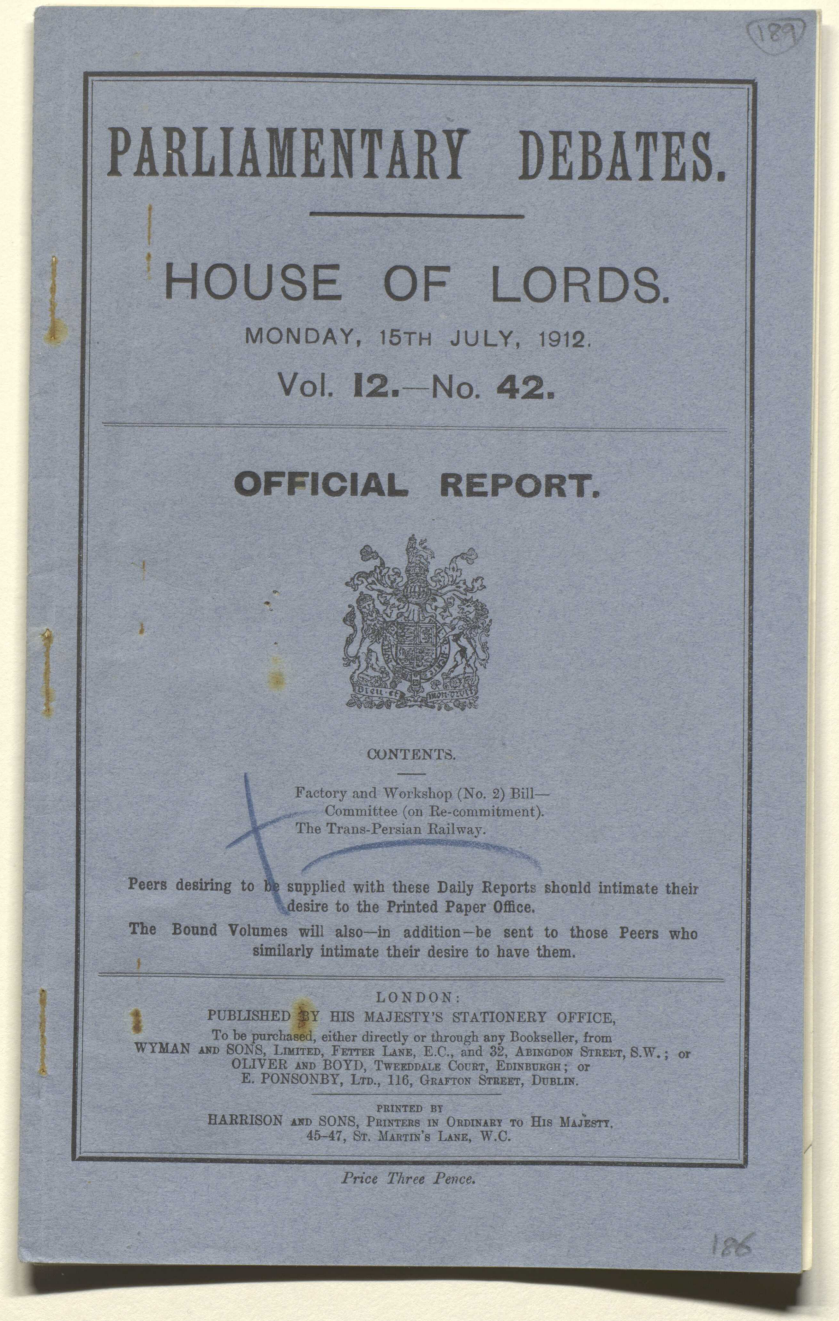

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, 15TH JULY, 1912.

Vol. 12.—No. 42.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

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Committee (on Re-commitment).
The Trans-Persian Railway.

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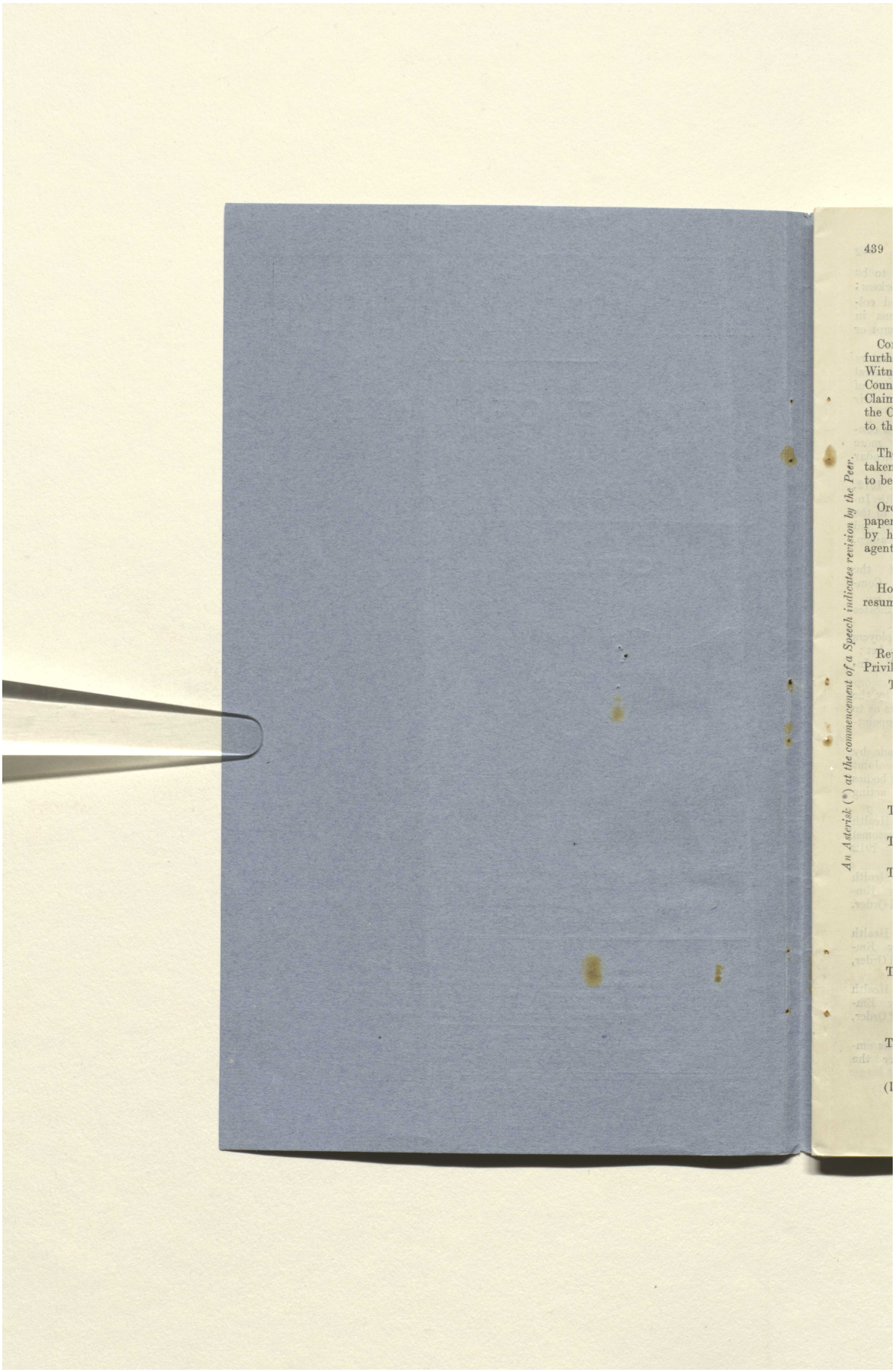

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HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 15th July, 1912.

BARONY OF LATYMER.

Committee for Privileges met: Counsel further heard on behalf of the Claimant: Witnesses examined: Evidence put in: Counsel heard on behalf of the Crown: Claim *considered*: Resolution *agreed to* by the Committee; report thereof to be made to the House.

The proceedings and minutes of evidence taken before the Committee for Privileges to be *printed*.

Ordered, That all deeds, documents and papers produced on behalf of the Claimant by his agents be delivered to the said agents.

House adjourned during pleasure; and resumed by the Lord Chancellor.

BARONY OF LATYMER.

Report made from the Committee for Privileges:

That the Barony of Latymer was created by Writ of Summons tested the 25th day of February in the tenth year of King Henry VI, addressed to Sir George Nevill, Knight, and that the said Sir George Nevill was subsequently present as a Peer in Parliament in the style of Lord Latymer.

That the Barony of Latymer so created is a Barony in Fee.

That the said Barony descended to John 4th Lord Latymer.

That John 4th Lord Latymer died in the year 1577 without issue male, leaving his four daughters, Catherine Countess of Northumberland, Dorothy afterwards Countess of Exeter, Dame Lucy Cornwallis and Dame Elizabeth Danvers his co-heirs.

That the said Barony thereupon fell into abeyance between the above-mentioned four daughters of John 4th Lord Latymer and is now in abeyance between their co-heirs.

That the Petitioner, Francis Coutts, is a co-heir to the said Barony of Latymer.

That the other co-heirs to the said Barony are:

John James Hugh Henry, Duke of Atholl;
Elizabeth Anne, Countess Palatiano, Nina Katherine Elena Webley-Parry, Olivia Fanny White, Frances Oxenham Russell;
Henry Rainald, Viscount Gage;
Colonel Hugo Montgomery Campbell;
Mary Ethel, Baroness Beaumont;
Henry Noailles Widdrington Standish;
Edward Carington Wright of Kelvedon;
John Rogerson, Lord Rollo;
Millicent Grace Gordon-Ives; and
Montagu, Earl of Abingdon:

Read, and *agreed to*; and *resolved* and *adjudged* accordingly; and Resolution and Judgment to be laid before His Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

The EARL OF TANKERVILLE—Took the Oath.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:

London County Council (Finance).
London County Council (General Powers).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

SHIPLEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL.

Read 3ª, and *passed*.

STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES WATER BILL.

GAS COMPANIES (STANDARD BURNER) BILL.

Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and *passed*, and returned to the Commons.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 9) BILL. (No. 115.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 13) BILL. (No. 116.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be *printed*; and *referred* to the Examiners.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Peer.

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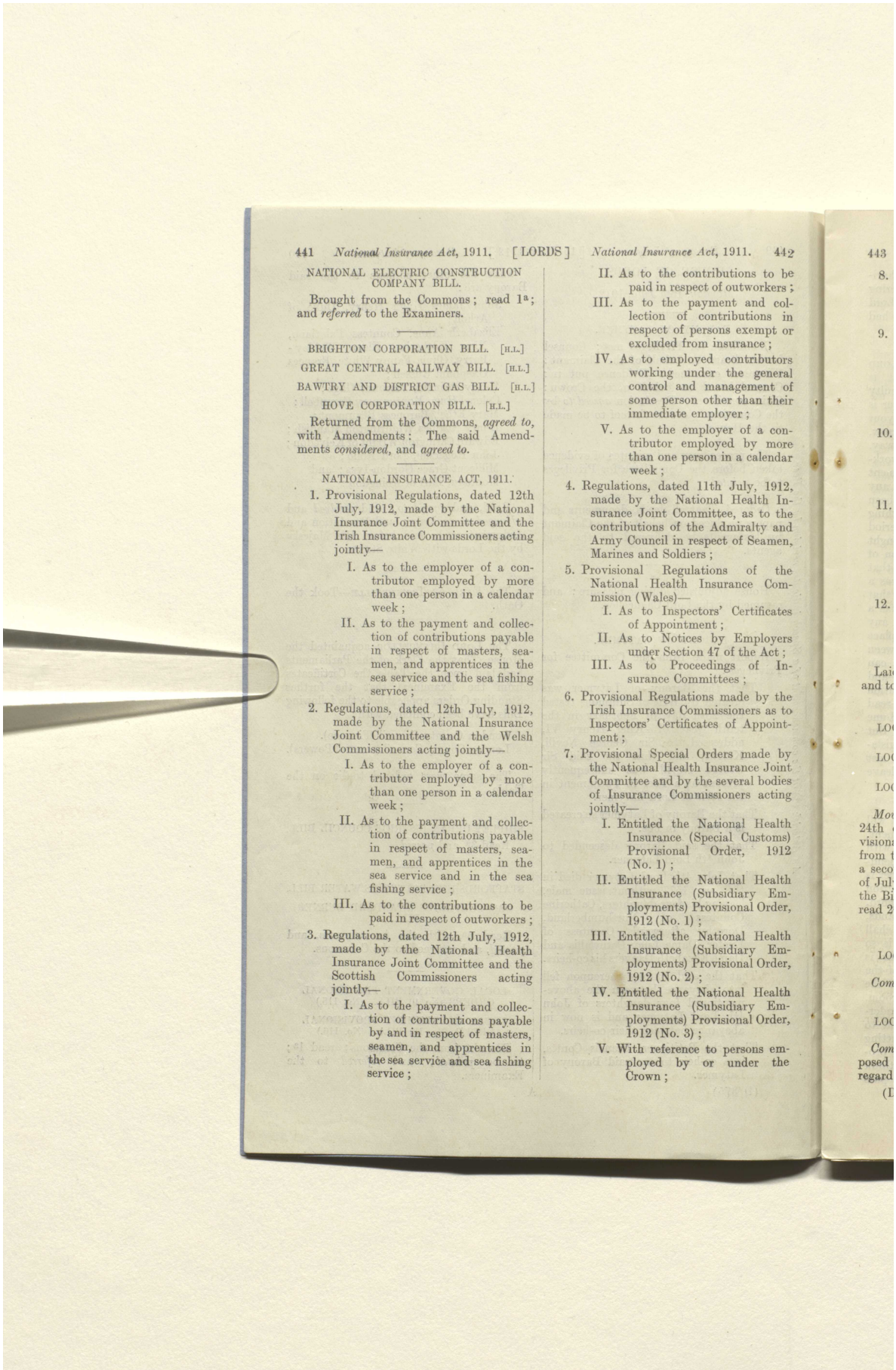
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [190v] (380/442)



441 *National Insurance Act*, 1911. [LORDS]

NATIONAL ELECTRIC CONSTRUCTION COMPANY BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and *referred* to the Examiners.

BRIGHTON CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY BILL. [H.L.]

BAWTRY AND DISTRICT GAS BILL. [H.L.]

HOVE CORPORATION BILL. [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons, *agreed to*, with Amendments: The said Amendments *considered*, and *agreed to*.

NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT, 1911.

1. Provisional Regulations, dated 12th July, 1912, made by the National Insurance Joint Committee and the Irish Insurance Commissioners acting jointly—
   - I. As to the employer of a contributor employed by more than one person in a calendar week;
   - II. As to the payment and collection of contributions payable in respect of masters, seamen, and apprentices in the sea service and the sea fishing service;
2. Regulations, dated 12th July, 1912, made by the National Insurance Joint Committee and the Welsh Commissioners acting jointly—
   - I. As to the employer of a contributor employed by more than one person in a calendar week;
   - II. As to the payment and collection of contributions payable in respect of masters, seamen, and apprentices in the sea service and in the sea fishing service;
   - III. As to the contributions to be paid in respect of outworkers;
3. Regulations, dated 12th July, 1912, made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee and the Scottish Commissioners acting jointly—
   - I. As to the payment and collection of contributions payable by and in respect of masters, seamen, and apprentices in the sea service and sea fishing service;

National Insurance Act, 1911. 442

   - II. As to the contributions to be paid in respect of outworkers;
   - III. As to the payment and collection of contributions in respect of persons exempt or excluded from insurance;
   - IV. As to employed contributors working under the general control and management of some person other than their immediate employer;
   - V. As to the employer of a contributor employed by more than one person in a calendar week;
4. Regulations, dated 11th July, 1912, made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee, as to the contributions of the Admiralty and Army Council in respect of Seamen, Marines and Soldiers;
5. Provisional Regulations of the National Health Insurance Commission (Wales)—
   - I. As to Inspectors' Certificates of Appointment;
   - II. As to Notices by Employers under Section 47 of the Act;
   - III. As to Proceedings of Insurance Committees;
6. Provisional Regulations made by the Irish Insurance Commissioners as to Inspectors' Certificates of Appointment;
7. Provisional Special Orders made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee and by the several bodies of Insurance Commissioners acting jointly—
   - I. Entitled the National Health Insurance (Special Customs) Provisional Order, 1912 (No. 1);
   - II. Entitled the National Health Insurance (Subsidiary Employments) Provisional Order, 1912 (No. 1);
   - III. Entitled the National Health Insurance (Subsidiary Employments) Provisional Order, 1912 (No. 2);
   - IV. Entitled the National Health Insurance (Subsidiary Employments) Provisional Order, 1912 (No. 3);
   - V. With reference to persons employed by or under the Crown;

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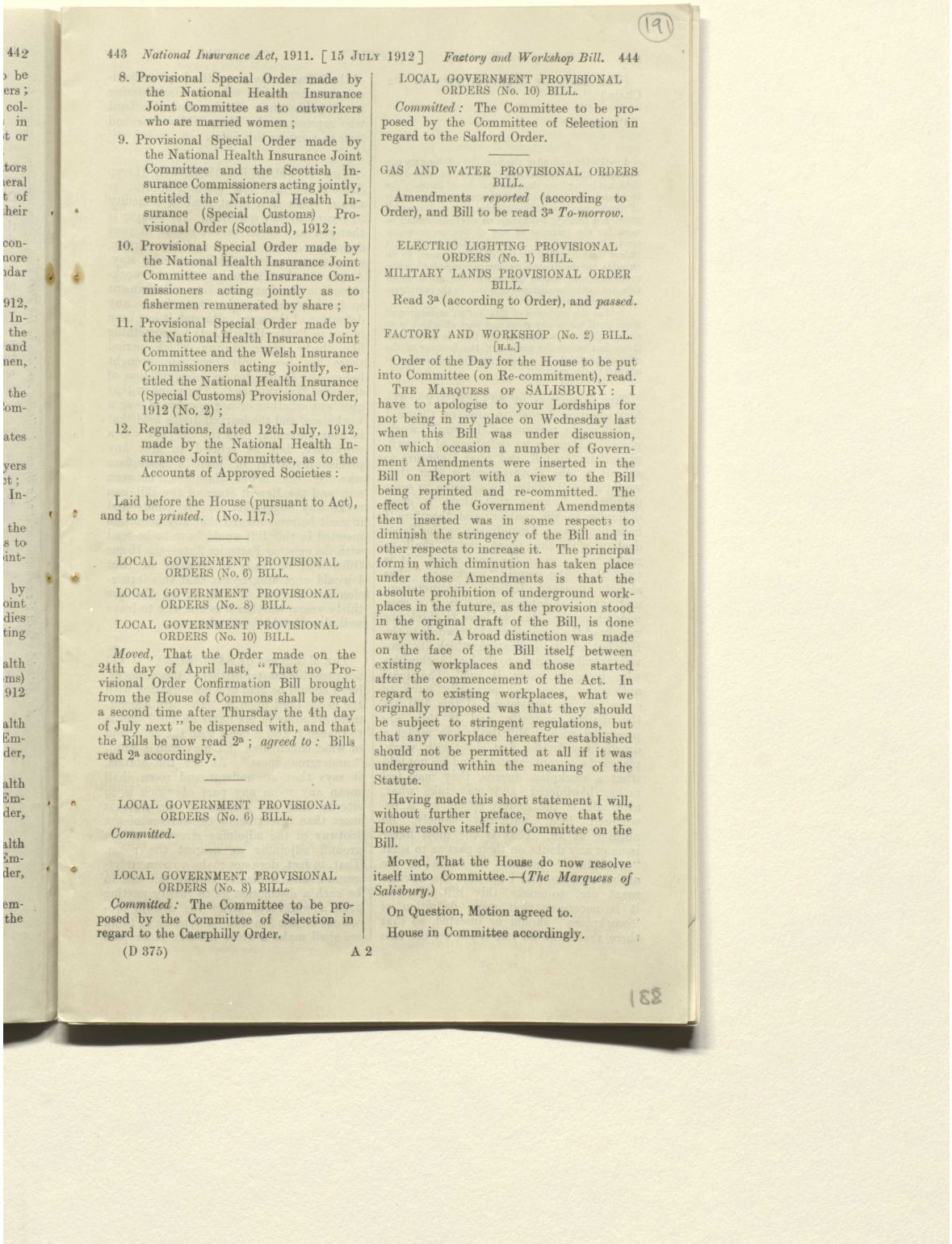

8. Provisional Special Order made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee as to outworkers who are married women ;

9. Provisional Special Order made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee and the Scottish Insurance Commissioners acting jointly, entitled the National Health Insurance (Special Customs) Provisional Order (Scotland), 1912 ;

10. Provisional Special Order made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee and the Insurance Commissioners acting jointly as to fishermen remunerated by share ;

11. Provisional Special Order made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee and the Welsh Insurance Commissioners acting jointly, entitled the National Health Insurance (Special Customs) Provisional Order, 1912 (No. 2) ;

12. Regulations, dated 12th July, 1912, made by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee, as to the Accounts of Approved Societies :

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be *printed*. (No. 117.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 8) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL.

Moved, That the Order made on the 24th day of April last, "That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 4th day of July next" be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª ; *agreed to* : Bills read 2ª accordingly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 6) BILL.

Committed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 8) BILL.

Committed : The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Caerphilly Order.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL.

Committed : The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Salford Order.

GAS AND WATER PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª *To-morrow*.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

MILITARY LANDS PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read 3ª (according to Order), and *passed*.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (No. 2) BILL. [H.L.]

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee (on Re-commitment), read.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY : I have to apologise to your Lordships for not being in my place on Wednesday last when this Bill was under discussion, on which occasion a number of Government Amendments were inserted in the Bill on Report with a view to the Bill being reprinted and re-committed. The effect of the Government Amendments then inserted was in some respects to diminish the stringency of the Bill and in other respects to increase it. The principal form in which diminution has taken place under those Amendments is that the absolute prohibition of underground workplaces in the future, as the provision stood in the original draft of the Bill, is done away with. A broad distinction was made on the face of the Bill itself between existing workplaces and those started after the commencement of the Act. In regard to existing workplaces, what we originally proposed was that they should be subject to stringent regulations, but that any workplace hereafter established should not be permitted at all if it was underground within the meaning of the Statute.

Having made this short statement I will, without further preface, move that the House resolve itself into Committee on the Bill.

Moved, That the House do now resolve itself into Committee.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

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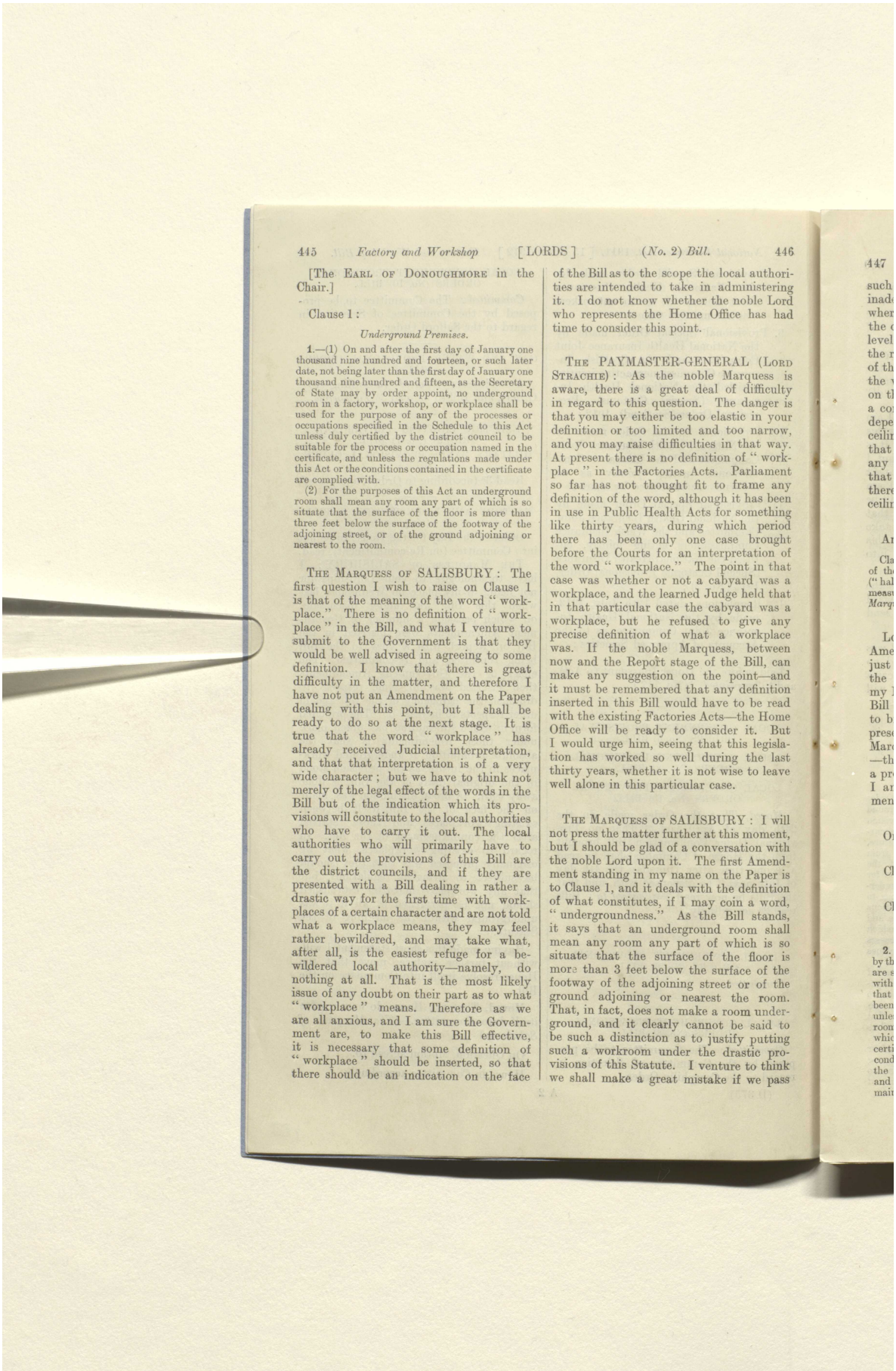

[The EARL OF DONOUGHMORE in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Underground Premises.

1.—(1) On and after the first day of January one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, or such later date, not being later than the first day of January one thousand nine hundred and fifteen, as the Secretary of State may by order appoint, no underground room in a factory, workshop, or workplace shall be used for the purpose of any of the processes or occupations specified in the Schedule to this Act unless duly certified by the district council to be suitable for the process or occupation named in the certificate, and unless the regulations made under this Act or the conditions contained in the certificate are complied with.

(2) For the purposes of this Act an underground room shall mean any room any part of which is so situate that the surface of the floor is more than three feet below the surface of the footway of the adjoining street, or of the ground adjoining or nearest to the room.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The first question I wish to raise on Clause 1 is that of the meaning of the word "workplace." There is no definition of "workplace" in the Bill, and what I venture to submit to the Government is that they would be well advised in agreeing to some definition. I know that there is great difficulty in the matter, and therefore I have not put an Amendment on the Paper dealing with this point, but I shall be ready to do so at the next stage. It is true that the word "workplace" has already received Judicial interpretation, and that that interpretation is of a very wide character; but we have to think not merely of the legal effect of the words in the Bill but of the indication which its provisions will constitute to the local authorities who have to carry it out. The local authorities who will primarily have to carry out the provisions of this Bill are the district councils, and if they are presented with a Bill dealing in rather a drastic way for the first time with workplaces of a certain character and are not told what a workplace means, they may feel rather bewildered, and may take what, after all, is the easiest refuge for a bewildered local authority—namely, do nothing at all. That is the most likely issue of any doubt on their part as to what "workplace" means. Therefore as we are all anxious, and I am sure the Government are, to make this Bill effective, it is necessary that some definition of "workplace" should be inserted, so that there should be an indication on the face of the Bill as to the scope the local authorities are intended to take in administering it. I do not know whether the noble Lord who represents the Home Office has had time to consider this point.

THE PAYMASTER-GENERAL (LORD STRACHIE): As the noble Marquess is aware, there is a great deal of difficulty in regard to this question. The danger is that you may either be too elastic in your definition or too limited and too narrow, and you may raise difficulties in that way. At present there is no definition of "workplace" in the Factories Acts. Parliament so far has not thought fit to frame any definition of the word, although it has been in use in Public Health Acts for something like thirty years, during which period there has been only one case brought before the Courts for an interpretation of the word "workplace." The point in that case was whether or not a cabyard was a workplace, and the learned Judge held that in that particular case the cabyard was a workplace, but he refused to give any precise definition of what a workplace was. If the noble Marquess, between now and the Report stage of the Bill, can make any suggestion on the point—and it must be remembered that any definition inserted in this Bill would have to be read with the existing Factories Acts—the Home Office will be ready to consider it. But I would urge him, seeing that this legislation has worked so well during the last thirty years, whether it is not wise to leave well alone in this particular case.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I will not press the matter further at this moment, but I should be glad of a conversation with the noble Lord upon it. The first Amendment standing in my name on the Paper is to Clause 1, and it deals with the definition of what constitutes, if I may coin a word, "undergroundness." As the Bill stands, it says that an underground room shall mean any room any part of which is so situate that the surface of the floor is more than 3 feet below the surface of the footway of the adjoining street or of the ground adjoining or nearest the room. That, in fact, does not make a room underground, and it clearly cannot be said to be such a distinction as to justify putting such a workroom under the drastic provisions of this Statute. I venture to think we shall make a great mistake if we pass

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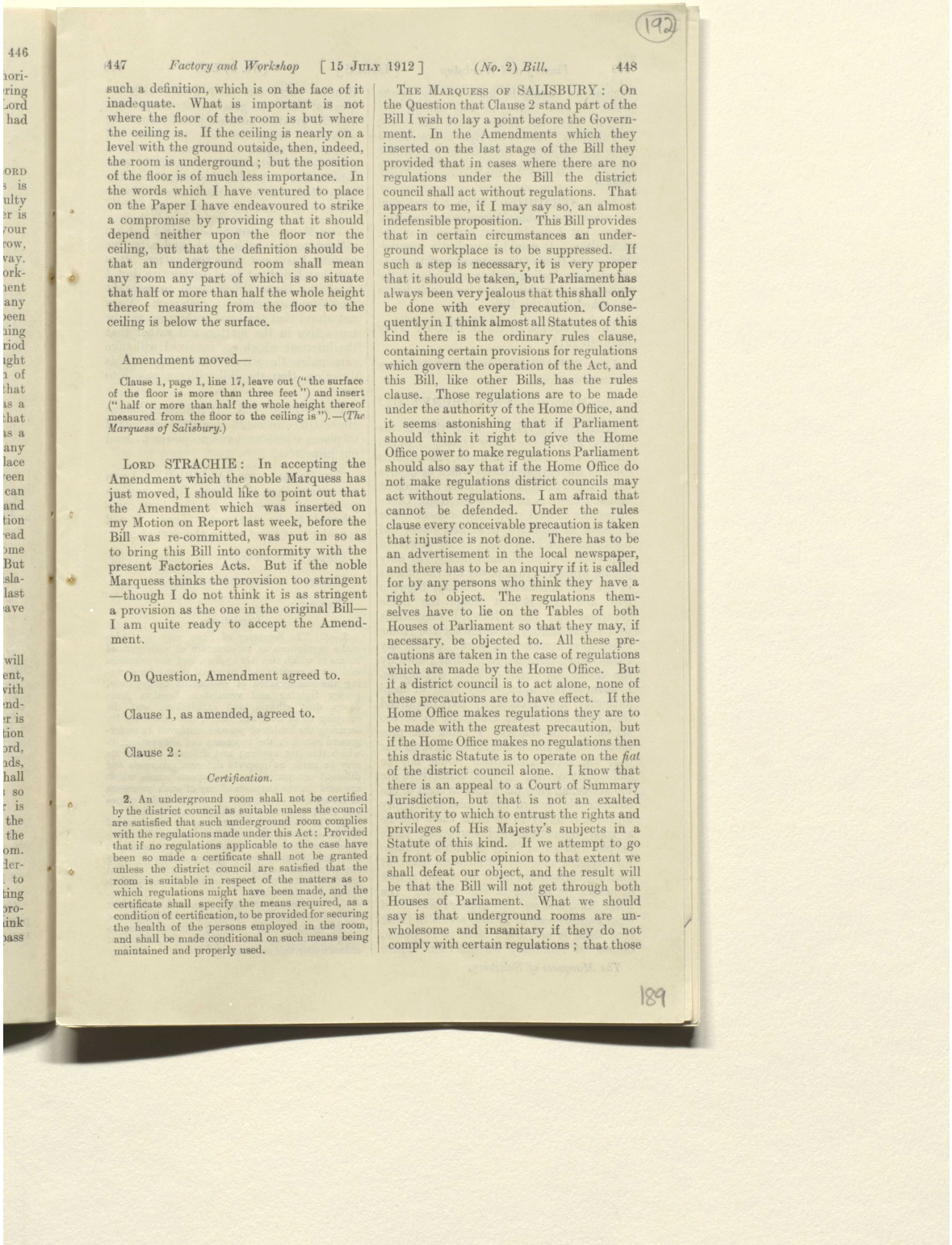

such a definition, which is on the face of it inadequate. What is important is not where the floor of the room is but where the ceiling is. If the ceiling is nearly on a level with the ground outside, then, indeed, the room is underground; but the position of the floor is of much less importance. In the words which I have ventured to place on the Paper I have endeavoured to strike a compromise by providing that it should depend neither upon the floor nor the ceiling, but that the definition should be that an underground room shall mean any room any part of which is so situate that half or more than half the whole height thereof measuring from the floor to the ceiling is below the surface.

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, line 17, leave out ("the surface of the floor is more than three feet") and insert ("half or more than half the whole height thereof measured from the floor to the ceiling is").—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

LORD STRACHIE: In accepting the Amendment which the noble Marquess has just moved, I should like to point out that the Amendment which was inserted on my Motion on Report last week, before the Bill was re-committed, was put in so as to bring this Bill into conformity with the present Factories Acts. But if the noble Marquess thinks the provision too stringent —though I do not think it is as stringent a provision as the one in the original Bill— I am quite ready to accept the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Certification.

2. An underground room shall not be certified by the district council as suitable unless the council are satisfied that such underground room complies with the regulations made under this Act: Provided that if no regulations applicable to the case have been so made a certificate shall not be granted unless the district council are satisfied that the room is suitable in respect of the matters as to which regulations might have been made, and the certificate shall specify the means required, as a condition of certification, to be provided for securing the health of the persons employed in the room, and shall be made conditional on such means being maintained and properly used.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: On the Question that Clause 2 stand part of the Bill I wish to lay a point before the Government. In the Amendments which they inserted on the last stage of the Bill they provided that in cases where there are no regulations under the Bill the district council shall act without regulations. That appears to me, if I may say so, an almost indefensible proposition. This Bill provides that in certain circumstances an underground workplace is to be suppressed. If such a step is necessary, it is very proper that it should be taken, but Parliament has always been very jealous that this shall only be done with every precaution. Consequently in I think almost all Statutes of this kind there is the ordinary rules clause, containing certain provisions for regulations which govern the operation of the Act, and this Bill, like other Bills, has the rules clause. Those regulations are to be made under the authority of the Home Office, and it seems astonishing that if Parliament should think it right to give the Home Office power to make regulations Parliament should also say that if the Home Office do not make regulations district councils may act without regulations. I am afraid that cannot be defended. Under the rules clause every conceivable precaution is taken that injustice is not done. There has to be an advertisement in the local newspaper, and there has to be an inquiry if it is called for by any persons who think they have a right to object. The regulations themselves have to lie on the Tables of both Houses ot Parliament so that they may, if necessary, be objected to. All these precautions are taken in the case of regulations which are made by the Home Office. But if a district council is to act alone, none of these precautions are to have effect. If the Home Office makes regulations they are to be made with the greatest precaution, but if the Home Office makes no regulations then this drastic Statute is to operate on the *fiat* of the district council alone. I know that there is an appeal to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction, but that is not an exalted authority to which to entrust the rights and privileges of His Majesty's subjects in a Statute of this kind. If we attempt to go in front of public opinion to that extent we shall defeat our object, and the result will be that the Bill will not get through both Houses of Parliament. What we should say is that underground rooms are unwholesome and insanitary if they do not comply with certain regulations; that those

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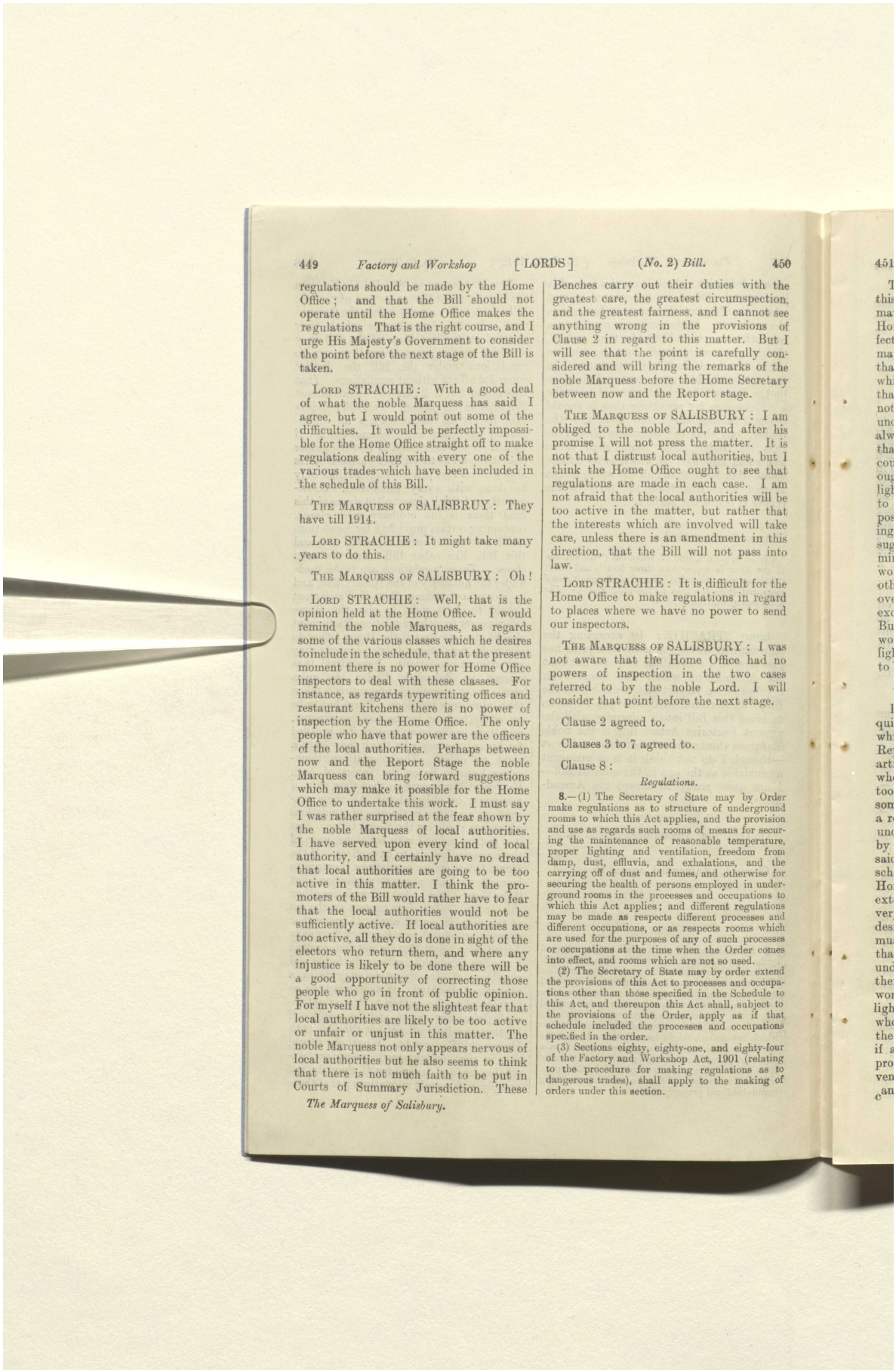

regulations should be made by the Home Office; and that the Bill should not operate until the Home Office makes the regulations That is the right course, and I urge His Majesty's Government to consider the point before the next stage of the Bill is taken.

LORD STRACHIE: With a good deal of what the noble Marquess has said I agree, but I would point out some of the difficulties. It would be perfectly impossible for the Home Office straight off to make regulations dealing with every one of the various trades which have been included in the schedule of this Bill.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBRUY: They have till 1914.

LORD STRACHIE: It might take many years to do this.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Oh!

LORD STRACHIE: Well, that is the opinion held at the Home Office. I would remind the noble Marquess, as regards some of the various classes which he desires to include in the schedule, that at the present moment there is no power for Home Office inspectors to deal with these classes. For instance, as regards typewriting offices and restaurant kitchens there is no power of inspection by the Home Office. The only people who have that power are the officers of the local authorities. Perhaps between now and the Report Stage the noble Marquess can bring forward suggestions which may make it possible for the Home Office to undertake this work. I must say I was rather surprised at the fear shown by the noble Marquess of local authorities. I have served upon every kind of local authority, and I certainly have no dread that local authorities are going to be too active in this matter. I think the promoters of the Bill would rather have to fear that the local authorities would not be sufficiently active. If local authorities are too active, all they do is done in sight of the electors who return them, and where any injustice is likely to be done there will be a good opportunity of correcting those people who go in front of public opinion. For myself I have not the slightest fear that local authorities are likely to be too active or unfair or unjust in this matter. The noble Marquess not only appears nervous of local authorities but he also seems to think that there is not much faith to be put in Courts of Summary Jurisdiction. These Benches carry out their duties with the greatest care, the greatest circumspection, and the greatest fairness, and I cannot see anything wrong in the provisions of Clause 2 in regard to this matter. But I will see that the point is carefully considered and will bring the remarks of the noble Marquess before the Home Secretary between now and the Report stage.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am obliged to the noble Lord, and after his promise I will not press the matter. It is not that I distrust local authorities, but I think the Home Office ought to see that regulations are made in each case. I am not afraid that the local authorities will be too active in the matter, but rather that the interests which are involved will take care, unless there is an amendment in this direction, that the Bill will not pass into law.

LORD STRACHIE: It is difficult for the Home Office to make regulations in regard to places where we have no power to send our inspectors.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I was not aware that the Home Office had no powers of inspection in the two cases referred to by the noble Lord. I will consider that point before the next stage.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 7 agreed to.

Clause 8:

Regulations.

8.—(1) The Secretary of State may by Order make regulations as to structure of underground rooms to which this Act applies, and the provision and use as regards such rooms of means for securing the maintenance of reasonable temperature, proper lighting and ventilation, freedom from damp, dust, effluvia, and exhalations, and the carrying off of dust and fumes, and otherwise for securing the health of persons employed in underground rooms in the processes and occupations to which this Act applies; and different regulations may be made as respects different processes and different occupations, or as respects rooms which are used for the purposes of any of such processes or occupations at the time when the Order comes into effect, and rooms which are not so used.

(2) The Secretary of State may by order extend the provisions of this Act to processes and occupations other than those specified in the Schedule to this Act, and thereupon this Act shall, subject to the provisions of the Order, apply as if that schedule included the processes and occupations specified in the order.

(3) Sections eighty, eighty-one, and eighty-four of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901 (relating to the procedure for making regulations as to dangerous trades), shall apply to the making of orders under this section.

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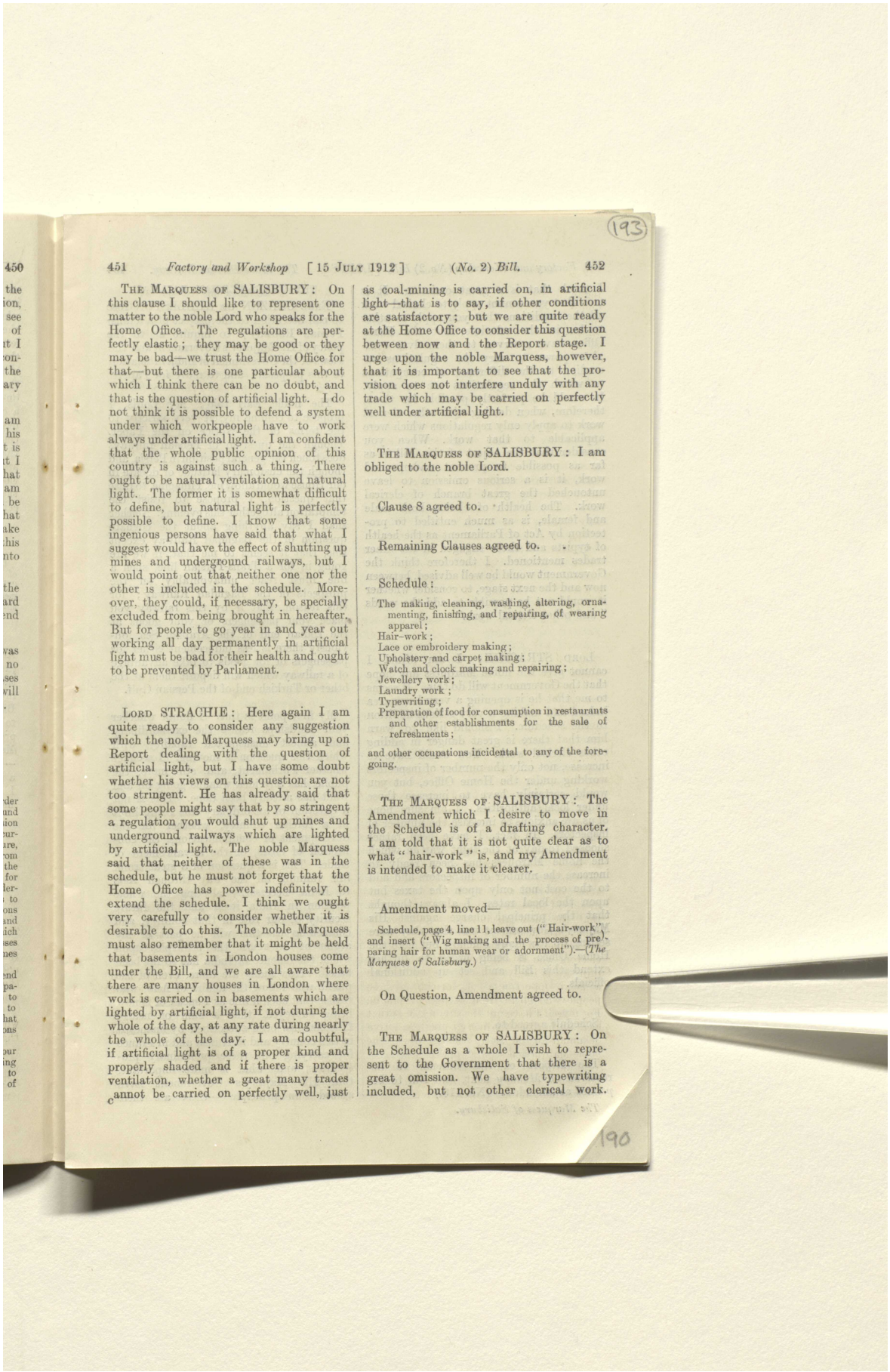

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: On this clause I should like to represent one matter to the noble Lord who speaks for the Home Office. The regulations are perfectly elastic; they may be good or they may be bad—we trust the Home Office for that—but there is one particular about which I think there can be no doubt, and that is the question of artificial light. I do not think it is possible to defend a system under which workpeople have to work always under artificial light. I am confident that the whole public opinion of this country is against such a thing. There ought to be natural ventilation and natural light. The former it is somewhat difficult to define, but natural light is perfectly possible to define. I know that some ingenious persons have said that what I suggest would have the effect of shutting up mines and underground railways, but I would point out that neither one nor the other is included in the schedule. Moreover, they could, if necessary, be specially excluded from being brought in hereafter. But for people to go year in and year out working all day permanently in artificial light must be bad for their health and ought to be prevented by Parliament.

LORD STRACHIE: Here again I am quite ready to consider any suggestion which the noble Marquess may bring up on Report dealing with the question of artificial light, but I have some doubt whether his views on this question are not too stringent. He has already said that some people might say that by so stringent a regulation you would shut up mines and underground railways which are lighted by artificial light. The noble Marquess said that neither of these was in the schedule, but he must not forget that the Home Office has power indefinitely to extend the schedule. I think we ought very carefully to consider whether it is desirable to do this. The noble Marquess must also remember that it might be held that basements in London houses come under the Bill, and we are all aware that there are many houses in London where work is carried on in basements which are lighted by artificial light, if not during the whole of the day, at any rate during nearly the whole of the day. I am doubtful, if artificial light is of a proper kind and properly shaded and if there is proper ventilation, whether a great many trades cannot be carried on perfectly well, just as coal-mining is carried on, in artificial light—that is to say, if other conditions are satisfactory; but we are quite ready at the Home Office to consider this question between now and the Report stage. I urge upon the noble Marquess, however, that it is important to see that the provision does not interfere unduly with any trade which may be carried on perfectly well under artificial light.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am obliged to the noble Lord.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to.

Schedule:

The making, cleaning, washing, altering, ornamenting, finishing, and repairing, of wearing apparel;
Hair-work;
Lace or embroidery making;
Upholstery and carpet making;
Watch and clock making and repairing;
Jewellery work;
Laundry work;
Typewriting;
Preparation of food for consumption in restaurants and other establishments for the sale of refreshments;

and other occupations incidental to any of the foregoing.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The Amendment which I desire to move in the Schedule is of a drafting character. I am told that it is not quite clear as to what "hair-work" is, and my Amendment is intended to make it clearer.

Amendment moved—

Schedule, page 4, line 11, leave out ("Hair-work") and insert ("Wig making and the process of preparing hair for human wear or adornment").—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: On the Schedule as a whole I wish to represent to the Government that there is a great omission. We have typewriting included, but not other clerical work.

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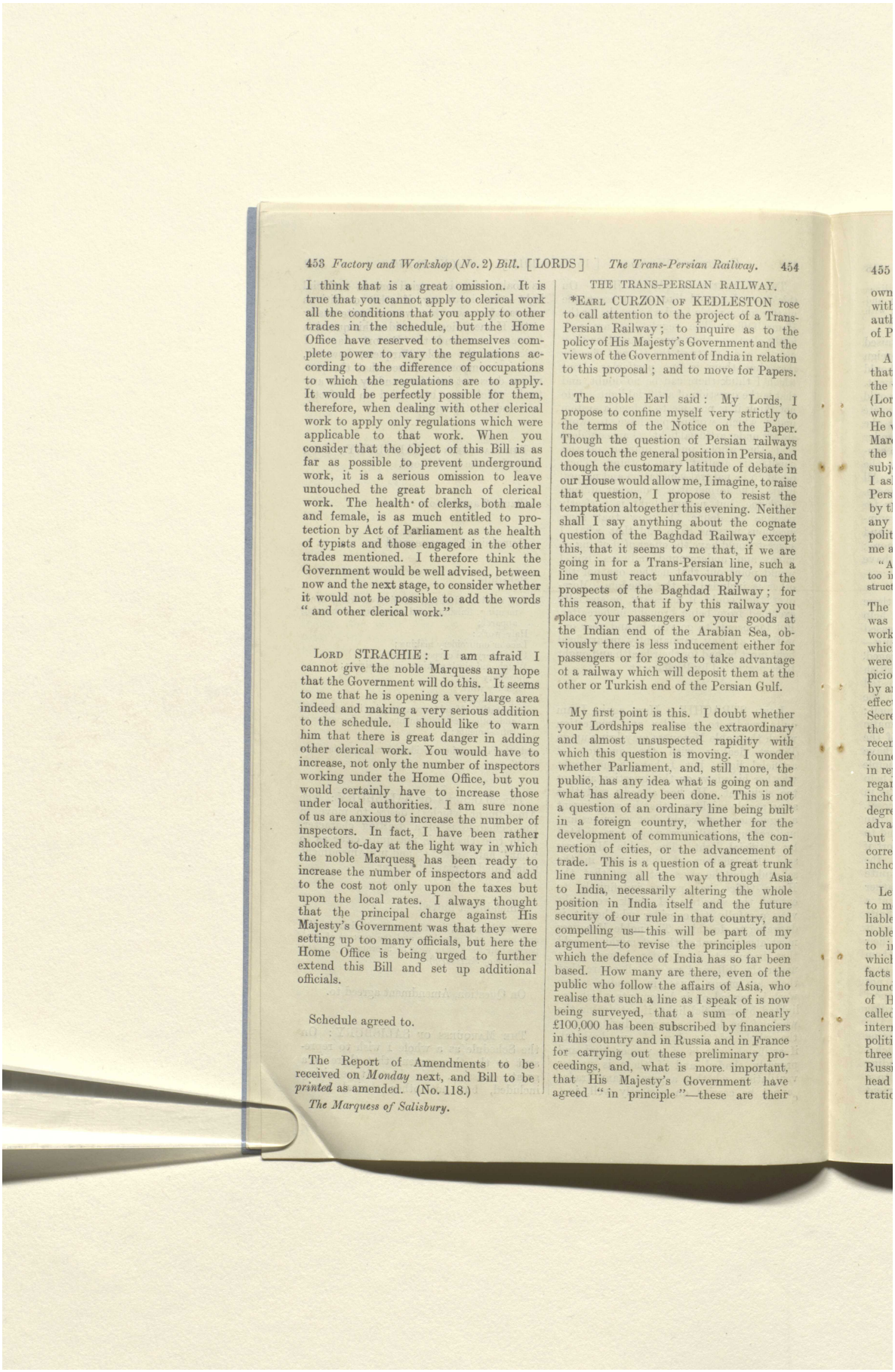

453 *Factory and Workshop (No. 2) Bill.* [LORDS] *The Trans-Persian Railway.* 454

I think that is a great omission. It is true that you cannot apply to clerical work all the conditions that you apply to other trades in the schedule, but the Home Office have reserved to themselves complete power to vary the regulations according to the difference of occupations to which the regulations are to apply. It would be perfectly possible for them, therefore, when dealing with other clerical work to apply only regulations which were applicable to that work. When you consider that the object of this Bill is as far as possible to prevent underground work, it is a serious omission to leave untouched the great branch of clerical work. The health of clerks, both male and female, is as much entitled to protection by Act of Parliament as the health of typists and those engaged in the other trades mentioned. I therefore think the Government would be well advised, between now and the next stage, to consider whether it would not be possible to add the words "and other clerical work."

LORD STRACHIE: I am afraid I cannot give the noble Marquess any hope that the Government will do this. It seems to me that he is opening a very large area indeed and making a very serious addition to the schedule. I should like to warn him that there is great danger in adding other clerical work. You would have to increase, not only the number of inspectors working under the Home Office, but you would certainly have to increase those under local authorities. I am sure none of us are anxious to increase the number of inspectors. In fact, I have been rather shocked to-day at the light way in which the noble Marquess has been ready to increase the number of inspectors and add to the cost not only upon the taxes but upon the local rates. I always thought that the principal charge against His Majesty's Government was that they were setting up too many officials, but here the Home Office is being urged to further extend this Bill and set up additional officials.

Schedule agreed to.

The Report of Amendments to be received on *Monday* next, and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 118.)

The Marquess of Salisbury.

THE TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON rose to call attention to the project of a Trans-Persian Railway; to inquire as to the policy of His Majesty's Government and the views of the Government of India in relation to this proposal; and to move for Papers.

The noble Earl said: My Lords, I propose to confine myself very strictly to the terms of the Notice on the Paper. Though the question of Persian railways does touch the general position in Persia, and though the customary latitude of debate in our House would allow me, I imagine, to raise that question, I propose to resist the temptation altogether this evening. Neither shall I say anything about the cognate question of the Baghdad Railway except this, that it seems to me that, if we are going in for a Trans-Persian line, such a line must react unfavourably on the prospects of the Baghdad Railway; for this reason, that if by this railway you place your passengers or your goods at the Indian end of the Arabian Sea, obviously there is less inducement either for passengers or for goods to take advantage of a railway which will deposit them at the other or Turkish end of the Persian Gulf.

My first point is this. I doubt whether your Lordships realise the extraordinary and almost unsuspected rapidity with which this question is moving. I wonder whether Parliament, and, still more, the public, has any idea what is going on and what has already been done. This is not a question of an ordinary line being built in a foreign country, whether for the development of communications, the connection of cities, or the advancement of trade. This is a question of a great trunk line running all the way through Asia to India, necessarily altering the whole position in India itself and the future security of our rule in that country, and compelling us—this will be part of my argument—to revise the principles upon which the defence of India has so far been based. How many are there, even of the public who follow the affairs of Asia, who realise that such a line as I speak of is now being surveyed, that a sum of nearly £100,000 has been subscribed by financiers in this country and in Russia and in France for carrying out these preliminary proceedings, and, what is more important, that His Majesty's Government have agreed "in principle"—these are their

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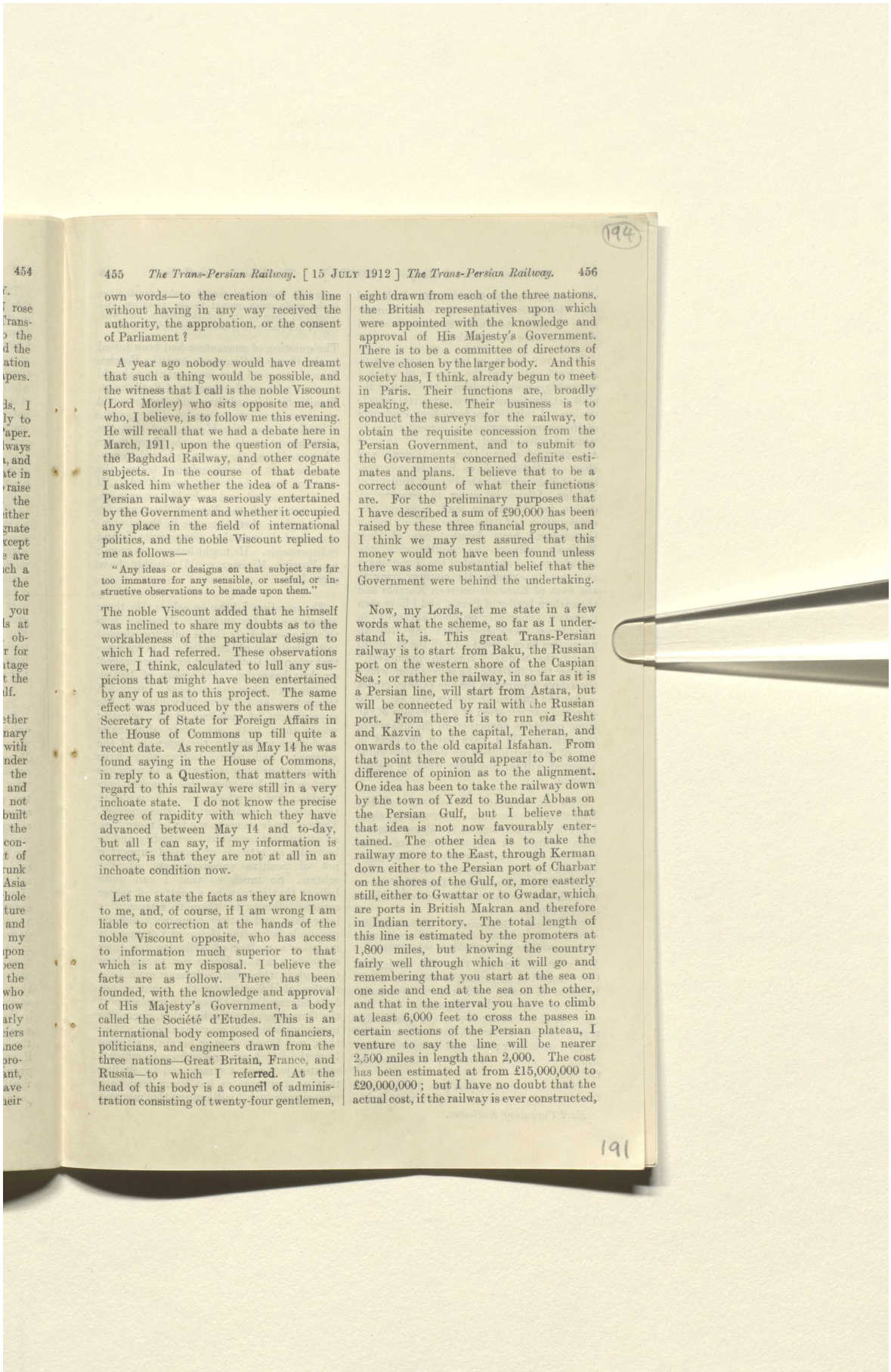

own words—to the creation of this line without having in any way received the authority, the approbation, or the consent of Parliament?

A year ago nobody would have dreamt that such a thing would be possible, and the witness that I call is the noble Viscount (Lord Morley) who sits opposite me, and who, I believe, is to follow me this evening. He will recall that we had a debate here in March, 1911, upon the question of Persia, the Baghdad Railway, and other cognate subjects. In the course of that debate I asked him whether the idea of a Trans-Persian railway was seriously entertained by the Government and whether it occupied any place in the field of international politics, and the noble Viscount replied to me as follows—

"Any ideas or designs on that subject are far too immature for any sensible, or useful, or instructive observations to be made upon them."

The noble Viscount added that he himself was inclined to share my doubts as to the workableness of the particular design to which I had referred. These observations were, I think, calculated to lull any suspicions that might have been entertained by any of us as to this project. The same effect was produced by the answers of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons up till quite a recent date. As recently as May 14 he was found saying in the House of Commons, in reply to a Question, that matters with regard to this railway were still in a very inchoate state. I do not know the precise degree of rapidity with which they have advanced between May 14 and to-day, but all I can say, if my information is correct, is that they are not at all in an inchoate condition now.

Let me state the facts as they are known to me, and, of course, if I am wrong I am liable to correction at the hands of the noble Viscount opposite, who has access to information much superior to that which is at my disposal. I believe the facts are as follow. There has been founded, with the knowledge and approval of His Majesty's Government, a body called the Société d'Etudes. This is an international body composed of financiers, politicians, and engineers drawn from the three nations—Great Britain, France, and Russia—to which I referred. At the head of this body is a council of administration consisting of twenty-four gentlemen, eight drawn from each of the three nations, the British representatives upon which were appointed with the knowledge and approval of His Majesty's Government. There is to be a committee of directors of twelve chosen by the larger body. And this society has, I think, already begun to meet in Paris. Their functions are, broadly speaking, these. Their business is to conduct the surveys for the railway, to obtain the requisite concession from the Persian Government, and to submit to the Governments concerned definite estimates and plans. I believe that to be a correct account of what their functions are. For the preliminary purposes that I have described a sum of £90,000 has been raised by these three financial groups, and I think we may rest assured that this money would not have been found unless there was some substantial belief that the Government were behind the undertaking.

Now, my Lords, let me state in a few words what the scheme, so far as I understand it, is. This great Trans-Persian railway is to start from Baku, the Russian port on the western shore of the Caspian Sea; or rather the railway, in so far as it is a Persian line, will start from Astara, but will be connected by rail with the Russian port. From there it is to run *via* Resht and Kazvin to the capital, Teheran, and onwards to the old capital Isfahan. From that point there would appear to be some difference of opinion as to the alignment. One idea has been to take the railway down by the town of Yezd to Bundar Abbas on the Persian Gulf, but I believe that that idea is not now favourably entertained. The other idea is to take the railway more to the East, through Kerman down either to the Persian port of Charbar on the shores of the Gulf, or, more easterly still, either to Gwattar or to Gwadar, which are ports in British Makran and therefore in Indian territory. The total length of this line is estimated by the promoters at 1,800 miles, but knowing the country fairly well through which it will go and remembering that you start at the sea on one side and end at the sea on the other, and that in the interval you have to climb at least 6,000 feet to cross the passes in certain sections of the Persian plateau, I venture to say the line will be nearer 2,500 miles in length than 2,000. The cost has been estimated at from £15,000,000 to £20,000,000; but I have no doubt that the actual cost, if the railway is ever constructed,

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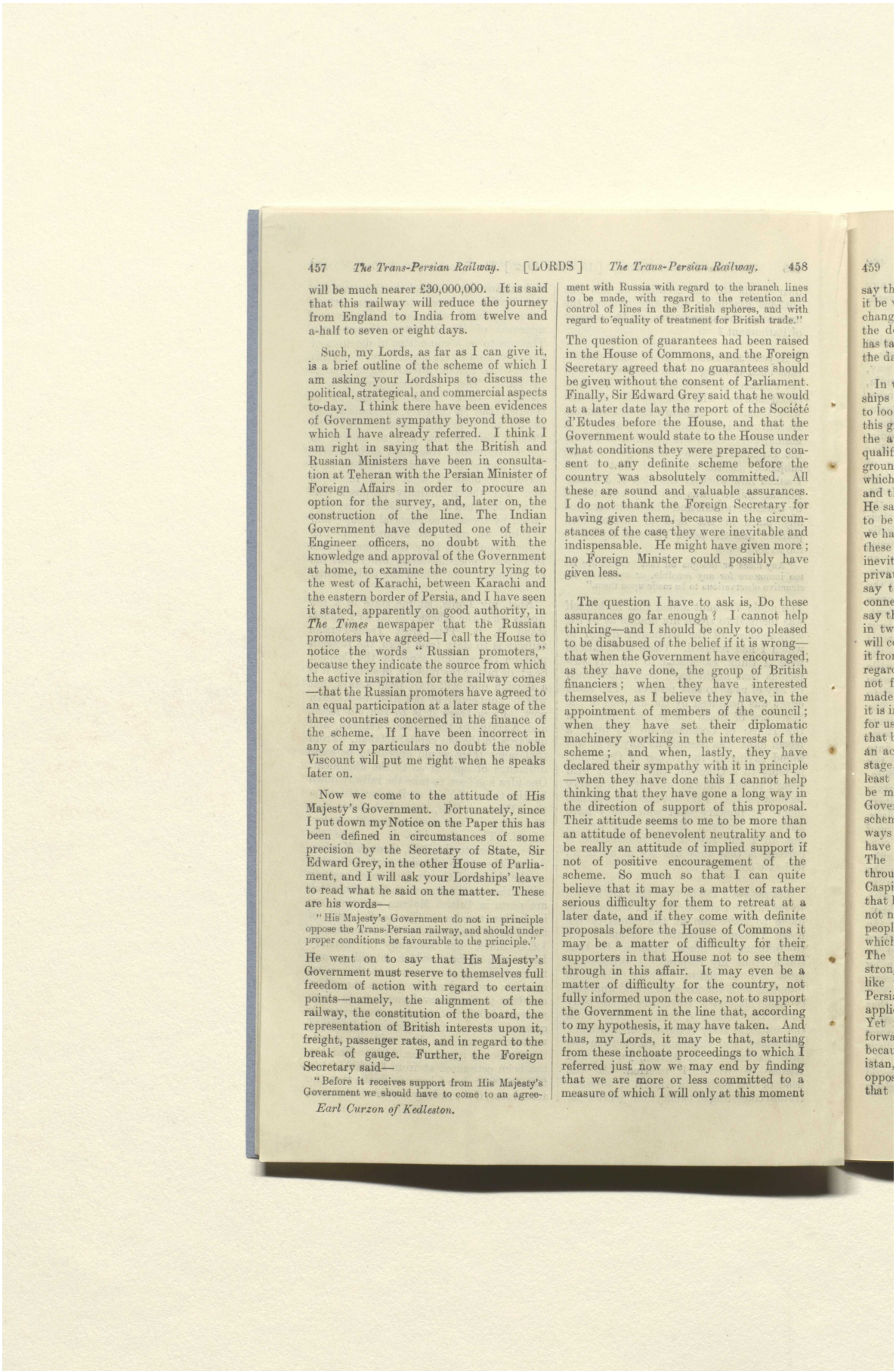

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will be much nearer £30,000,000. It is said that this railway will reduce the journey from England to India from twelve and a-half to seven or eight days.

Such, my Lords, as far as I can give it, is a brief outline of the scheme of which I am asking your Lordships to discuss the political, strategical, and commercial aspects to-day. I think there have been evidences of Government sympathy beyond those to which I have already referred. I think I am right in saying that the British and Russian Ministers have been in consultation at Teheran with the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs in order to procure an option for the survey, and, later on, the construction of the line. The Indian Government have deputed one of their Engineer officers, no doubt with the knowledge and approval of the Government at home, to examine the country lying to the west of Karachi, between Karachi and the eastern border of Persia, and I have seen it stated, apparently on good authority, in *The Times* newspaper that the Russian promoters have agreed—I call the House to notice the words "Russian promoters," because they indicate the source from which the active inspiration for the railway comes—that the Russian promoters have agreed to an equal participation at a later stage of the three countries concerned in the finance of the scheme. If I have been incorrect in any of my particulars no doubt the noble Viscount will put me right when he speaks later on.

Now we come to the attitude of His Majesty's Government. Fortunately, since I put down my Notice on the Paper this has been defined in circumstances of some precision by the Secretary of State, Sir Edward Grey, in the other House of Parliament, and I will ask your Lordships' leave to read what he said on the matter. These are his words—

"His Majesty's Government do not in principle oppose the Trans-Persian railway, and should under proper conditions be favourable to the principle."

He went on to say that His Majesty's Government must reserve to themselves full freedom of action with regard to certain points—namely, the alignment of the railway, the constitution of the board, the representation of British interests upon it, freight, passenger rates, and in regard to the break of gauge. Further, the Foreign Secretary said—

"Before it receives support from His Majesty's Government we should have to come to an agreement with Russia with regard to the branch lines to be made, with regard to the retention and control of lines in the British spheres, and with regard to equality of treatment for British trade."

The question of guarantees had been raised in the House of Commons, and the Foreign Secretary agreed that no guarantees should be given without the consent of Parliament. Finally, Sir Edward Grey said that he would at a later date lay the report of the Société d'Etudes before the House, and that the Government would state to the House under what conditions they were prepared to consent to any definite scheme before the country was absolutely committed. All these are sound and valuable assurances. I do not thank the Foreign Secretary for having given them, because in the circumstances of the case they were inevitable and indispensable. He might have given more; no Foreign Minister could possibly have given less.

The question I have to ask is, Do these assurances go far enough? I cannot help thinking—and I should be only too pleased to be disabused of the belief if it is wrong—that when the Government have encouraged, as they have done, the group of British financiers; when they have interested themselves, as I believe they have, in the appointment of members of the council; when they have set their diplomatic machinery working in the interests of the scheme; and when, lastly, they have declared their sympathy with it in principle—when they have done this I cannot help thinking that they have gone a long way in the direction of support of this proposal. Their attitude seems to me to be more than an attitude of benevolent neutrality and to be really an attitude of implied support if not of positive encouragement of the scheme. So much so that I can quite believe that it may be a matter of rather serious difficulty for them to retreat at a later date, and if they come with definite proposals before the House of Commons it may be a matter of difficulty for their supporters in that House not to see them through in this affair. It may even be a matter of difficulty for the country, not fully informed upon the case, not to support the Government in the line that, according to my hypothesis, it may have taken. And thus, my Lords, it may be that, starting from these inchoate proceedings to which I referred just now we may end by finding that we are more or less committed to a measure of which I will only at this moment

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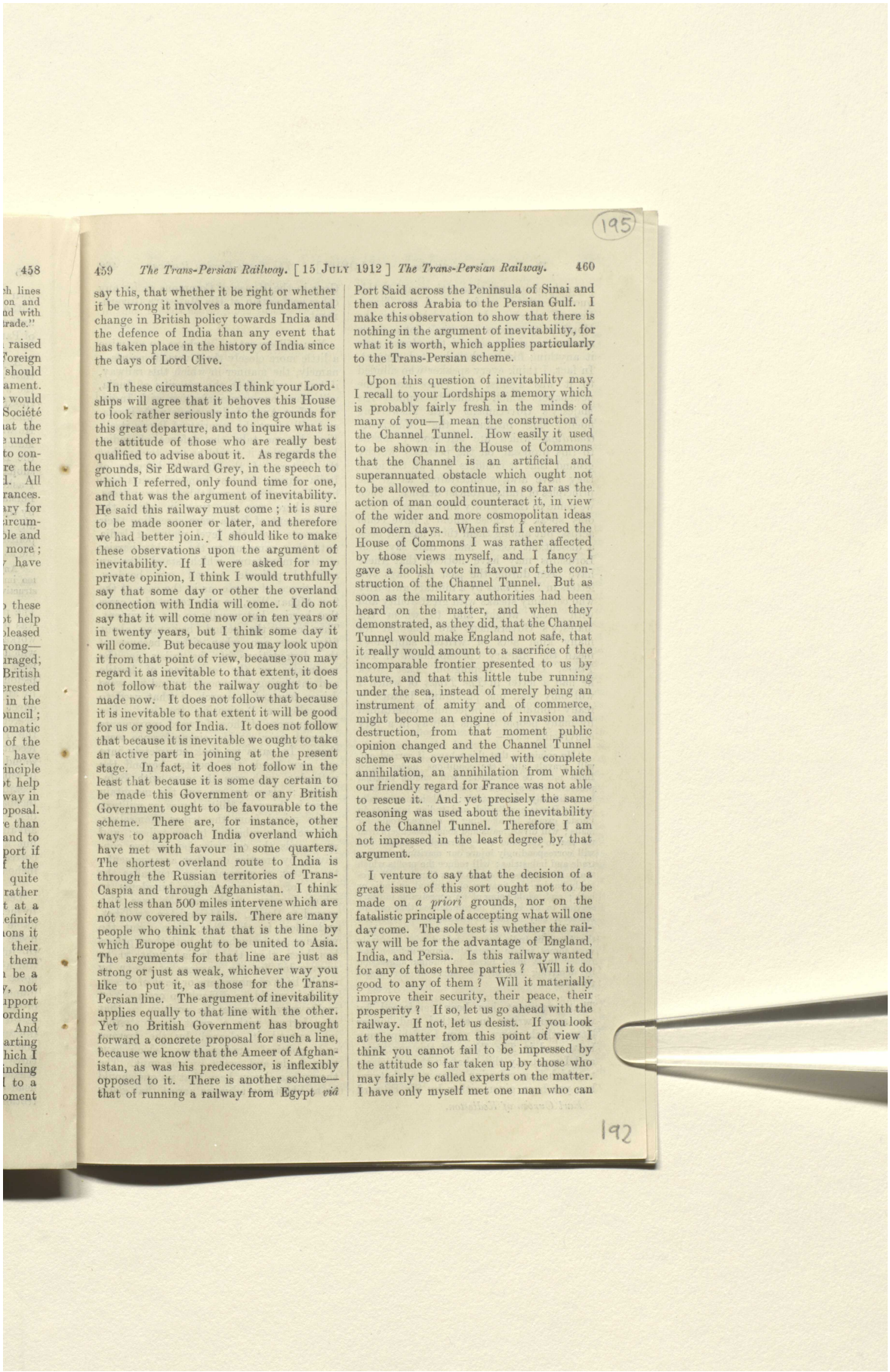

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say this, that whether it be right or whether it be wrong it involves a more fundamental change in British policy towards India and the defence of India than any event that has taken place in the history of India since the days of Lord Clive.

In these circumstances I think your Lordships will agree that it behoves this House to look rather seriously into the grounds for this great departure, and to inquire what is the attitude of those who are really best qualified to advise about it. As regards the grounds, Sir Edward Grey, in the speech to which I referred, only found time for one, and that was the argument of inevitability. He said this railway must come; it is sure to be made sooner or later, and therefore we had better join. I should like to make these observations upon the argument of inevitability. If I were asked for my private opinion, I think I would truthfully say that some day or other the overland connection with India will come. I do not say that it will come now or in ten years or in twenty years, but I think some day it will come. But because you may look upon it from that point of view, because you may regard it as inevitable to that extent, it does not follow that the railway ought to be made now. It does not follow that because it is inevitable to that extent it will be good for us or good for India. It does not follow that because it is inevitable we ought to take an active part in joining at the present stage. In fact, it does not follow in the least that because it is some day certain to be made this Government or any British Government ought to be favourable to the scheme. There are, for instance, other ways to approach India overland which have met with favour in some quarters. The shortest overland route to India is through the Russian territories of Trans-Caspia and through Afghanistan. I think that less than 500 miles intervene which are not now covered by rails. There are many people who think that that is the line by which Europe ought to be united to Asia. The arguments for that line are just as strong or just as weak, whichever way you like to put it, as those for the Trans-Persian line. The argument of inevitability applies equally to that line with the other. Yet no British Government has brought forward a concrete proposal for such a line, because we know that the Ameer of Afghanistan, as was his predecessor, is inflexibly opposed to it. There is another scheme—that of running a railway from Egypt *viâ* Port Said across the Peninsula of Sinai and then across Arabia to the Persian Gulf. I make this observation to show that there is nothing in the argument of inevitability, for what it is worth, which applies particularly to the Trans-Persian scheme.

Upon this question of inevitability may I recall to your Lordships a memory which is probably fairly fresh in the minds of many of you—I mean the construction of the Channel Tunnel. How easily it used to be shown in the House of Commons that the Channel is an artificial and superannuated obstacle which ought not to be allowed to continue, in so far as the action of man could counteract it, in view of the wider and more cosmopolitan ideas of modern days. When first I entered the House of Commons I was rather affected by those views myself, and I fancy I gave a foolish vote in favour of the construction of the Channel Tunnel. But as soon as the military authorities had been heard on the matter, and when they demonstrated, as they did, that the Channel Tunnel would make England not safe, that it really would amount to a sacrifice of the incomparable frontier presented to us by nature, and that this little tube running under the sea, instead of merely being an instrument of amity and of commerce, might become an engine of invasion and destruction, from that moment public opinion changed and the Channel Tunnel scheme was overwhelmed with complete annihilation, an annihilation from which our friendly regard for France was not able to rescue it. And yet precisely the same reasoning was used about the inevitability of the Channel Tunnel. Therefore I am not impressed in the least degree by that argument.

I venture to say that the decision of a great issue of this sort ought not to be made on *a priori* grounds, nor on the fatalistic principle of accepting what will one day come. The sole test is whether the railway will be for the advantage of England, India, and Persia. Is this railway wanted for any of those three parties? Will it do good to any of them? Will it materially improve their security, their peace, their prosperity? If so, let us go ahead with the railway. If not, let us desist. If you look at the matter from this point of view I think you cannot fail to be impressed by the attitude so far taken up by those who may fairly be called experts on the matter. I have only myself met one man who can

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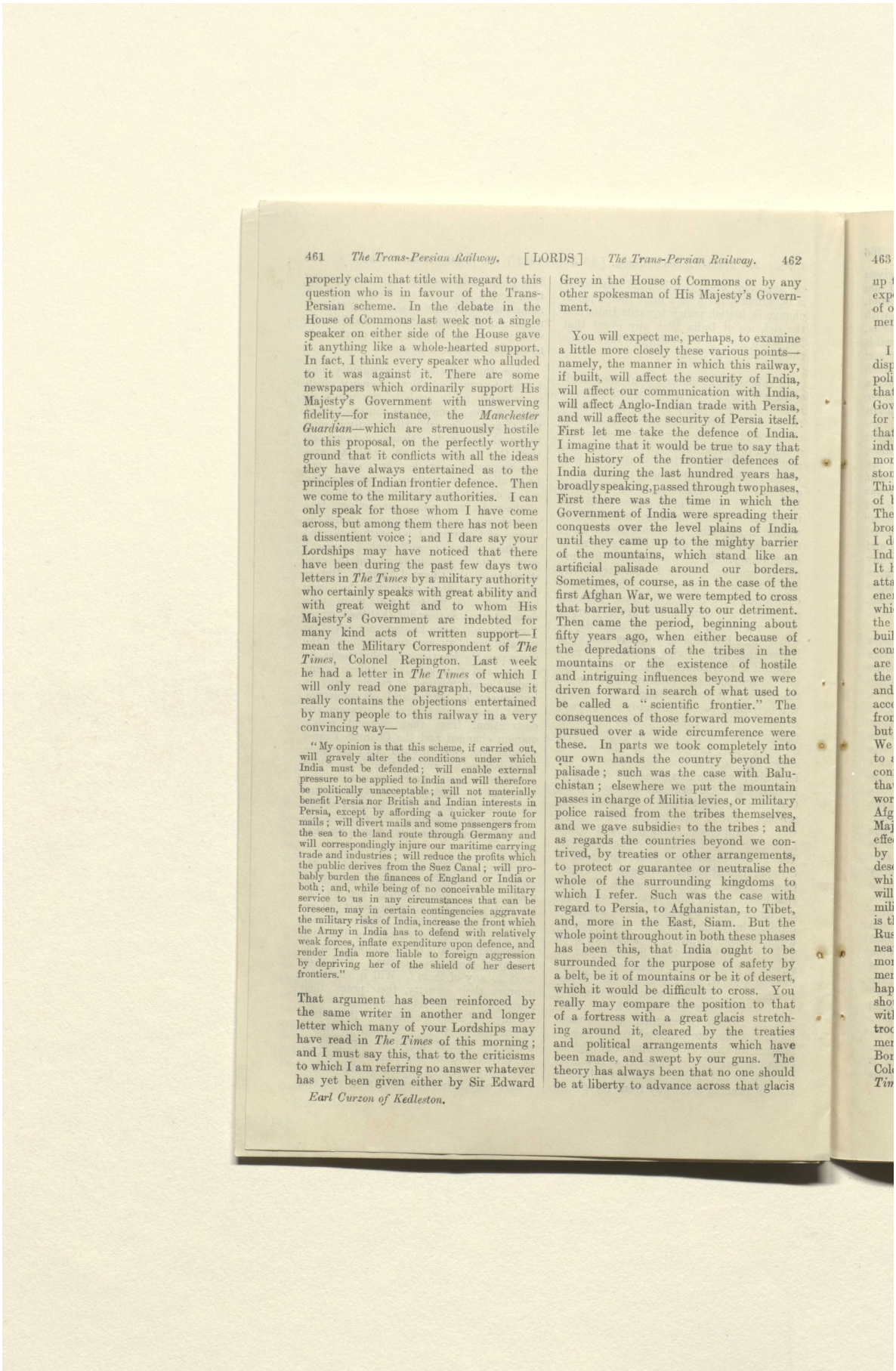

properly claim that title with regard to this question who is in favour of the Trans-Persian scheme. In the debate in the House of Commons last week not a single speaker on either side of the House gave it anything like a whole-hearted support. In fact, I think every speaker who alluded to it was against it. There are some newspapers which ordinarily support His Majesty's Government with unswerving fidelity—for instance, the *Manchester Guardian*—which are strenuously hostile to this proposal, on the perfectly worthy ground that it conflicts with all the ideas they have always entertained as to the principles of Indian frontier defence. Then we come to the military authorities. I can only speak for those whom I have come across, but among them there has not been a dissentient voice; and I dare say your Lordships may have noticed that there have been during the past few days two letters in *The Times* by a military authority who certainly speaks with great ability and with great weight and to whom His Majesty's Government are indebted for many kind acts of written support—I mean the Military Correspondent of *The Times*, Colonel Repington. Last week he had a letter in *The Times* of which I will only read one paragraph, because it really contains the objections entertained by many people to this railway in a very convincing way—

> "My opinion is that this scheme, if carried out, will gravely alter the conditions under which India must be defended; will enable external pressure to be applied to India and will therefore be politically unacceptable; will not materially benefit Persia nor British and Indian interests in Persia, except by affording a quicker route for mails; will divert mails and some passengers from the sea to the land route through Germany and will correspondingly injure our maritime carrying trade and industries; will reduce the profits which the public derives from the Suez Canal; will probably burden the finances of England or India or both; and, while being of no conceivable military service to us in any circumstances that can be foreseen, may in certain contingencies aggravate the military risks of India, increase the front which the Army in India has to defend with relatively weak forces, inflate expenditure upon defence, and render India more liable to foreign aggression by depriving her of the shield of her desert frontiers."

That argument has been reinforced by the same writer in another and longer letter which many of your Lordships may have read in *The Times* of this morning; and I must say this, that to the criticisms to which I am referring no answer whatever has yet been given either by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons or by any other spokesman of His Majesty's Government.

You will expect me, perhaps, to examine a little more closely these various points—namely, the manner in which this railway, if built, will affect the security of India, will affect our communication with India, will affect Anglo-Indian trade with Persia, and will affect the security of Persia itself. First let me take the defence of India. I imagine that it would be true to say that the history of the frontier defences of India during the last hundred years has, broadly speaking, passed through two phases. First there was the time in which the Government of India were spreading their conquests over the level plains of India until they came up to the mighty barrier of the mountains, which stand like an artificial palisade around our borders. Sometimes, of course, as in the case of the first Afghan War, we were tempted to cross that barrier, but usually to our detriment. Then came the period, beginning about fifty years ago, when either because of the depredations of the tribes in the mountains or the existence of hostile and intriguing influences beyond we were driven forward in search of what used to be called a "scientific frontier." The consequences of those forward movements pursued over a wide circumference were these. In parts we took completely into our own hands the country beyond the palisade; such was the case with Baluchistan; elsewhere we put the mountain passes in charge of Militia levies, or military police raised from the tribes themselves, and we gave subsidies to the tribes; and as regards the countries beyond we contrived, by treaties or other arrangements, to protect or guarantee or neutralise the whole of the surrounding kingdoms to which I refer. Such was the case with regard to Persia, to Afghanistan, to Tibet, and, more in the East, Siam. But the whole point throughout in both these phases has been this, that India ought to be surrounded for the purpose of safety by a belt, be it of mountains or be it of desert, which it would be difficult to cross. You really may compare the position to that of a fortress with a great glacis stretching around it, cleared by the treaties and political arrangements which have been made, and swept by our guns. The theory has always been that no one should be at liberty to advance across that glacis

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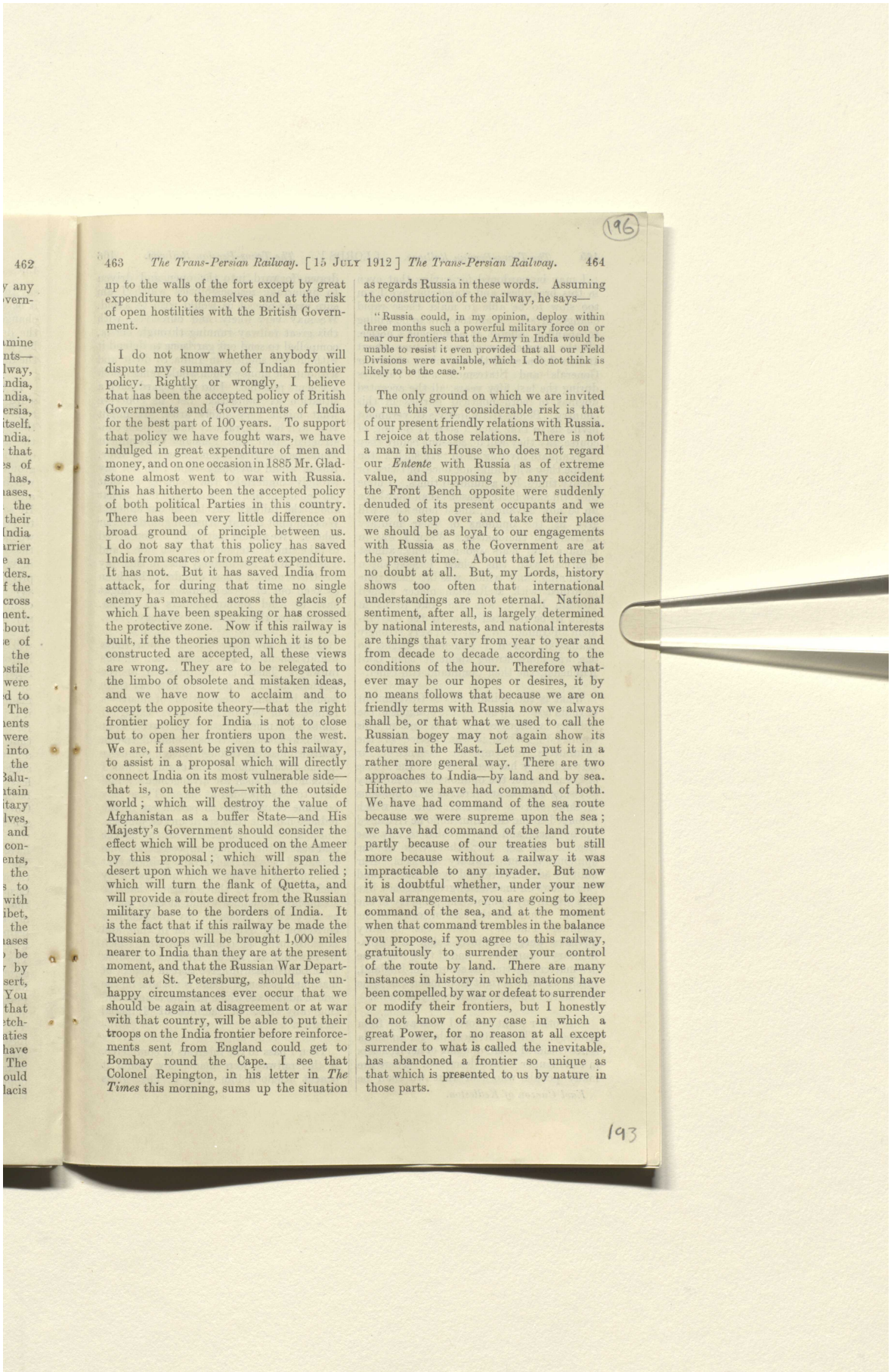

up to the walls of the fort except by great expenditure to themselves and at the risk of open hostilities with the British Government.

I do not know whether anybody will dispute my summary of Indian frontier policy. Rightly or wrongly, I believe that has been the accepted policy of British Governments and Governments of India for the best part of 100 years. To support that policy we have fought wars, we have indulged in great expenditure of men and money, and on one occasion in 1885 Mr. Gladstone almost went to war with Russia. This has hitherto been the accepted policy of both political Parties in this country. There has been very little difference on broad ground of principle between us. I do not say that this policy has saved India from scares or from great expenditure. It has not. But it has saved India from attack, for during that time no single enemy has marched across the glacis of which I have been speaking or has crossed the protective zone. Now if this railway is built, if the theories upon which it is to be constructed are accepted, all these views are wrong. They are to be relegated to the limbo of obsolete and mistaken ideas, and we have now to acclaim and to accept the opposite theory—that the right frontier policy for India is not to close but to open her frontiers upon the west. We are, if assent be given to this railway, to assist in a proposal which will directly connect India on its most vulnerable side—that is, on the west—with the outside world; which will destroy the value of Afghanistan as a buffer State—and His Majesty's Government should consider the effect which will be produced on the Ameer by this proposal; which will span the desert upon which we have hitherto relied; which will turn the flank of Quetta, and will provide a route direct from the Russian military base to the borders of India. It is the fact that if this railway be made the Russian troops will be brought 1,000 miles nearer to India than they are at the present moment, and that the Russian War Department at St. Petersburg, should the unhappy circumstances ever occur that we should be again at disagreement or at war with that country, will be able to put their troops on the India frontier before reinforcements sent from England could get to Bombay round the Cape. I see that Colonel Repington, in his letter in *The Times* this morning, sums up the situation as regards Russia in these words. Assuming the construction of the railway, he says—

> "Russia could, in my opinion, deploy within three months such a powerful military force on or near our frontiers that the Army in India would be unable to resist it even provided that all our Field Divisions were available, which I do not think is likely to be the case."

The only ground on which we are invited to run this very considerable risk is that of our present friendly relations with Russia. I rejoice at those relations. There is not a man in this House who does not regard our *Entente* with Russia as of extreme value, and supposing by any accident the Front Bench opposite were suddenly denuded of its present occupants and we were to step over and take their place we should be as loyal to our engagements with Russia as the Government are at the present time. About that let there be no doubt at all. But, my Lords, history shows too often that international understandings are not eternal. National sentiment, after all, is largely determined by national interests, and national interests are things that vary from year to year and from decade to decade according to the conditions of the hour. Therefore whatever may be our hopes or desires, it by no means follows that because we are on friendly terms with Russia now we always shall be, or that what we used to call the Russian bogey may not again show its features in the East. Let me put it in a rather more general way. There are two approaches to India—by land and by sea. Hitherto we have had command of both. We have had command of the sea route because we were supreme upon the sea; we have had command of the land route partly because of our treaties but still more because without a railway it was impracticable to any invader. But now it is doubtful whether, under your new naval arrangements, you are going to keep command of the sea, and at the moment when that command trembles in the balance you propose, if you agree to this railway, gratuitously to surrender your control of the route by land. There are many instances in history in which nations have been compelled by war or defeat to surrender or modify their frontiers, but I honestly do not know of any case in which a great Power, for no reason at all except surrender to what is called the inevitable, has abandoned a frontier so unique as that which is presented to us by nature in those parts.

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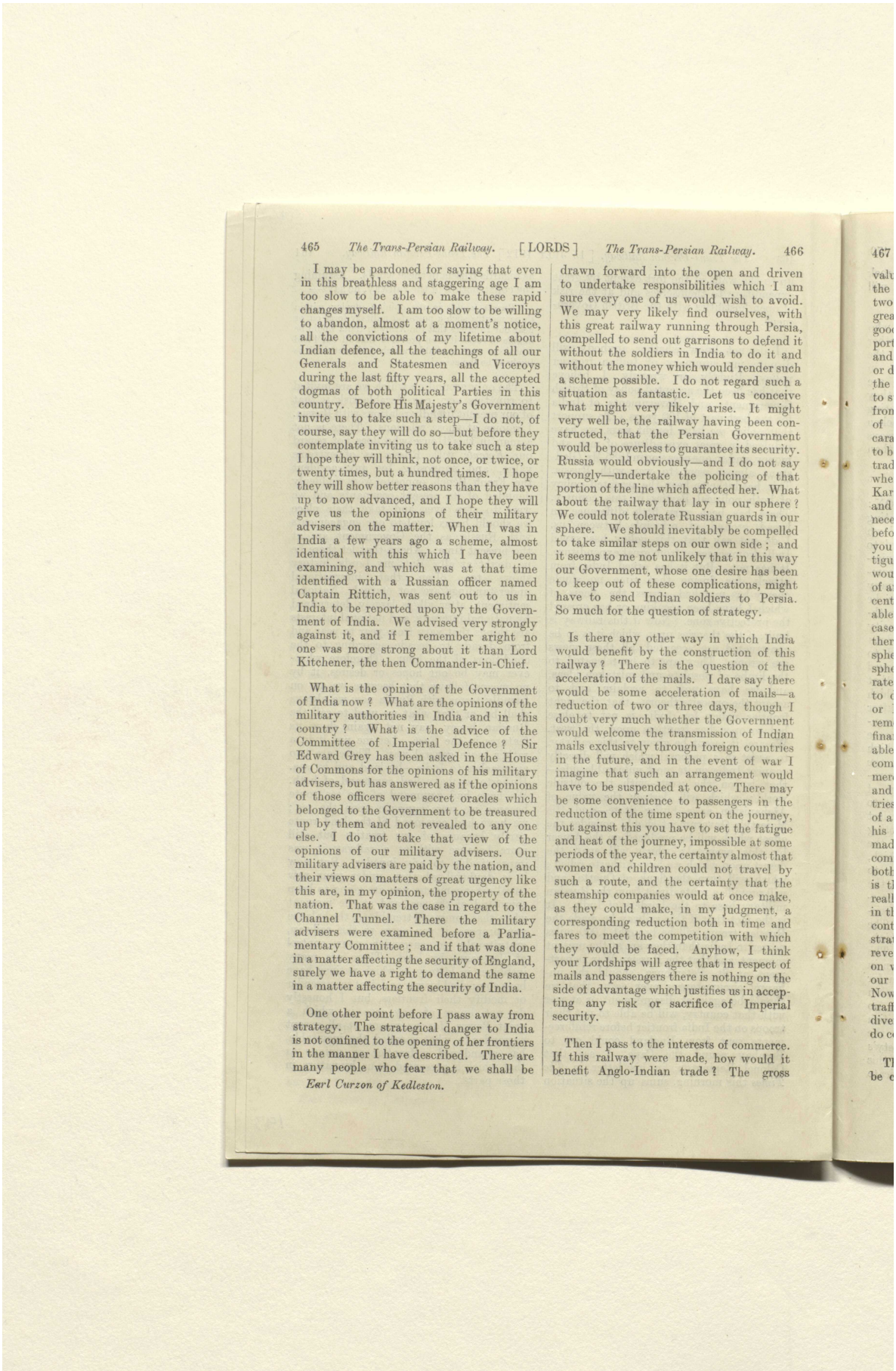

I may be pardoned for saying that even in this breathless and staggering age I am too slow to be able to make these rapid changes myself. I am too slow to be willing to abandon, almost at a moment's notice, all the convictions of my lifetime about Indian defence, all the teachings of all our Generals and Statesmen and Viceroys during the last fifty years, all the accepted dogmas of both political Parties in this country. Before His Majesty's Government invite us to take such a step—I do not, of course, say they will do so—but before they contemplate inviting us to take such a step I hope they will think, not once, or twice, or twenty times, but a hundred times. I hope they will show better reasons than they have up to now advanced, and I hope they will give us the opinions of their military advisers on the matter. When I was in India a few years ago a scheme, almost identical with this which I have been examining, and which was at that time identified with a Russian officer named Captain Rittich, was sent out to us in India to be reported upon by the Government of India. We advised very strongly against it, and if I remember aright no one was more strong about it than Lord Kitchener, the then Commander-in-Chief.

What is the opinion of the Government of India now? What are the opinions of the military authorities in India and in this country? What is the advice of the Committee of Imperial Defence? Sir Edward Grey has been asked in the House of Commons for the opinions of his military advisers, but has answered as if the opinions of those officers were secret oracles which belonged to the Government to be treasured up by them and not revealed to any one else. I do not take that view of the opinions of our military advisers. Our military advisers are paid by the nation, and their views on matters of great urgency like this are, in my opinion, the property of the nation. That was the case in regard to the Channel Tunnel. There the military advisers were examined before a Parliamentary Committee; and if that was done in a matter affecting the security of England, surely we have a right to demand the same in a matter affecting the security of India.

One other point before I pass away from strategy. The strategical danger to India is not confined to the opening of her frontiers in the manner I have described. There are many people who fear that we shall be

drawn forward into the open and driven to undertake responsibilities which I am sure every one of us would wish to avoid. We may very likely find ourselves, with this great railway running through Persia, compelled to send out garrisons to defend it without the soldiers in India to do it and without the money which would render such a scheme possible. I do not regard such a situation as fantastic. Let us conceive what might very likely arise. It might very well be, the railway having been constructed, that the Persian Government would be powerless to guarantee its security. Russia would obviously—and I do not say wrongly—undertake the policing of that portion of the line which affected her. What about the railway that lay in our sphere? We could not tolerate Russian guards in our sphere. We should inevitably be compelled to take similar steps on our own side; and it seems to me not unlikely that in this way our Government, whose one desire has been to keep out of these complications, might have to send Indian soldiers to Persia. So much for the question of strategy.

Is there any other way in which India would benefit by the construction of this railway? There is the question of the acceleration of the mails. I dare say there would be some acceleration of mails—a reduction of two or three days, though I doubt very much whether the Government would welcome the transmission of Indian mails exclusively through foreign countries in the future, and in the event of war I imagine that such an arrangement would have to be suspended at once. There may be some convenience to passengers in the reduction of the time spent on the journey, but against this you have to set the fatigue and heat of the journey, impossible at some periods of the year, the certainty almost that women and children could not travel by such a route, and the certainty that the steamship companies would at once make, as they could make, in my judgment, a corresponding reduction both in time and fares to meet the competition with which they would be faced. Anyhow, I think your Lordships will agree that in respect of mails and passengers there is nothing on the side of advantage which justifies us in accepting any risk or sacrifice of Imperial security.

Then I pass to the interests of commerce. If this railway were made, how would it benefit Anglo-Indian trade? The gross

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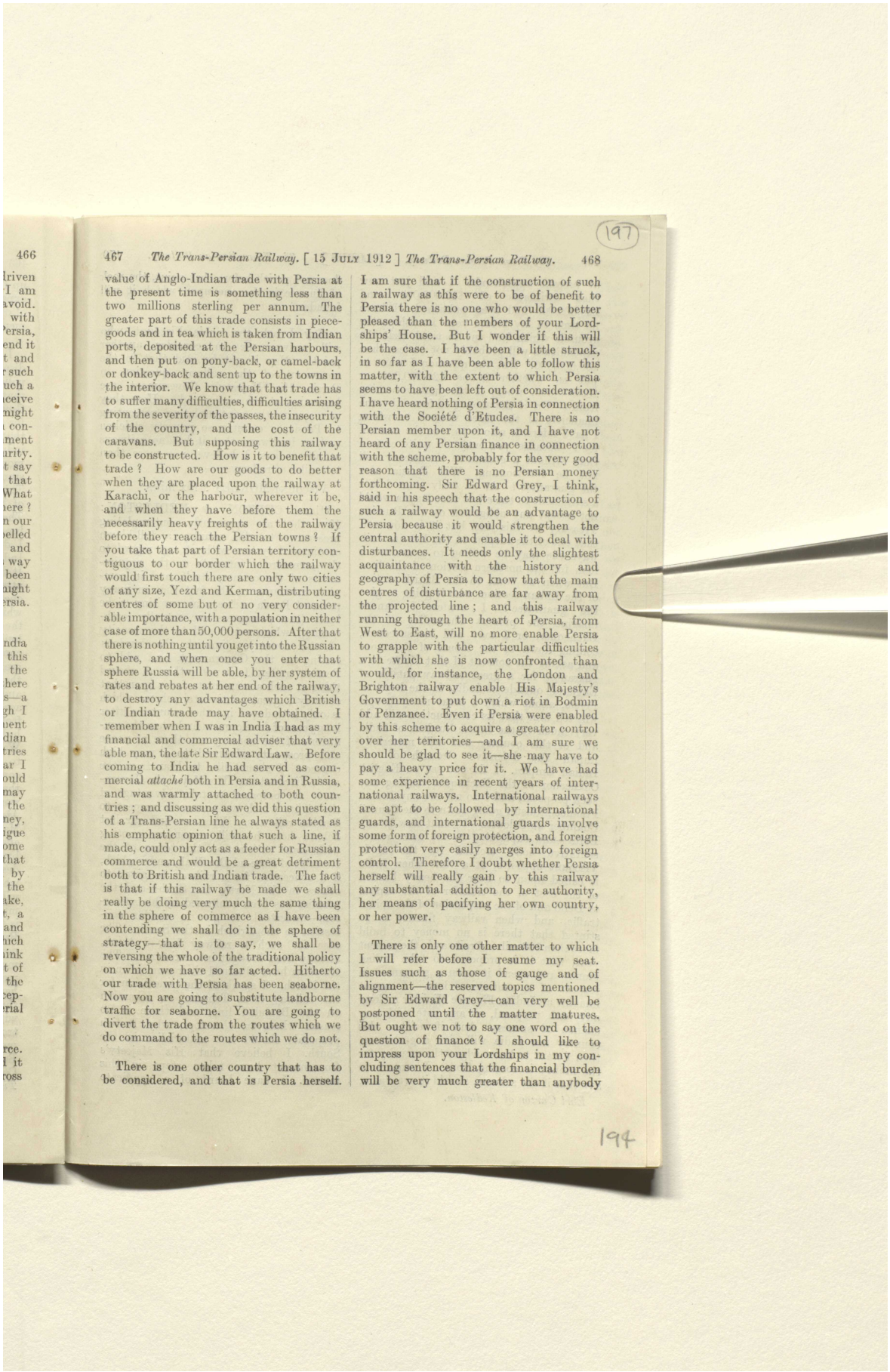

value of Anglo-Indian trade with Persia at the present time is something less than two millions sterling per annum. The greater part of this trade consists in piece-goods and in tea which is taken from Indian ports, deposited at the Persian harbours, and then put on pony-back, or camel-back or donkey-back and sent up to the towns in the interior. We know that that trade has to suffer many difficulties, difficulties arising from the severity of the passes, the insecurity of the country, and the cost of the caravans. But supposing this railway to be constructed. How is it to benefit that trade? How are our goods to do better when they are placed upon the railway at Karachi, or the harbour, wherever it be, and when they have before them the necessarily heavy freights of the railway before they reach the Persian towns? If you take that part of Persian territory contiguous to our border which the railway would first touch there are only two cities of any size, Yezd and Kerman, distributing centres of some but of no very considerable importance, with a population in neither case of more than 50,000 persons. After that there is nothing until you get into the Russian sphere, and when once you enter that sphere Russia will be able, by her system of rates and rebates at her end of the railway, to destroy any advantages which British or Indian trade may have obtained. I remember when I was in India I had as my financial and commercial adviser that very able man, the late Sir Edward Law. Before coming to India he had served as commercial *attaché* both in Persia and in Russia, and was warmly attached to both countries; and discussing as we did this question of a Trans-Persian line he always stated as his emphatic opinion that such a line, if made, could only act as a feeder for Russian commerce and would be a great detriment both to British and Indian trade. The fact is that if this railway be made we shall really be doing very much the same thing in the sphere of commerce as I have been contending we shall do in the sphere of strategy—that is to say, we shall be reversing the whole of the traditional policy on which we have so far acted. Hitherto our trade with Persia has been seaborne. Now you are going to substitute landborne traffic for seaborne. You are going to divert the trade from the routes which we do command to the routes which we do not.

There is one other country that has to be considered, and that is Persia herself. I am sure that if the construction of such a railway as this were to be of benefit to Persia there is no one who would be better pleased than the members of your Lordships' House. But I wonder if this will be the case. I have been a little struck, in so far as I have been able to follow this matter, with the extent to which Persia seems to have been left out of consideration. I have heard nothing of Persia in connection with the Société d'Etudes. There is no Persian member upon it, and I have not heard of any Persian finance in connection with the scheme, probably for the very good reason that there is no Persian money forthcoming. Sir Edward Grey, I think, said in his speech that the construction of such a railway would be an advantage to Persia because it would strengthen the central authority and enable it to deal with disturbances. It needs only the slightest acquaintance with the history and geography of Persia to know that the main centres of disturbance are far away from the projected line; and this railway running through the heart of Persia, from West to East, will no more enable Persia to grapple with the particular difficulties with which she is now confronted than would, for instance, the London and Brighton railway enable His Majesty's Government to put down a riot in Bodmin or Penzance. Even if Persia were enabled by this scheme to acquire a greater control over her territories—and I am sure we should be glad to see it—she may have to pay a heavy price for it. We have had some experience in recent years of international railways. International railways are apt to be followed by international guards, and international guards involve some form of foreign protection, and foreign protection very easily merges into foreign control. Therefore I doubt whether Persia herself will really gain by this railway any substantial addition to her authority, her means of pacifying her own country, or her power.

There is only one other matter to which I will refer before I resume my seat. Issues such as those of gauge and of alignment—the reserved topics mentioned by Sir Edward Grey—can very well be postponed until the matter matures. But ought we not to say one word on the question of finance? I should like to impress upon your Lordships in my concluding sentences that the financial burden will be very much greater than anybody

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at present apprehends. I said just now that estimates of £15,000,000 and £20,000,000 had been published. I have no time to lay before your Lordships the grounds which lead me to think that the expenditure will probably not be less than £30,000,000. But the question I want to put is, whether it be £20,000,000 or £30,000,000, where is the money coming from? Or, if the money is found by the financiers of the three nations to whom I have referred, who is to give the guarantee? Because you may be quite certain that without a guarantee the money will not be forthcoming. Will Russia give the guarantee? At an early stage I saw a statement to the effect that Russia would not accept any obligation on the Russian Treasury for this line, but it is now said that out of the surplus on the Russian railways she may be willing to guarantee a loan for the northern section of the line. But when we come to the British section or the Indian section, who is going to give the guarantee? I confess I cannot imagine the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, or I may add his successor, coming down to the House of Commons and asking the consent of that House to a guarantee for a great railway outside of England, outside of India, in the heart of Persia, about which a great many people will tell him that its construction will add very much to the future burdens of India and of this country and will materially impair the defensive strength of our Indian Empire. I do not see an English Chancellor of the Exchequer making any such proposal, and I do not see any Indian Finance Minister going down to the Council Chamber at Calcutta—I ought now to say Delhi—and explaining to the more representative body created by the noble Viscount opposite, at a time when India is called upon to bear the heavy burden of the cost of the transfer of the capital to Delhi and of the suspension of the opium traffic, and when railway finance is so stinted that there is no money to build more than 100 miles of railway in the present year, that it is proposed to take Indian money and spend it upon a guarantee in respect of a continental line. I cannot imagine an Indian Finance Minister making any such proposal, at any rate with any chance of success. And if neither this country nor India will give a guarantee, then I want to know where the security for the money is coming from. I venture to say that if the scheme, should it eventuate, does not perish before that point, the rock of finance is the one upon which it will founder.

May I ask the noble Viscount who will answer me to consider another point? May it not be said that in the treatment of the railway question in Persia His Majesty's Government are beginning at the wrong end? Here they are apparently contemplating presenting to Persia, a country so poverty stricken and so backward that it has no railways at all—it has, I believe, not more than ten miles of railway——

VISCOUNT MORLEY: Six miles.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: Here they are apparently contemplating presenting to this country a full-blown continental system without any regard to the commercial interests or the requirements of the country itself, and in complete ignorance of the fact that in many parts of Persia railways are waiting to be built (the promoters are actually forthcoming), which would add to the security of the country, diminish the burdens resting on the Government, and add to Persian trade. Is it not rather an absurd thing at such a moment to force upon that country a great continental scheme which is only introduced in other countries after long years of development and when the conditions of the country are those of peace and prosperity advanced to a very high degree? I should like to hear from the noble Viscount that His Majesty's Government are prepared to take advantage of the rights which we possess in respect to Persian railways. When we had our last debate here he will remember quoting with some satisfaction the terms of the Rescript of Nasr-ud-Din Shah, under which, if a concession for a railway be given to others in the North, the Shah—and the promise has been confirmed by his successors—undertook to give a similar concession to the British in the South. The case for such a railway has, I think, already been brought into existence. The Russians have obtained their concession in the North. I speak of the concession for the railway from Teheran to Khanikin on the Baghdad line, and there is no reason whatever, therefore, why British proposals should not materialise in the South. I believe that His Majesty's Government have taken steps in this matter. I have heard of a syndicate

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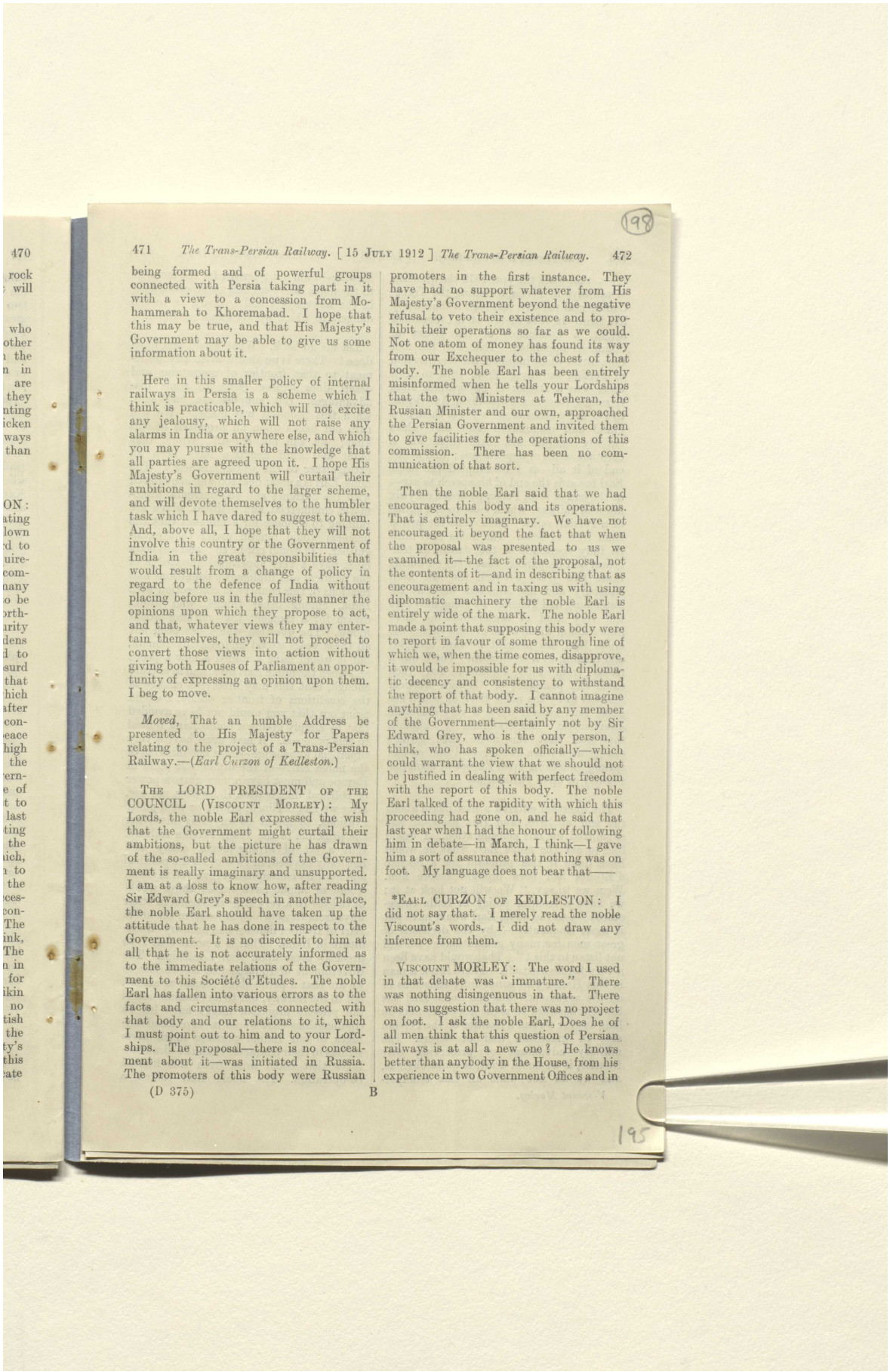

being formed and of powerful groups connected with Persia taking part in it with a view to a concession from Mohammerah to Khoremabad. I hope that this may be true, and that His Majesty's Government may be able to give us some information about it.

Here in this smaller policy of internal railways in Persia is a scheme which I think is practicable, which will not excite any jealousy, which will not raise any alarms in India or anywhere else, and which you may pursue with the knowledge that all parties are agreed upon it. I hope His Majesty's Government will curtail their ambitions in regard to the larger scheme, and will devote themselves to the humbler task which I have dared to suggest to them. And, above all, I hope that they will not involve this country or the Government of India in the great responsibilities that would result from a change of policy in regard to the defence of India without placing before us in the fullest manner the opinions upon which they propose to act, and that, whatever views they may entertain themselves, they will not proceed to convert those views into action without giving both Houses of Parliament an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon them. I beg to move.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty for Papers relating to the project of a Trans-Persian Railway.—(*Earl Curzon of Kedleston.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (VISCOUNT MORLEY): My Lords, the noble Earl expressed the wish that the Government might curtail their ambitions, but the picture he has drawn of the so-called ambitions of the Government is really imaginary and unsupported. I am at a loss to know how, after reading Sir Edward Grey's speech in another place, the noble Earl should have taken up the attitude that he has done in respect to the Government. It is no discredit to him at all that he is not accurately informed as to the immediate relations of the Government to this Société d'Etudes. The noble Earl has fallen into various errors as to the facts and circumstances connected with that body and our relations to it, which I must point out to him and to your Lordships. The proposal—there is no concealment about it—was initiated in Russia. The promoters of this body were Russian promoters in the first instance. They have had no support whatever from His Majesty's Government beyond the negative refusal to veto their existence and to prohibit their operations so far as we could. Not one atom of money has found its way from our Exchequer to the chest of that body. The noble Earl has been entirely misinformed when he tells your Lordships that the two Ministers at Teheran, the Russian Minister and our own, approached the Persian Government and invited them to give facilities for the operations of this commission. There has been no communication of that sort.

Then the noble Earl said that we had encouraged this body and its operations. That is entirely imaginary. We have not encouraged it beyond the fact that when the proposal was presented to us we examined it—the fact of the proposal, not the contents of it—and in describing that as encouragement and in taxing us with using diplomatic machinery the noble Earl is entirely wide of the mark. The noble Earl made a point that supposing this body were to report in favour of some through line of which we, when the time comes, disapprove, it would be impossible for us with diplomatic decency and consistency to withstand the report of that body. I cannot imagine anything that has been said by any member of the Government—certainly not by Sir Edward Grey, who is the only person, I think, who has spoken officially—which could warrant the view that we should not be justified in dealing with perfect freedom with the report of this body. The noble Earl talked of the rapidity with which this proceeding had gone on, and he said that last year when I had the honour of following him in debate—in March, I think—I gave him a sort of assurance that nothing was on foot. My language does not bear that——

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: I did not say that. I merely read the noble Viscount's words. I did not draw any inference from them.

VISCOUNT MORLEY: The word I used in that debate was "immature." There was nothing disingenuous in that. There was no suggestion that there was no project on foot. I ask the noble Earl, Does he of all men think that this question of Persian railways is at all a new one? He knows better than anybody in the House, from his experience in two Government Offices and in

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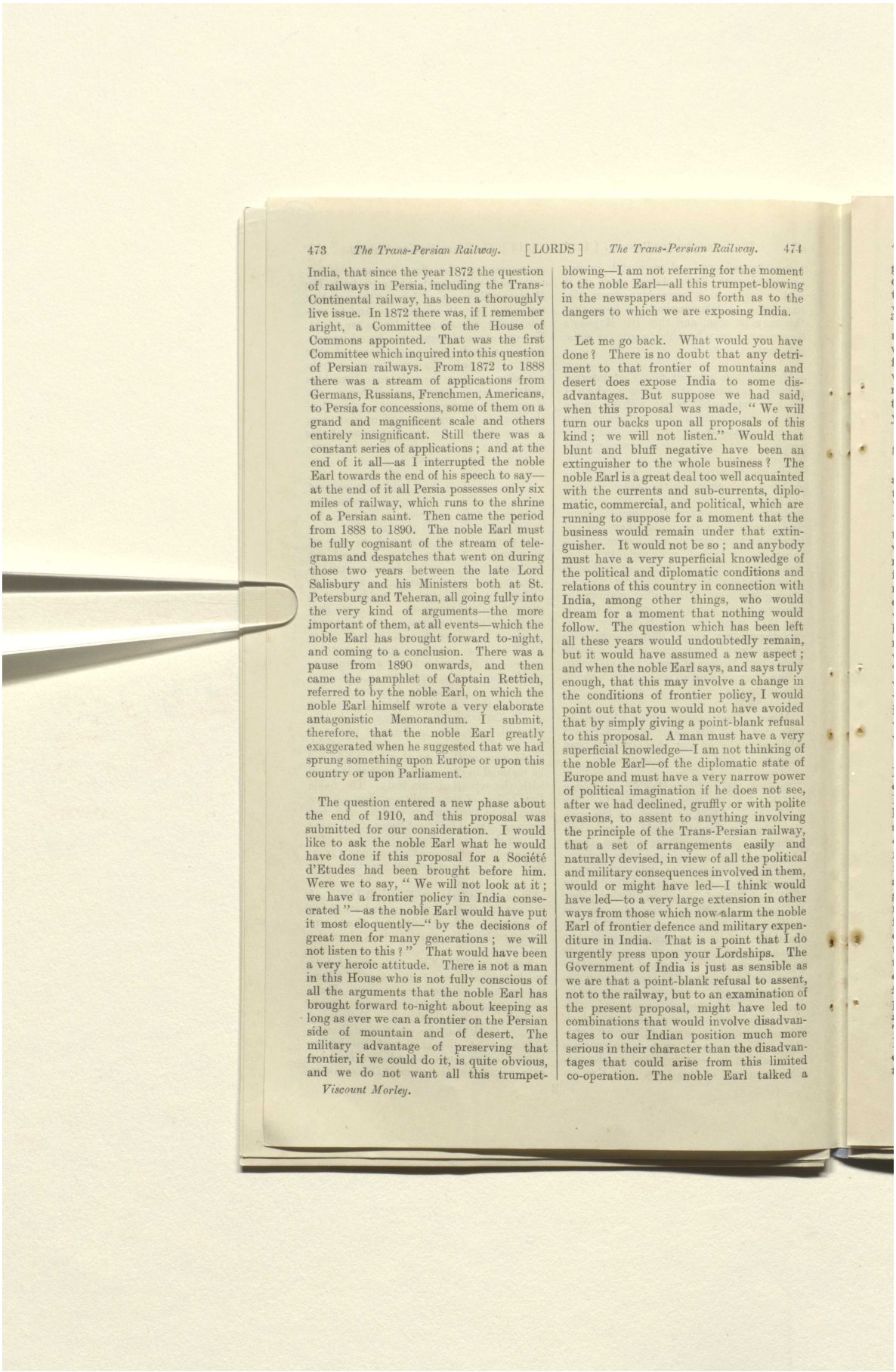
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [198v] (396/442)



India, that since the year 1872 the question of railways in Persia, including the Trans-Continental railway, has been a thoroughly live issue. In 1872 there was, if I remember aright, a Committee of the House of Commons appointed. That was the first Committee which inquired into this question of Persian railways. From 1872 to 1888 there was a stream of applications from Germans, Russians, Frenchmen, Americans, to Persia for concessions, some of them on a grand and magnificent scale and others entirely insignificant. Still there was a constant series of applications; and at the end of it all—as I interrupted the noble Earl towards the end of his speech to say—at the end of it all Persia possesses only six miles of railway, which runs to the shrine of a Persian saint. Then came the period from 1888 to 1890. The noble Earl must be fully cognisant of the stream of telegrams and despatches that went on during those two years between the late Lord Salisbury and his Ministers both at St. Petersburg and Teheran, all going fully into the very kind of arguments—the more important of them, at all events—which the noble Earl has brought forward to-night, and coming to a conclusion. There was a pause from 1890 onwards, and then came the pamphlet of Captain Rettich, referred to by the noble Earl, on which the noble Earl himself wrote a very elaborate antagonistic Memorandum. I submit, therefore, that the noble Earl greatly exaggerated when he suggested that we had sprung something upon Europe or upon this country or upon Parliament.

The question entered a new phase about the end of 1910, and this proposal was submitted for our consideration. I would like to ask the noble Earl what he would have done if this proposal for a Société d'Etudes had been brought before him. Were we to say, "We will not look at it; we have a frontier policy in India consecrated"—as the noble Earl would have put it most eloquently—"by the decisions of great men for many generations; we will not listen to this?" That would have been a very heroic attitude. There is not a man in this House who is not fully conscious of all the arguments that the noble Earl has brought forward to-night about keeping as long as ever we can a frontier on the Persian side of mountain and of desert. The military advantage of preserving that frontier, if we could do it, is quite obvious, and we do not want all this trumpet-blowing—I am not referring for the moment to the noble Earl—all this trumpet-blowing in the newspapers and so forth as to the dangers to which we are exposing India.

Let me go back. What would you have done? There is no doubt that any detriment to that frontier of mountains and desert does expose India to some disadvantages. But suppose we had said, when this proposal was made, "We will turn our backs upon all proposals of this kind; we will not listen." Would that blunt and bluff negative have been an extinguisher to the whole business? The noble Earl is a great deal too well acquainted with the currents and sub-currents, diplomatic, commercial, and political, which are running to suppose for a moment that the business would remain under that extinguisher. It would not be so; and anybody must have a very superficial knowledge of the political and diplomatic conditions and relations of this country in connection with India, among other things, who would dream for a moment that nothing would follow. The question which has been left all these years would undoubtedly remain, but it would have assumed a new aspect; and when the noble Earl says, and says truly enough, that this may involve a change in the conditions of frontier policy, I would point out that you would not have avoided that by simply giving a point-blank refusal to this proposal. A man must have a very superficial knowledge—I am not thinking of the noble Earl—of the diplomatic state of Europe and must have a very narrow power of political imagination if he does not see, after we had declined, gruffly or with polite evasions, to assent to anything involving the principle of the Trans-Persian railway, that a set of arrangements easily and naturally devised, in view of all the political and military consequences involved in them, would or might have led—I think would have led—to a very large extension in other ways from those which now alarm the noble Earl of frontier defence and military expenditure in India. That is a point that I do urgently press upon your Lordships. The Government of India is just as sensible as we are that a point-blank refusal to assent, not to the railway, but to an examination of the present proposal, might have led to combinations that would involve disadvantages to our Indian position much more serious in their character than the disadvantages that could arise from this limited co-operation. The noble Earl talked a

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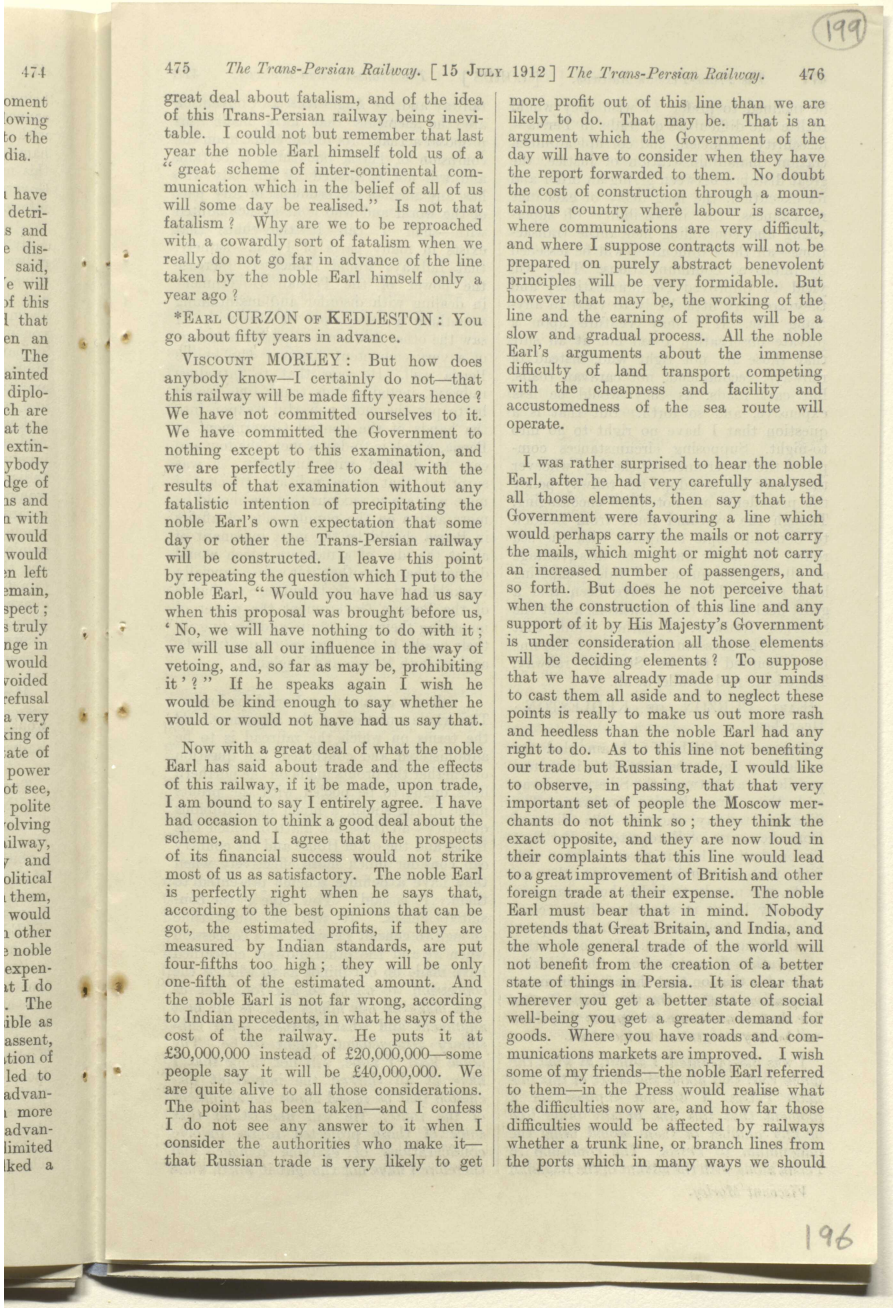

great deal about fatalism, and of the idea of this Trans-Persian railway being inevitable. I could not but remember that last year the noble Earl himself told us of a "great scheme of inter-continental communication which in the belief of all of us will some day be realised." Is not that fatalism? Why are we to be reproached with a cowardly sort of fatalism when we really do not go far in advance of the line taken by the noble Earl himself only a year ago?

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: You go about fifty years in advance.

VISCOUNT MORLEY: But how does anybody know—I certainly do not—that this railway will be made fifty years hence? We have not committed ourselves to it. We have committed the Government to nothing except to this examination, and we are perfectly free to deal with the results of that examination without any fatalistic intention of precipitating the noble Earl's own expectation that some day or other the Trans-Persian railway will be constructed. I leave this point by repeating the question which I put to the noble Earl, "Would you have had us say when this proposal was brought before us, 'No, we will have nothing to do with it; we will use all our influence in the way of vetoing, and, so far as may be, prohibiting it'?" If he speaks again I wish he would be kind enough to say whether he would or would not have had us say that.

Now with a great deal of what the noble Earl has said about trade and the effects of this railway, if it be made, upon trade, I am bound to say I entirely agree. I have had occasion to think a good deal about the scheme, and I agree that the prospects of its financial success would not strike most of us as satisfactory. The noble Earl is perfectly right when he says that, according to the best opinions that can be got, the estimated profits, if they are measured by Indian standards, are put four-fifths too high; they will be only one-fifth of the estimated amount. And the noble Earl is not far wrong, according to Indian precedents, in what he says of the cost of the railway. He puts it at £30,000,000 instead of £20,000,000—some people say it will be £40,000,000. We are quite alive to all those considerations. The point has been taken—and I confess I do not see any answer to it when I consider the authorities who make it—that Russian trade is very likely to get more profit out of this line than we are likely to do. That may be. That is an argument which the Government of the day will have to consider when they have the report forwarded to them. No doubt the cost of construction through a mountainous country where labour is scarce, where communications are very difficult, and where I suppose contracts will not be prepared on purely abstract benevolent principles will be very formidable. But however that may be, the working of the line and the earning of profits will be a slow and gradual process. All the noble Earl's arguments about the immense difficulty of land transport competing with the cheapness and facility and accustomedness of the sea route will operate.

I was rather surprised to hear the noble Earl, after he had very carefully analysed all those elements, then say that the Government were favouring a line which would perhaps carry the mails or not carry the mails, which might or might not carry an increased number of passengers, and so forth. But does he not perceive that when the construction of this line and any support of it by His Majesty's Government is under consideration all those elements will be deciding elements? To suppose that we have already made up our minds to cast them all aside and to neglect these points is really to make us out more rash and heedless than the noble Earl had any right to do. As to this line not benefiting our trade but Russian trade, I would like to observe, in passing, that that very important set of people the Moscow merchants do not think so; they think the exact opposite, and they are now loud in their complaints that this line would lead to a great improvement of British and other foreign trade at their expense. The noble Earl must bear that in mind. Nobody pretends that Great Britain, and India, and the whole general trade of the world will not benefit from the creation of a better state of things in Persia. It is clear that wherever you get a better state of social well-being you get a greater demand for goods. Where you have roads and communications markets are improved. I wish some of my friends—the noble Earl referred to them—in the Press would realise what the difficulties now are, and how far those difficulties would be affected by railways whether a trunk line, or branch lines from the ports which in many ways we should

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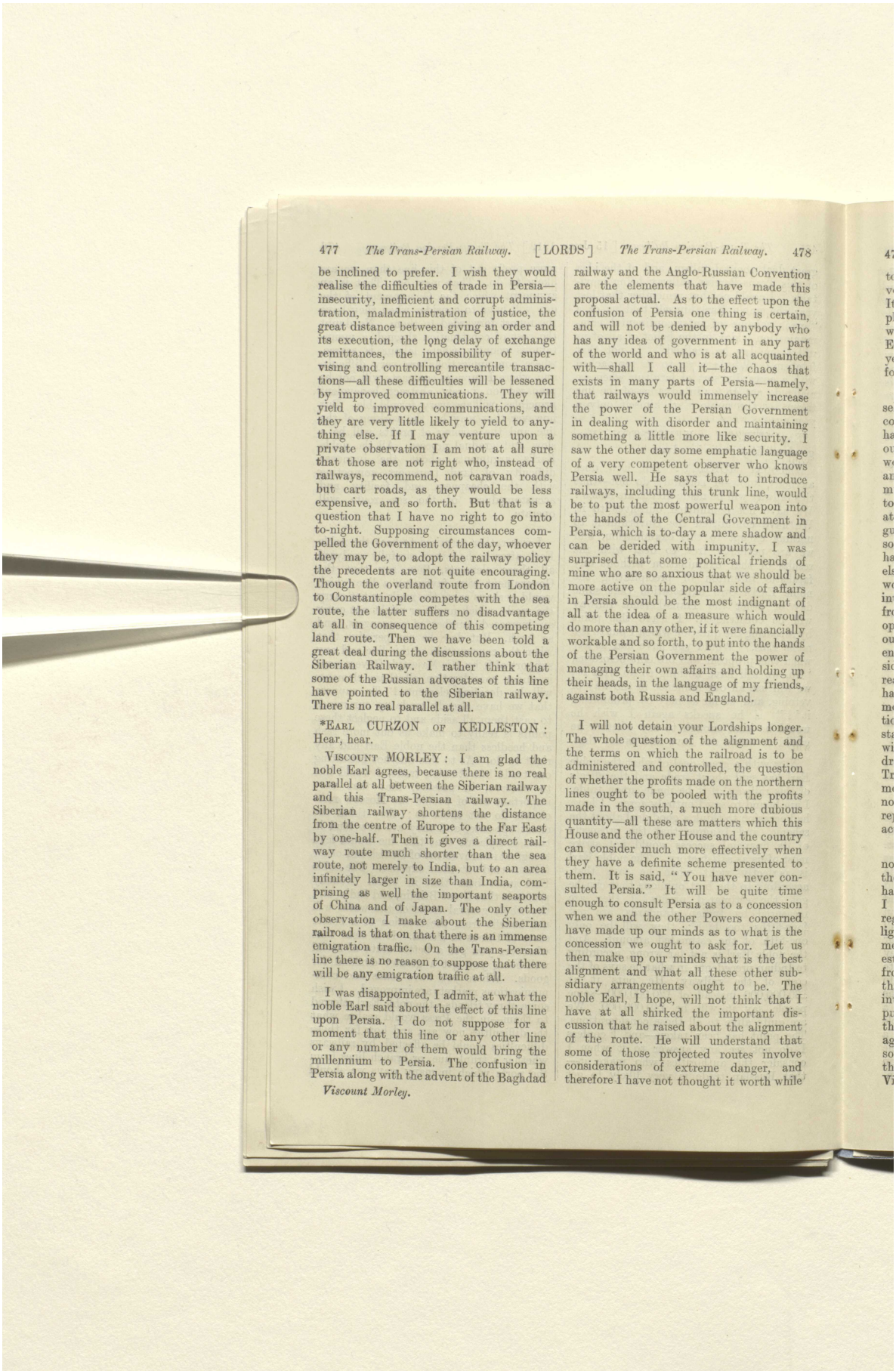

be inclined to prefer. I wish they would realise the difficulties of trade in Persia—insecurity, inefficient and corrupt administration, maladministration of justice, the great distance between giving an order and its execution, the long delay of exchange remittances, the impossibility of supervising and controlling mercantile transactions—all these difficulties will be lessened by improved communications. They will yield to improved communications, and they are very little likely to yield to anything else. If I may venture upon a private observation I am not at all sure that those are not right who, instead of railways, recommend, not caravan roads, but cart roads, as they would be less expensive, and so forth. But that is a question that I have no right to go into to-night. Supposing circumstances compelled the Government of the day, whoever they may be, to adopt the railway policy the precedents are not quite encouraging. Though the overland route from London to Constantinople competes with the sea route, the latter suffers no disadvantage at all in consequence of this competing land route. Then we have been told a great deal during the discussions about the Siberian Railway. I rather think that some of the Russian advocates of this line have pointed to the Siberian railway. There is no real parallel at all.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: Hear, hear.

VISCOUNT MORLEY: I am glad the noble Earl agrees, because there is no real parallel at all between the Siberian railway and this Trans-Persian railway. The Siberian railway shortens the distance from the centre of Europe to the Far East by one-half. Then it gives a direct railway route much shorter than the sea route, not merely to India, but to an area infinitely larger in size than India, comprising as well the important seaports of China and of Japan. The only other observation I make about the Siberian railroad is that on that there is an immense emigration traffic. On the Trans-Persian line there is no reason to suppose that there will be any emigration traffic at all.

I was disappointed, I admit, at what the noble Earl said about the effect of this line upon Persia. I do not suppose for a moment that this line or any other line or any number of them would bring the millennium to Persia. The confusion in Persia along with the advent of the Baghdad railway and the Anglo-Russian Convention are the elements that have made this proposal actual. As to the effect upon the confusion of Persia one thing is certain, and will not be denied by anybody who has any idea of government in any part of the world and who is at all acquainted with—shall I call it—the chaos that exists in many parts of Persia—namely, that railways would immensely increase the power of the Persian Government in dealing with disorder and maintaining something a little more like security. I saw the other day some emphatic language of a very competent observer who knows Persia well. He says that to introduce railways, including this trunk line, would be to put the most powerful weapon into the hands of the Central Government in Persia, which is to-day a mere shadow and can be derided with impunity. I was surprised that some political friends of mine who are so anxious that we should be more active on the popular side of affairs in Persia should be the most indignant of all at the idea of a measure which would do more than any other, if it were financially workable and so forth, to put into the hands of the Persian Government the power of managing their own affairs and holding up their heads, in the language of my friends, against both Russia and England.

I will not detain your Lordships longer. The whole question of the alignment and the terms on which the railroad is to be administered and controlled, the question of whether the profits made on the northern lines ought to be pooled with the profits made in the south, a much more dubious quantity—all these are matters which this House and the other House and the country can consider much more effectively when they have a definite scheme presented to them. It is said, "You have never consulted Persia." It will be quite time enough to consult Persia as to a concession when we and the other Powers concerned have made up our minds as to what is the concession we ought to ask for. Let us then make up our minds what is the best alignment and what all these other subsidiary arrangements ought to be. The noble Earl, I hope, will not think that I have at all shirked the important discussion that he raised about the alignment of the route. He will understand that some of those projected routes involve considerations of extreme danger, and therefore I have not thought it worth while

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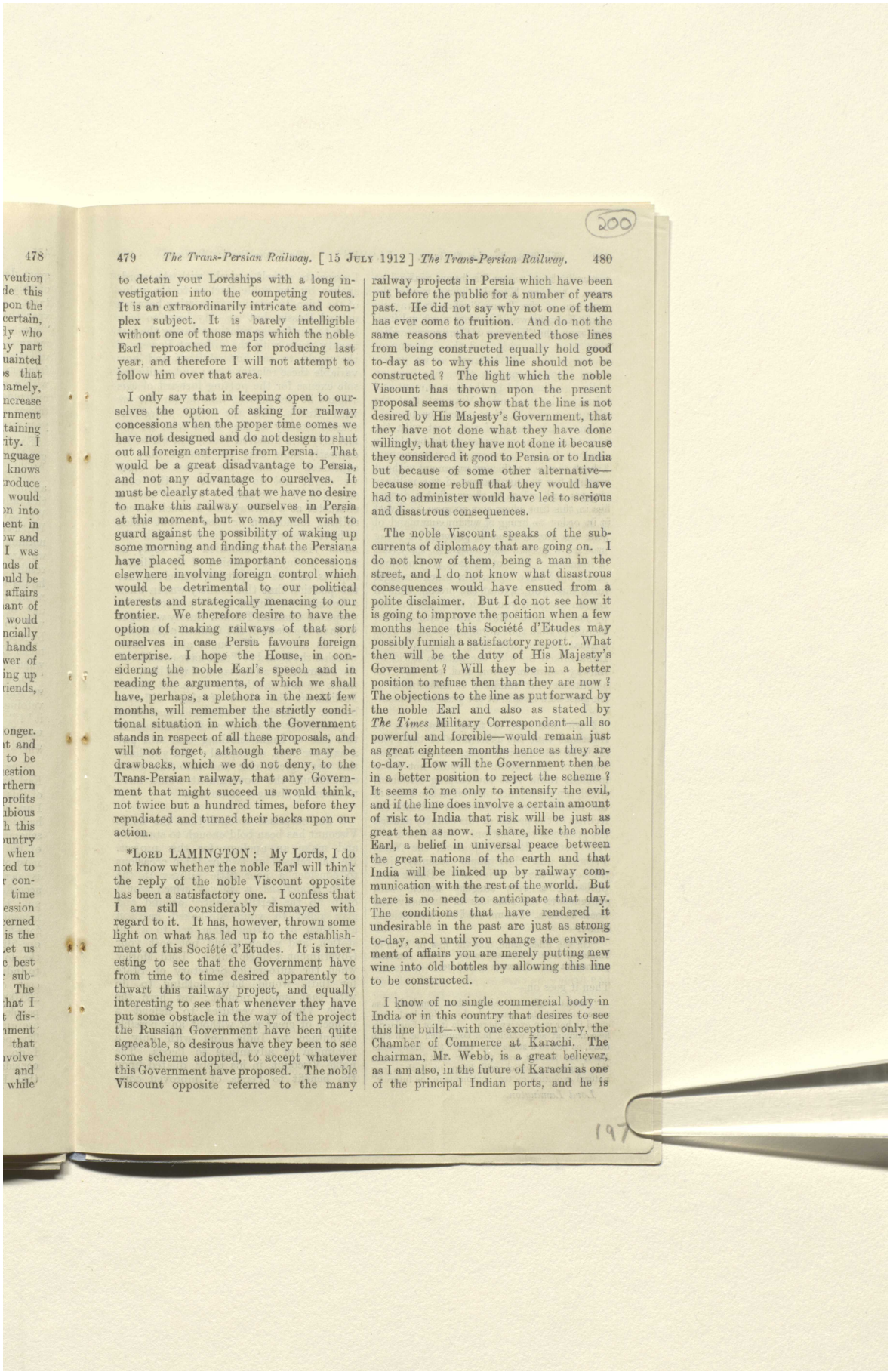

to detain your Lordships with a long investigation into the competing routes. It is an extraordinarily intricate and complex subject. It is barely intelligible without one of those maps which the noble Earl reproached me for producing last year, and therefore I will not attempt to follow him over that area.

I only say that in keeping open to ourselves the option of asking for railway concessions when the proper time comes we have not designed and do not design to shut out all foreign enterprise from Persia. That would be a great disadvantage to Persia, and not any advantage to ourselves. It must be clearly stated that we have no desire to make this railway ourselves in Persia at this moment, but we may well wish to guard against the possibility of waking up some morning and finding that the Persians have placed some important concessions elsewhere involving foreign control which would be detrimental to our political interests and strategically menacing to our frontier. We therefore desire to have the option of making railways of that sort ourselves in case Persia favours foreign enterprise. I hope the House, in considering the noble Earl's speech and in reading the arguments, of which we shall have, perhaps, a plethora in the next few months, will remember the strictly conditional situation in which the Government stands in respect of all these proposals, and will not forget, although there may be drawbacks, which we do not deny, to the Trans-Persian railway, that any Government that might succeed us would think, not twice but a hundred times, before they repudiated and turned their backs upon our action.

*LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, I do not know whether the noble Earl will think the reply of the noble Viscount opposite has been a satisfactory one. I confess that I am still considerably dismayed with regard to it. It has, however, thrown some light on what has led up to the establishment of this Société d'Etudes. It is interesting to see that the Government have from time to time desired apparently to thwart this railway project, and equally interesting to see that whenever they have put some obstacle in the way of the project the Russian Government have been quite agreeable, so desirous have they been to see some scheme adopted, to accept whatever this Government have proposed. The noble Viscount opposite referred to the many railway projects in Persia which have been put before the public for a number of years past. He did not say why not one of them has ever come to fruition. And do not the same reasons that prevented those lines from being constructed equally hold good to-day as to why this line should not be constructed? The light which the noble Viscount has thrown upon the present proposal seems to show that the line is not desired by His Majesty's Government, that they have not done what they have done willingly, that they have not done it because they considered it good to Persia or to India but because of some other alternative—because some rebuff that they would have had to administer would have led to serious and disastrous consequences.

The noble Viscount speaks of the sub-currents of diplomacy that are going on. I do not know of them, being a man in the street, and I do not know what disastrous consequences would have ensued from a polite disclaimer. But I do not see how it is going to improve the position when a few months hence this Société d'Etudes may possibly furnish a satisfactory report. What then will be the duty of His Majesty's Government? Will they be in a better position to refuse then than they are now? The objections to the line as put forward by the noble Earl and also as stated by *The Times* Military Correspondent—all so powerful and forcible—would remain just as great eighteen months hence as they are to-day. How will the Government then be in a better position to reject the scheme? It seems to me only to intensify the evil, and if the line does involve a certain amount of risk to India that risk will be just as great then as now. I share, like the noble Earl, a belief in universal peace between the great nations of the earth and that India will be linked up by railway communication with the rest of the world. But there is no need to anticipate that day. The conditions that have rendered it undesirable in the past are just as strong to-day, and until you change the environment of affairs you are merely putting new wine into old bottles by allowing this line to be constructed.

I know of no single commercial body in India or in this country that desires to see this line built—with one exception only, the Chamber of Commerce at Karachi. The chairman, Mr. Webb, is a great believer, as I am also, in the future of Karachi as one of the principal Indian ports, and he is

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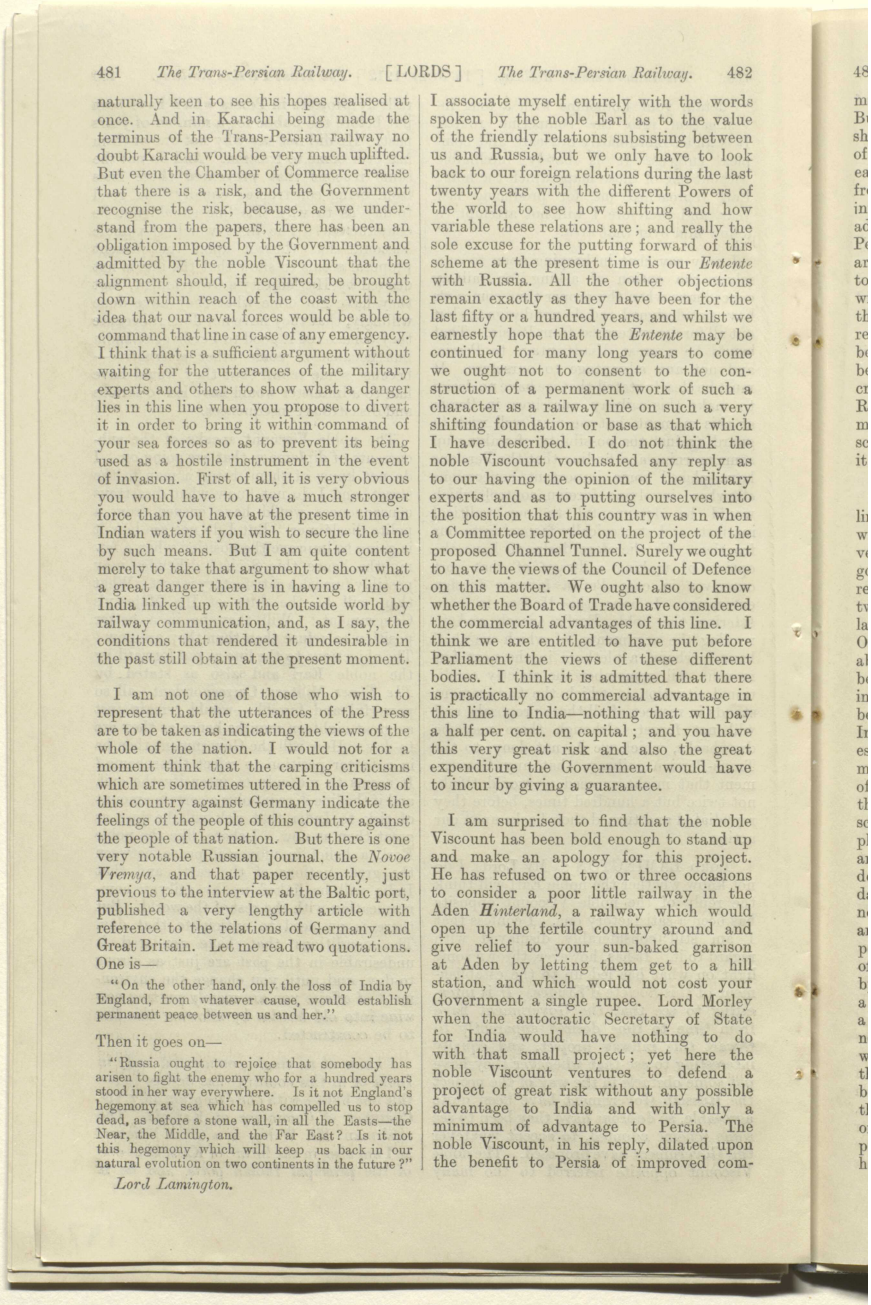

naturally keen to see his hopes realised at once. And in Karachi being made the terminus of the Trans-Persian railway no doubt Karachi would be very much uplifted. But even the Chamber of Commerce realise that there is a risk, and the Government recognise the risk, because, as we understand from the papers, there has been an obligation imposed by the Government and admitted by the noble Viscount that the alignment should, if required, be brought down within reach of the coast with the idea that our naval forces would be able to command that line in case of any emergency. I think that is a sufficient argument without waiting for the utterances of the military experts and others to show what a danger lies in this line when you propose to divert it in order to bring it within command of your sea forces so as to prevent its being used as a hostile instrument in the event of invasion. First of all, it is very obvious you would have to have a much stronger force than you have at the present time in Indian waters if you wish to secure the line by such means. But I am quite content merely to take that argument to show what a great danger there is in having a line to India linked up with the outside world by railway communication, and, as I say, the conditions that rendered it undesirable in the past still obtain at the present moment.

I am not one of those who wish to represent that the utterances of the Press are to be taken as indicating the views of the whole of the nation. I would not for a moment think that the carping criticisms which are sometimes uttered in the Press of this country against Germany indicate the feelings of the people of this country against the people of that nation. But there is one very notable Russian journal, the *Novoe Vremya*, and that paper recently, just previous to the interview at the Baltic port, published a very lengthy article with reference to the relations of Germany and Great Britain. Let me read two quotations. One is—

"On the other hand, only the loss of India by England, from whatever cause, would establish permanent peace between us and her."

Then it goes on—

"Russia ought to rejoice that somebody has arisen to fight the enemy who for a hundred years stood in her way everywhere. Is it not England's hegemony at sea which has compelled us to stop dead, as before a stone wall, in all the Easts—the Near, the Middle, and the Far East? Is it not this hegemony which will keep us back in our natural evolution on two continents in the future?"

Lord Lamington.

I associate myself entirely with the words spoken by the noble Earl as to the value of the friendly relations subsisting between us and Russia, but we only have to look back to our foreign relations during the last twenty years with the different Powers of the world to see how shifting and how variable these relations are; and really the sole excuse for the putting forward of this scheme at the present time is our *Entente* with Russia. All the other objections remain exactly as they have been for the last fifty or a hundred years, and whilst we earnestly hope that the *Entente* may be continued for many long years to come we ought not to consent to the construction of a permanent work of such a character as a railway line on such a very shifting foundation or base as that which I have described. I do not think the noble Viscount vouchsafed any reply as to our having the opinion of the military experts and as to putting ourselves into the position that this country was in when a Committee reported on the project of the proposed Channel Tunnel. Surely we ought to have the views of the Council of Defence on this matter. We ought also to know whether the Board of Trade have considered the commercial advantages of this line. I think we are entitled to have put before Parliament the views of these different bodies. I think it is admitted that there is practically no commercial advantage in this line to India—nothing that will pay a half per cent. on capital; and you have this very great risk and also the great expenditure the Government would have to incur by giving a guarantee.

I am surprised to find that the noble Viscount has been bold enough to stand up and make an apology for this project. He has refused on two or three occasions to consider a poor little railway in the Aden *Hinterland*, a railway which would open up the fertile country around and give relief to your sun-baked garrison at Aden by letting them get to a hill station, and which would not cost your Government a single rupee. Lord Morley when the autocratic Secretary of State for India would have nothing to do with that small project; yet here the noble Viscount ventures to defend a project of great risk without any possible advantage to India and with only a minimum of advantage to Persia. The noble Viscount, in his reply, dilated upon the benefit to Persia of improved com-

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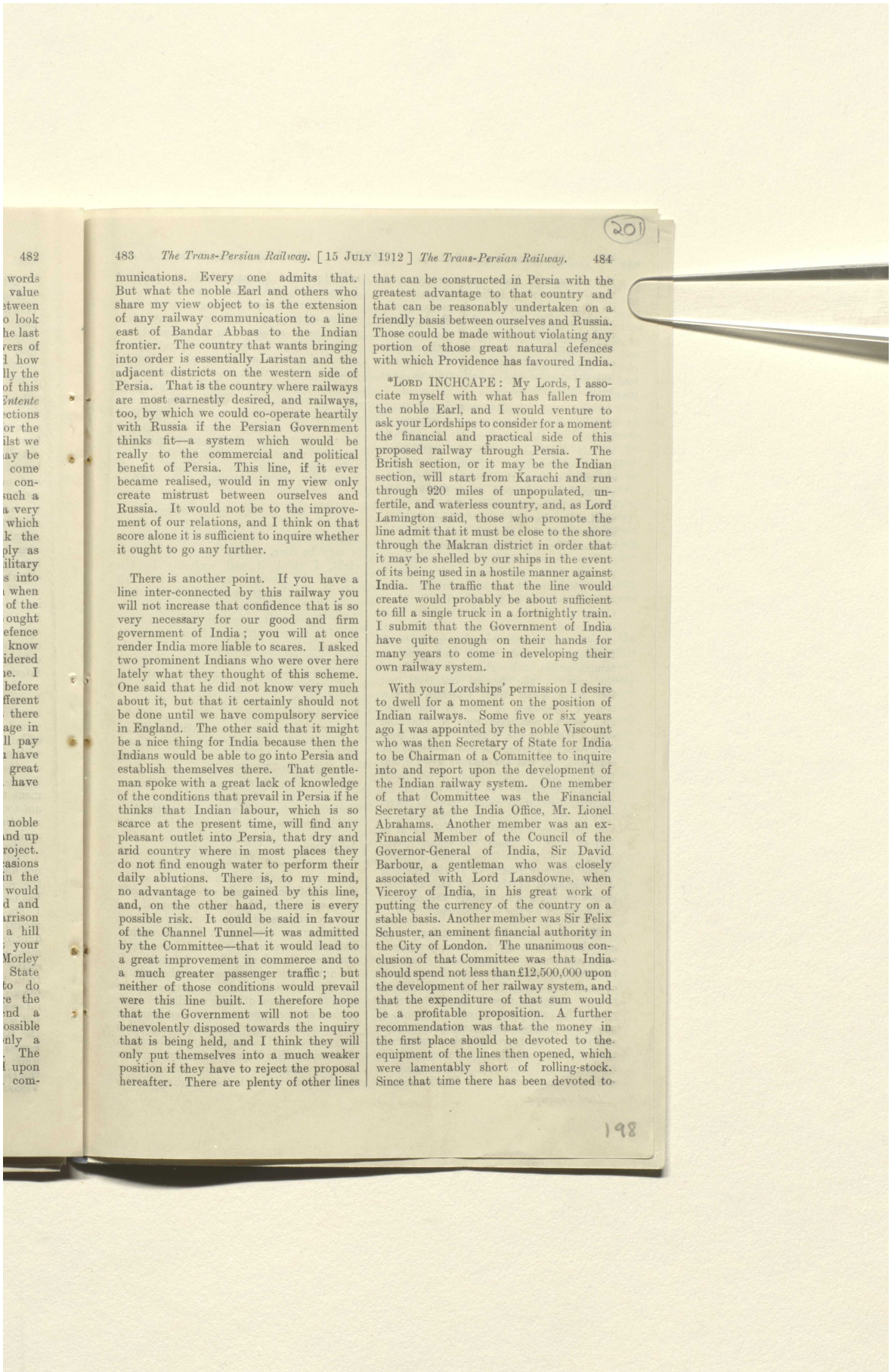

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munications. Every one admits that. But what the noble Earl and others who share my view object to is the extension of any railway communication to a line east of Bandar Abbas to the Indian frontier. The country that wants bringing into order is essentially Laristan and the adjacent districts on the western side of Persia. That is the country where railways are most earnestly desired, and railways, too, by which we could co-operate heartily with Russia if the Persian Government thinks fit—a system which would be really to the commercial and political benefit of Persia. This line, if it ever became realised, would in my view only create mistrust between ourselves and Russia. It would not be to the improvement of our relations, and I think on that score alone it is sufficient to inquire whether it ought to go any further.

There is another point. If you have a line inter-connected by this railway you will not increase that confidence that is so very necessary for our good and firm government of India; you will at once render India more liable to scares. I asked two prominent Indians who were over here lately what they thought of this scheme. One said that he did not know very much about it, but that it certainly should not be done until we have compulsory service in England. The other said that it might be a nice thing for India because then the Indians would be able to go into Persia and establish themselves there. That gentleman spoke with a great lack of knowledge of the conditions that prevail in Persia if he thinks that Indian labour, which is so scarce at the present time, will find any pleasant outlet into Persia, that dry and arid country where in most places they do not find enough water to perform their daily ablutions. There is, to my mind, no advantage to be gained by this line, and, on the other hand, there is every possible risk. It could be said in favour of the Channel Tunnel—it was admitted by the Committee—that it would lead to a great improvement in commerce and to a much greater passenger traffic; but neither of those conditions would prevail were this line built. I therefore hope that the Government will not be too benevolently disposed towards the inquiry that is being held, and I think they will only put themselves into a much weaker position if they have to reject the proposal hereafter. There are plenty of other lines that can be constructed in Persia with the greatest advantage to that country and that can be reasonably undertaken on a friendly basis between ourselves and Russia. Those could be made without violating any portion of those great natural defences with which Providence has favoured India.

*LORD INCHCAPE: My Lords, I associate myself with what has fallen from the noble Earl, and I would venture to ask your Lordships to consider for a moment the financial and practical side of this proposed railway through Persia. The British section, or it may be the Indian section, will start from Karachi and run through 920 miles of unpopulated, unfertile, and waterless country, and, as Lord Lamington said, those who promote the line admit that it must be close to the shore through the Makran district in order that it may be shelled by our ships in the event of its being used in a hostile manner against India. The traffic that the line would create would probably be about sufficient to fill a single truck in a fortnightly train. I submit that the Government of India have quite enough on their hands for many years to come in developing their own railway system.

With your Lordships' permission I desire to dwell for a moment on the position of Indian railways. Some five or six years ago I was appointed by the noble Viscount who was then Secretary of State for India to be Chairman of a Committee to inquire into and report upon the development of the Indian railway system. One member of that Committee was the Financial Secretary at the India Office, Mr. Lionel Abrahams. Another member was an ex-Financial Member of the Council of the Governor-General of India, Sir David Barbour, a gentleman who was closely associated with Lord Lansdowne, when Viceroy of India, in his great work of putting the currency of the country on a stable basis. Another member was Sir Felix Schuster, an eminent financial authority in the City of London. The unanimous conclusion of that Committee was that India should spend not less than £12,500,000 upon the development of her railway system, and that the expenditure of that sum would be a profitable proposition. A further recommendation was that the money in the first place should be devoted to the equipment of the lines then opened, which were lamentably short of rolling-stock. Since that time there has been devoted to

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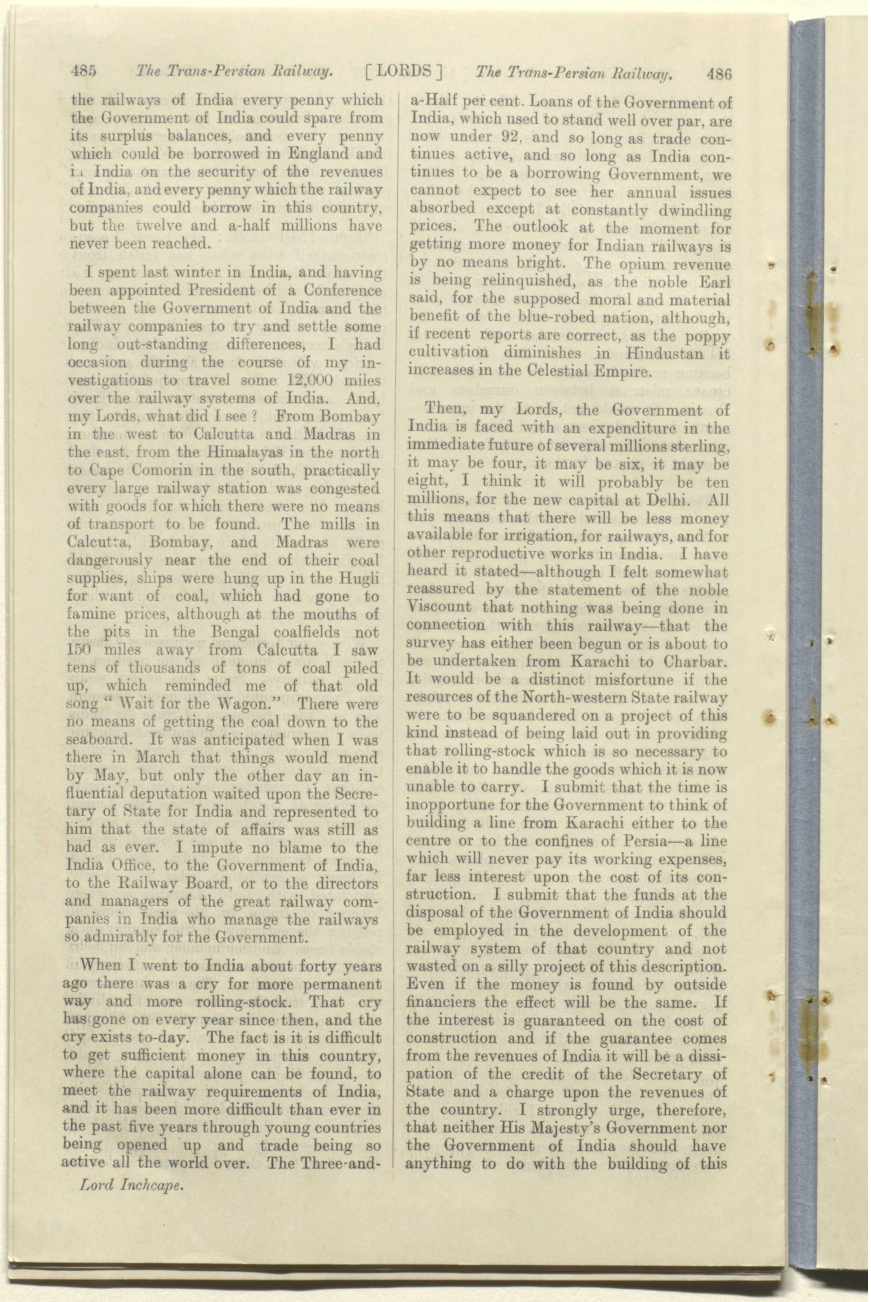
Letters and Papers Concerning the Trans-Persian Railway and Other Railways in Persia [201v] (402/442)



the railways of India every penny which the Government of India could spare from its surplus balances, and every penny which could be borrowed in England and in India on the security of the revenues of India, and every penny which the railway companies could borrow in this country, but the twelve and a-half millions have never been reached.

I spent last winter in India, and having been appointed President of a Conference between the Government of India and the railway companies to try and settle some long out-standing differences, I had occasion during the course of my investigations to travel some 12,000 miles over the railway systems of India. And, my Lords, what did I see? From Bombay in the west to Calcutta and Madras in the east, from the Himalayas in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, practically every large railway station was congested with goods for which there were no means of transport to be found. The mills in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were dangerously near the end of their coal supplies, ships were hung up in the Hugli for want of coal, which had gone to famine prices, although at the mouths of the pits in the Bengal coalfields not 150 miles away from Calcutta I saw tens of thousands of tons of coal piled up, which reminded me of that old song "Wait for the Wagon." There were no means of getting the coal down to the seaboard. It was anticipated when I was there in March that things would mend by May, but only the other day an influential deputation waited upon the Secretary of State for India and represented to him that the state of affairs was still as bad as ever. I impute no blame to the India Office, to the Government of India, to the Railway Board, or to the directors and managers of the great railway companies in India who manage the railways so admirably for the Government.

When I went to India about forty years ago there was a cry for more permanent way and more rolling-stock. That cry has gone on every year since then, and the cry exists to-day. The fact is it is difficult to get sufficient money in this country, where the capital alone can be found, to meet the railway requirements of India, and it has been more difficult than ever in the past five years through young countries being opened up and trade being so active all the world over. The Three-and-a-Half per cent. Loans of the Government of India, which used to stand well over par, are now under 92, and so long as trade continues active, and so long as India continues to be a borrowing Government, we cannot expect to see her annual issues absorbed except at constantly dwindling prices. The outlook at the moment for getting more money for Indian railways is by no means bright. The opium revenue is being relinquished, as the noble Earl said, for the supposed moral and material benefit of the blue-robed nation, although, if recent reports are correct, as the poppy cultivation diminishes in Hindustan it increases in the Celestial Empire.

Then, my Lords, the Government of India is faced with an expenditure in the immediate future of several millions sterling, it may be four, it may be six, it may be eight, I think it will probably be ten millions, for the new capital at Delhi. All this means that there will be less money available for irrigation, for railways, and for other reproductive works in India. I have heard it stated—although I felt somewhat reassured by the statement of the noble Viscount that nothing was being done in connection with this railway—that the survey has either been begun or is about to be undertaken from Karachi to Charbar. It would be a distinct misfortune if the resources of the North-western State railway were to be squandered on a project of this kind instead of being laid out in providing that rolling-stock which is so necessary to enable it to handle the goods which it is now unable to carry. I submit that the time is inopportune for the Government to think of building a line from Karachi either to the centre or to the confines of Persia—a line which will never pay its working expenses, far less interest upon the cost of its construction. I submit that the funds at the disposal of the Government of India should be employed in the development of the railway system of that country and not wasted on a silly project of this description. Even if the money is found by outside financiers the effect will be the same. If the interest is guaranteed on the cost of construction and if the guarantee comes from the revenues of India it will be a dissipation of the credit of the Secretary of State and a charge upon the revenues of the country. I strongly urge, therefore, that neither His Majesty's Government nor the Government of India should have anything to do with the building of this

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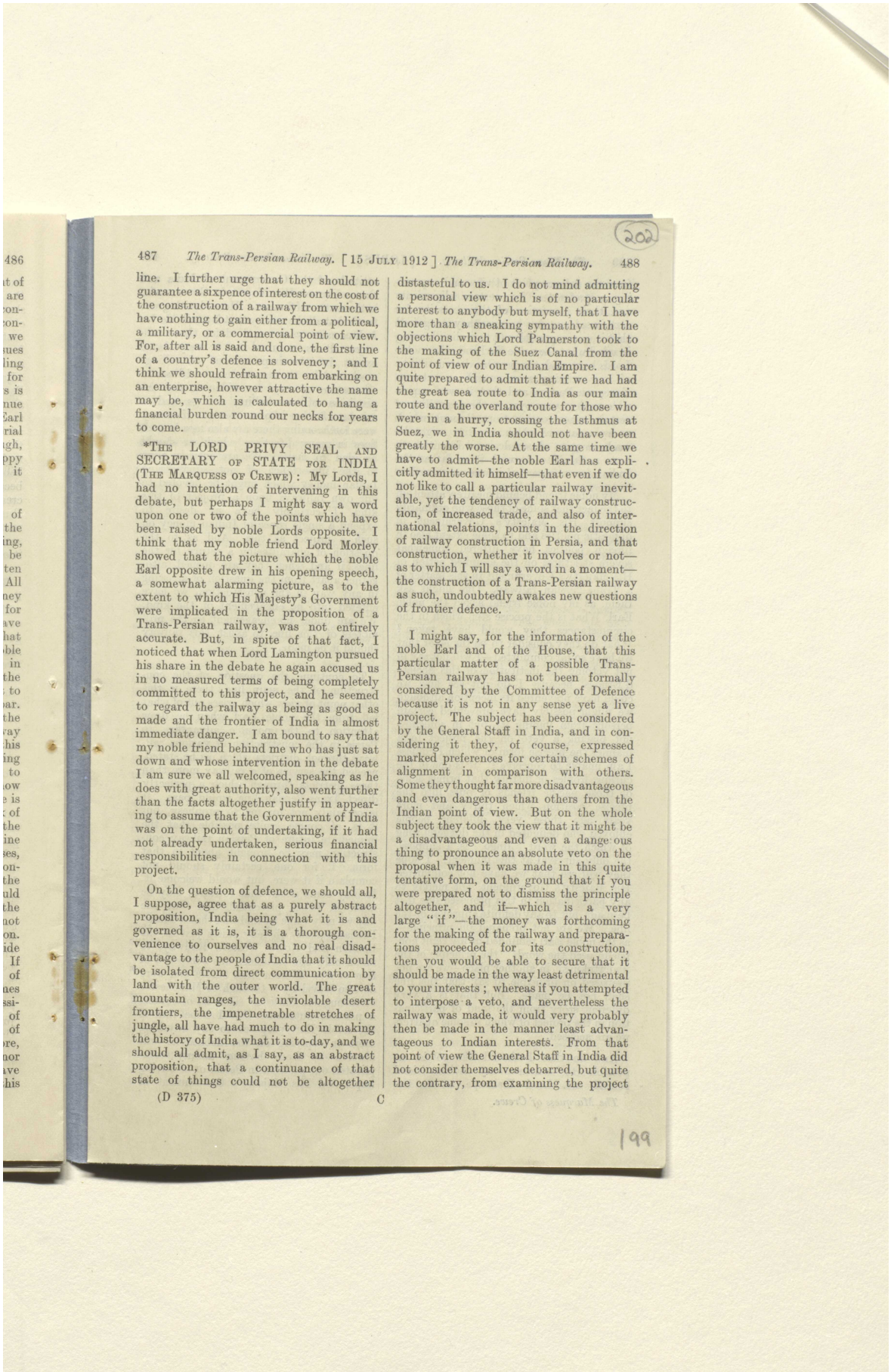

line. I further urge that they should not guarantee a sixpence of interest on the cost of the construction of a railway from which we have nothing to gain either from a political, a military, or a commercial point of view. For, after all is said and done, the first line of a country's defence is solvency; and I think we should refrain from embarking on an enterprise, however attractive the name may be, which is calculated to hang a financial burden round our necks for years to come.

*THE LORD PRIVY SEAL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (THE MARQUESS OF CREWE): My Lords, I had no intention of intervening in this debate, but perhaps I might say a word upon one or two of the points which have been raised by noble Lords opposite. I think that my noble friend Lord Morley showed that the picture which the noble Earl opposite drew in his opening speech, a somewhat alarming picture, as to the extent to which His Majesty's Government were implicated in the proposition of a Trans-Persian railway, was not entirely accurate. But, in spite of that fact, I noticed that when Lord Lamington pursued his share in the debate he again accused us in no measured terms of being completely committed to this project, and he seemed to regard the railway as being as good as made and the frontier of India in almost immediate danger. I am bound to say that my noble friend behind me who has just sat down and whose intervention in the debate I am sure we all welcomed, speaking as he does with great authority, also went further than the facts altogether justify in appearing to assume that the Government of India was on the point of undertaking, if it had not already undertaken, serious financial responsibilities in connection with this project.

On the question of defence, we should all, I suppose, agree that as a purely abstract proposition, India being what it is and governed as it is, it is a thorough convenience to ourselves and no real disadvantage to the people of India that it should be isolated from direct communication by land with the outer world. The great mountain ranges, the inviolable desert frontiers, the impenetrable stretches of jungle, all have had much to do in making the history of India what it is to-day, and we should all admit, as I say, as an abstract proposition, that a continuance of that state of things could not be altogether distasteful to us. I do not mind admitting a personal view which is of no particular interest to anybody but myself, that I have more than a sneaking sympathy with the objections which Lord Palmerston took to the making of the Suez Canal from the point of view of our Indian Empire. I am quite prepared to admit that if we had had the great sea route to India as our main route and the overland route for those who were in a hurry, crossing the Isthmus at Suez, we in India should not have been greatly the worse. At the same time we have to admit—the noble Earl has explicitly admitted it himself—that even if we do not like to call a particular railway inevitable, yet the tendency of railway construction, of increased trade, and also of international relations, points in the direction of railway construction in Persia, and that construction, whether it involves or not—as to which I will say a word in a moment—the construction of a Trans-Persian railway as such, undoubtedly awakes new questions of frontier defence.

I might say, for the information of the noble Earl and of the House, that this particular matter of a possible Trans-Persian railway has not been formally considered by the Committee of Defence because it is not in any sense yet a live project. The subject has been considered by the General Staff in India, and in considering it they, of course, expressed marked preferences for certain schemes of alignment in comparison with others. Some they thought far more disadvantageous and even dangerous than others from the Indian point of view. But on the whole subject they took the view that it might be a disadvantageous and even a dangerous thing to pronounce an absolute veto on the proposal when it was made in this quite tentative form, on the ground that if you were prepared not to dismiss the principle altogether, and if—which is a very large "if"—the money was forthcoming for the making of the railway and preparations proceeded for its construction, then you would be able to secure that it should be made in the way least detrimental to your interests; whereas if you attempted to interpose a veto, and nevertheless the railway was made, it would very probably then be made in the manner least advantageous to Indian interests. From that point of view the General Staff in India did not consider themselves debarred, but quite the contrary, from examining the project

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from the defence point of view and expressing a preference for certain alignments and their conviction of the necessity for certain safeguards; because they recognised that it was impossible not to realise, bearing in mind what the noble Earl and other noble Lords have said, the possible destructibility of any existing arrangement as between European Powers, and that it was impossible to shut your eyes to the possibility of certain other combinations through which or by means of which, the line might be made in spite of our declared intention to have nothing to do with it so far as the Indian frontier part of it was concerned.

My noble friend behind me drew attention to the fact that some of those who ordinarily support His Majesty's Government in domestic politics and to some extent also in foreign politics have uttered somewhat severe strictures on the assumed action of His Majesty's Government in this matter of a Trans-Persian railway. One might ask them, as my noble friend asked the noble Earl, What is the precise step which in the circumstances they would have taken? What do they consider to be the error that we have so far committed—I will not say in not vetoing the institution of this Société d'Etudes, because I do not see how we could have prevented its inception although we might possibly have prevented certain persons from joining it—but in somehow not placing a veto on the project in a manner the precise form of which I confess I am unable to conceive? It is one of the curious ironies of history that brings some of those pacific friends of ours into the precise position which thirty and more years ago those very different people enjoyed who delighted in the doggerel song of which the word "Jingo" is, I suppose, the only survival at this moment. I hope they will see that we have not committed His Majesty's Government, not merely to any participation in this proposed line if it be made, but to any definite approval of the line. We are not prepared on principle—as the noble Earl reminded us my right hon. friend used the words "the principle of the undertaking" in another place—we are not prepared on principle to say that this line shall not be made. But that is a very different story from the kind of participation in the project of which in some quarters we are accused.

And on that I should like so far as possible to reassure my noble friend behind me, Lord Inchcape, as to the attitude of the Government of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government in the matter of finance. He said with great truth that all the money that is available for Indian railways is required for those railways. It is required to a very large extent for the improvement of rolling-stock and for the improvement of lines in all manner of ways by widening and the provision of marshalling sidings and a number of other improvements. If money were forthcoming there are also new branch lines in many directions which we should be glad to make. We are entirely alive to the importance of not squandering Indian money which might be devoted to our own railways upon a project of this kind. I certainly have no desire to expend a single rupee of Indian money on such a project as this. And as to the question of guaranteeing a return for the lines, if and when they are opened, altogether apart from the question of assisting in any way in the construction, we have entered into no engagement of the kind. We are under no engagement to the promoters of this line to assist this railway should it be made.

To continue the question of the construction of the main line, there is this other point of view which arises out of what fell from the noble Earl when he drew attention to the possible advantage to Persia in the construction of various railways through districts which, as he stated, needed the service of a railway more than those districts through which a perfectly direct Trans-Persian line would pass. It is certainly not for me to prophesy, but it is, of course, quite possible that the immediate future of Persian railway construction may be brought about in that form. I, for one, certainly should not complain if it were, but would welcome it. It may come about that railways may be made in Persia piecemeal, and that one day we may wake up and find that a Trans-Persian railway thereby exists just as the London and North Western Railway, to name only one instance, was composed of four or five different lines before you were able to travel by it through to Manchester or through to Carlisle. That is, of course, a possible outcome. But I hope that if the noble Earl proposes to say anything more in replying on the debate he will absolve us from having unduly complicated our position in Persia or of having implicated His Majesty's Government in

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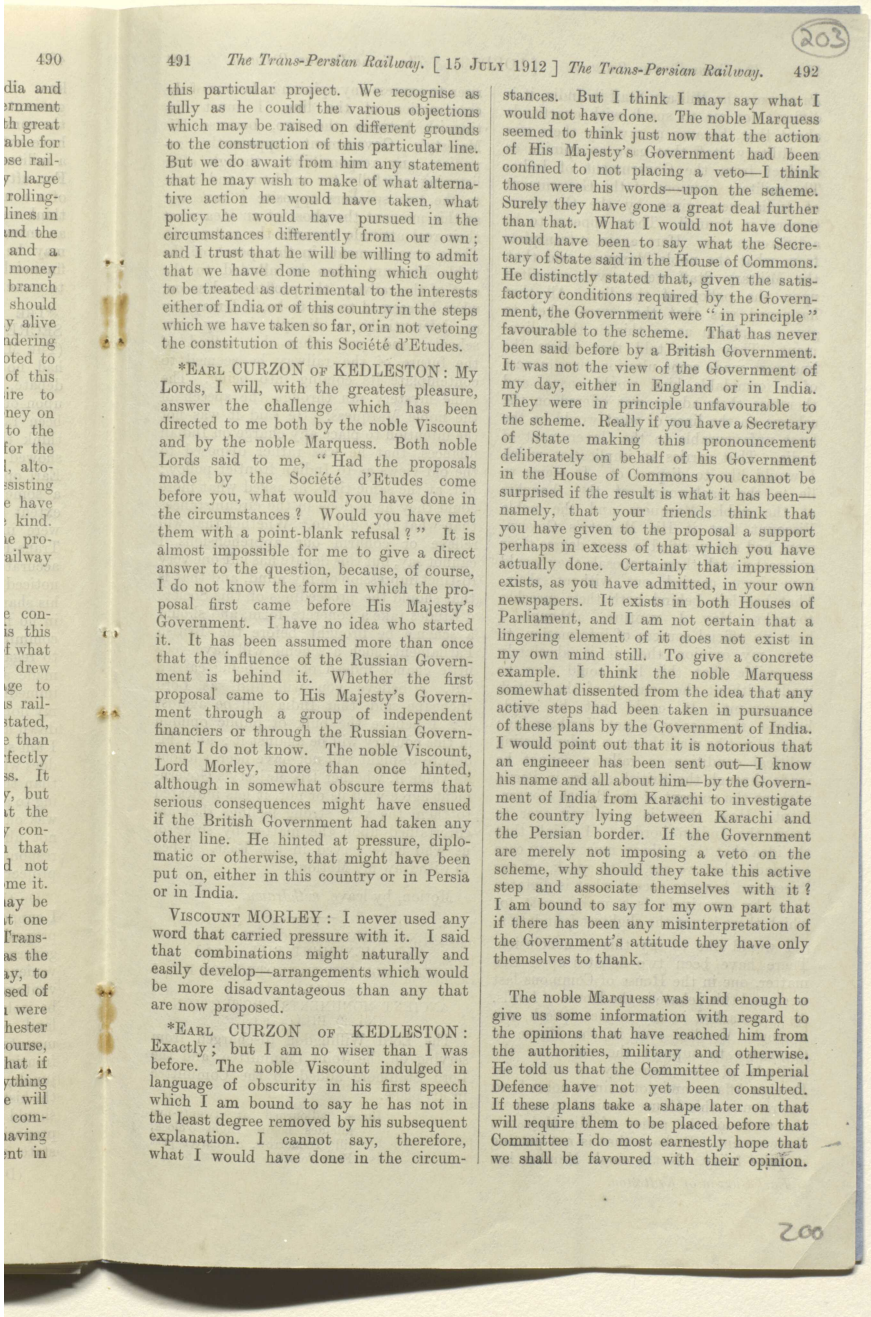

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this particular project. We recognise as fully as he could the various objections which may be raised on different grounds to the construction of this particular line. But we do await from him any statement that he may wish to make of what alternative action he would have taken, what policy he would have pursued in the circumstances differently from our own; and I trust that he will be willing to admit that we have done nothing which ought to be treated as detrimental to the interests either of India or of this country in the steps which we have taken so far, or in not vetoing the constitution of this Société d'Etudes.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, I will, with the greatest pleasure, answer the challenge which has been directed to me both by the noble Viscount and by the noble Marquess. Both noble Lords said to me, "Had the proposals made by the Société d'Etudes come before you, what would you have done in the circumstances? Would you have met them with a point-blank refusal?" It is almost impossible for me to give a direct answer to the question, because, of course, I do not know the form in which the proposal first came before His Majesty's Government. I have no idea who started it. It has been assumed more than once that the influence of the Russian Government is behind it. Whether the first proposal came to His Majesty's Government through a group of independent financiers or through the Russian Government I do not know. The noble Viscount, Lord Morley, more than once hinted, although in somewhat obscure terms that serious consequences might have ensued if the British Government had taken any other line. He hinted at pressure, diplomatic or otherwise, that might have been put on, either in this country or in Persia or in India.

VISCOUNT MORLEY: I never used any word that carried pressure with it. I said that combinations might naturally and easily develop—arrangements which would be more disadvantageous than any that are now proposed.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: Exactly; but I am no wiser than I was before. The noble Viscount indulged in language of obscurity in his first speech which I am bound to say he has not in the least degree removed by his subsequent explanation. I cannot say, therefore, what I would have done in the circumstances. But I think I may say what I would not have done. The noble Marquess seemed to think just now that the action of His Majesty's Government had been confined to not placing a veto—I think those were his words—upon the scheme. Surely they have gone a great deal further than that. What I would not have done would have been to say what the Secretary of State said in the House of Commons. He distinctly stated that, given the satisfactory conditions required by the Government, the Government were "in principle" favourable to the scheme. That has never been said before by a British Government. It was not the view of the Government of my day, either in England or in India. They were in principle unfavourable to the scheme. Really if you have a Secretary of State making this pronouncement deliberately on behalf of his Government in the House of Commons you cannot be surprised if the result is what it has been—namely, that your friends think that you have given to the proposal a support perhaps in excess of that which you have actually done. Certainly that impression exists, as you have admitted, in your own newspapers. It exists in both Houses of Parliament, and I am not certain that a lingering element of it does not exist in my own mind still. To give a concrete example. I think the noble Marquess somewhat dissented from the idea that any active steps had been taken in pursuance of these plans by the Government of India. I would point out that it is notorious that an engineeer has been sent out—I know his name and all about him—by the Government of India from Karachi to investigate the country lying between Karachi and the Persian border. If the Government are merely not imposing a veto on the scheme, why should they take this active step and associate themselves with it? I am bound to say for my own part that if there has been any misinterpretation of the Government's attitude they have only themselves to thank.

The noble Marquess was kind enough to give us some information with regard to the opinions that have reached him from the authorities, military and otherwise. He told us that the Committee of Imperial Defence have not yet been consulted. If these plans take a shape later on that will require them to be placed before that Committee I do most earnestly hope that we shall be favoured with their opinion.

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As regards the Military Staff in India, it is difficult for me to speak with exactitude about that, because in my day there was no Military Staff that gave an opinion as distinct from the Government of India. The military opinions of the Government of India were given by the Governor-General in Council. There appears to be a difference now. Here, again, it transpires from what the noble Marquess said that the Military Staff were never consulted upon the policy of the line. All that happened was that they were asked to give an opinion as to this or that alignment. They were told that unless the line were made some ulterior consequences of a formidable kind would ensue, and therefore their advice was offered on the scheme on the lines of what would be the least unfavourable to the Government of India. That carries an implication which I would like to dispose of. It seems to lie in the background of the thoughts of the noble Marquess and the noble Viscount that if His Majesty's Government had not signified in some degree their sympathy with these proposals they would have been carried out without them. That has lain behind both their speeches to-night. May I venture, although I have no official sources of information, to state my opinion that it is absolutely impossible that this line could ever be made without the consent of the British Government. It could not be made because the money is not forthcoming; it could not be made because under existing political conditions a railway cannot be made through the British sphere in Persia without the consent of the British Government. How, then, is a railway ever to reach the Indian border? I think that the idea that this railway must in any case be made, that we are, so to speak, on our knees and have to accept what is dictated to us by our rivals, is a mare's nest for which there is not the slightest foundation.

I would like to say this in conclusion. There have been two debates upon this matter, one in the House of Commons last week and this debate in the House of Lords. As I remarked in my former speech, not a single Member rose in the House of Commons to support the policy or the attitude of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and not a single noble Lord has risen in this House to-night to support the views or the policy of His Majesty's Government. Perhaps that is not putting it quite fairly. Not a single Member has risen to express any opinion in favour of the construction of the line. I must distinguish between the two, because His Majesty's Government apparently repudiate any responsibility, though after listening carefully for an hour and more to the two speakers opposite I have not at this moment the ghost of an idea what their real attitude towards the railway is. There were moments in the speech of the noble Viscount when he alluded to the cost of the railway, the profits, and so on, when he seemed to me to be, if I may say so deferentially, a disciple in my own school; and yet when he talked of the future of the railway he seemed to contemplate its coming into being. The same mystery ran through the speech of the noble Marquess. He said it was not the intention to place any charge on Indian finances, that he was rather disposed to the old views as to Indian frontier policy; but, at the same time, he asked what more could they have done in the circumstances than what they did do. Whether that will relieve or confirm our apprehensions I cannot say, but this debate has left one very distinct impression on my mind, and that is that should the proceedings of this Société d'Etudes take a concrete form, and should a scheme be brought before the British Parliament, such a scheme will have very little chance indeed of ever being carried out. I believe you will find, as Lord Inchcape said, that India will be against it; I believe the bulk of public opinion in this country will be against it; and this debate to-night will not have been without its value if, whether His Majesty's Government agree with us or not, it has indicated to them the very strong feelings that are entertained upon the matter by some of us who have served in the East. I beg to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS CONSOLIDATION AND AMENDMENT BILL. [H.L.]

ANCIENT MONUMENTS PROTECTION BIL L [H.L.]

ANCIENT MONUMENTS PROTECTION (No. 2) BILL. [H.L.]

The Lord Willingdon discharged from serving on the Joint Committee, and the Lord Stanmore added to the Committee in his place.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

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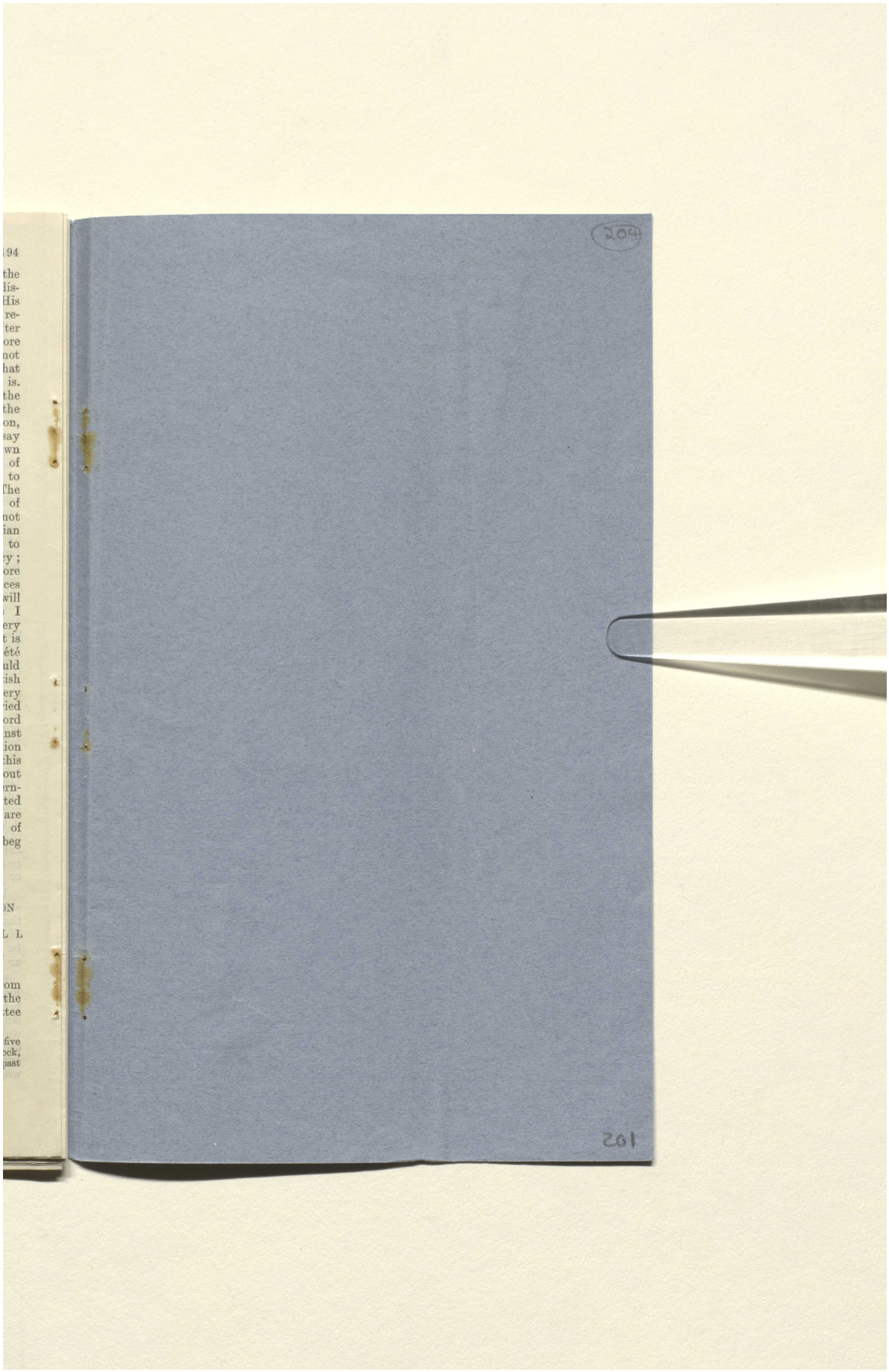

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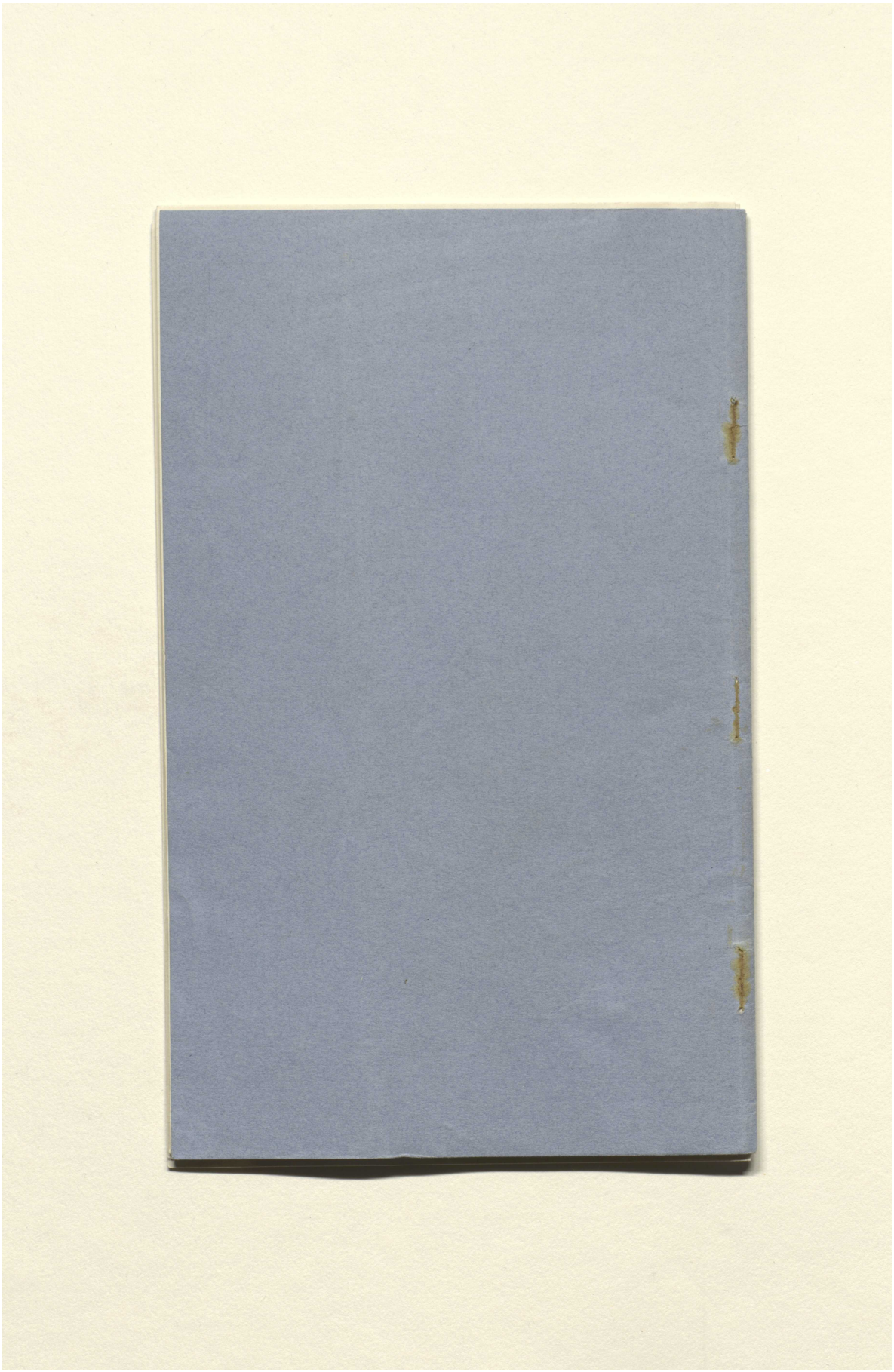

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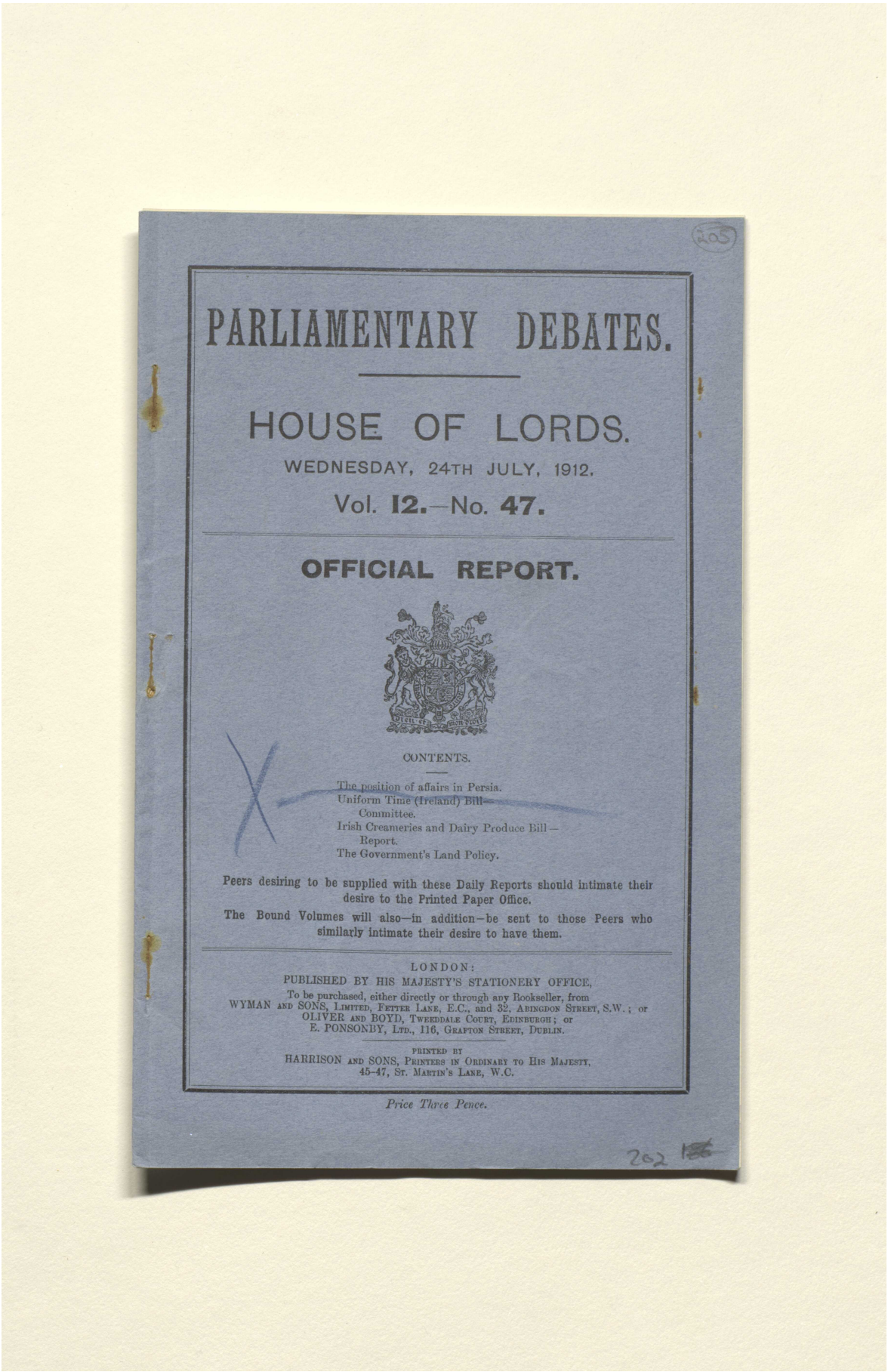

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH JULY, 1912.

Vol. 12.—No. 47.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

CONTENTS.

The position of affairs in Persia.
Uniform Time (Ireland) Bill—
Committee.
Irish Creameries and Dairy Produce Bill—
Report.
The Government's Land Policy.

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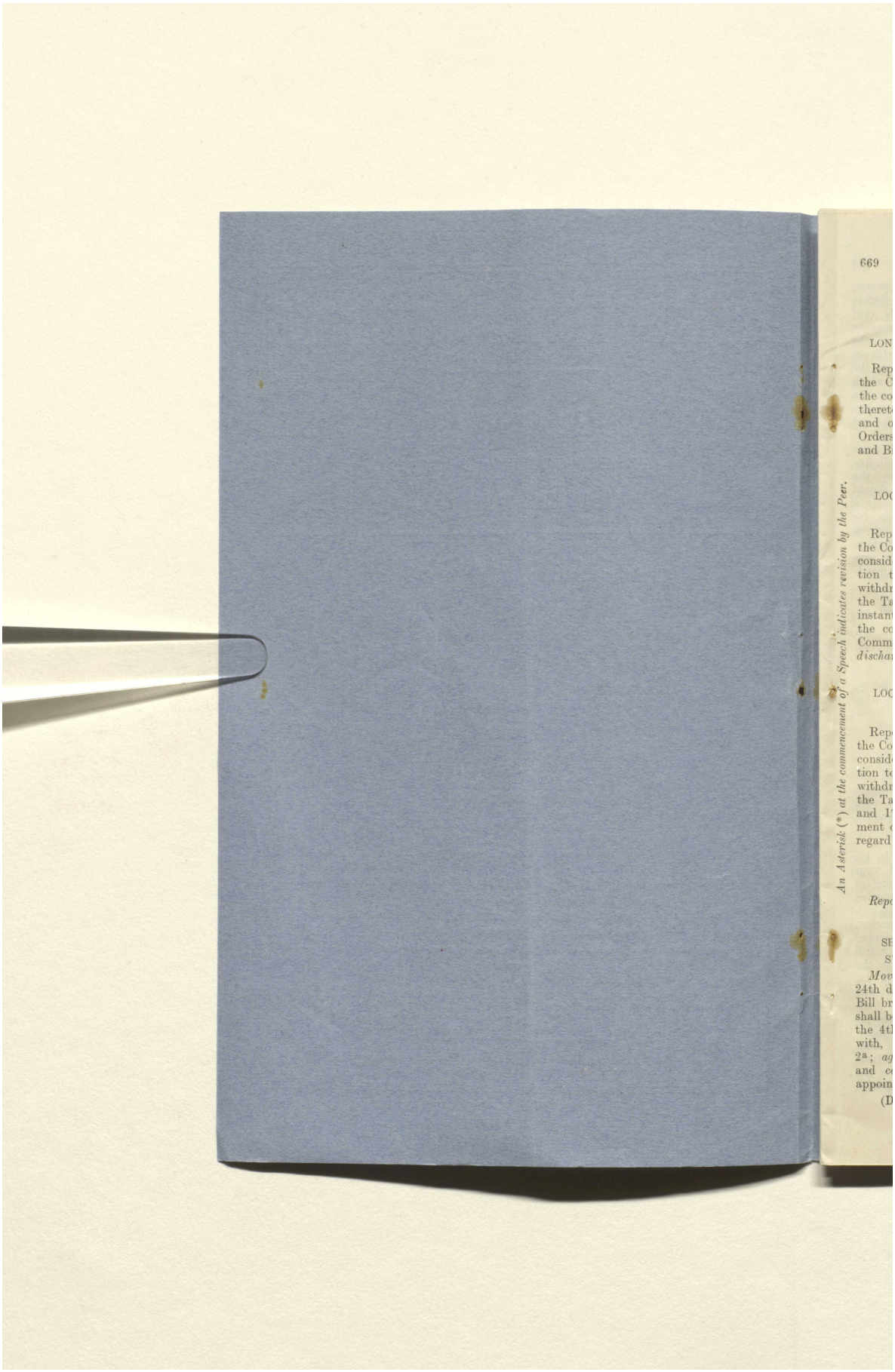

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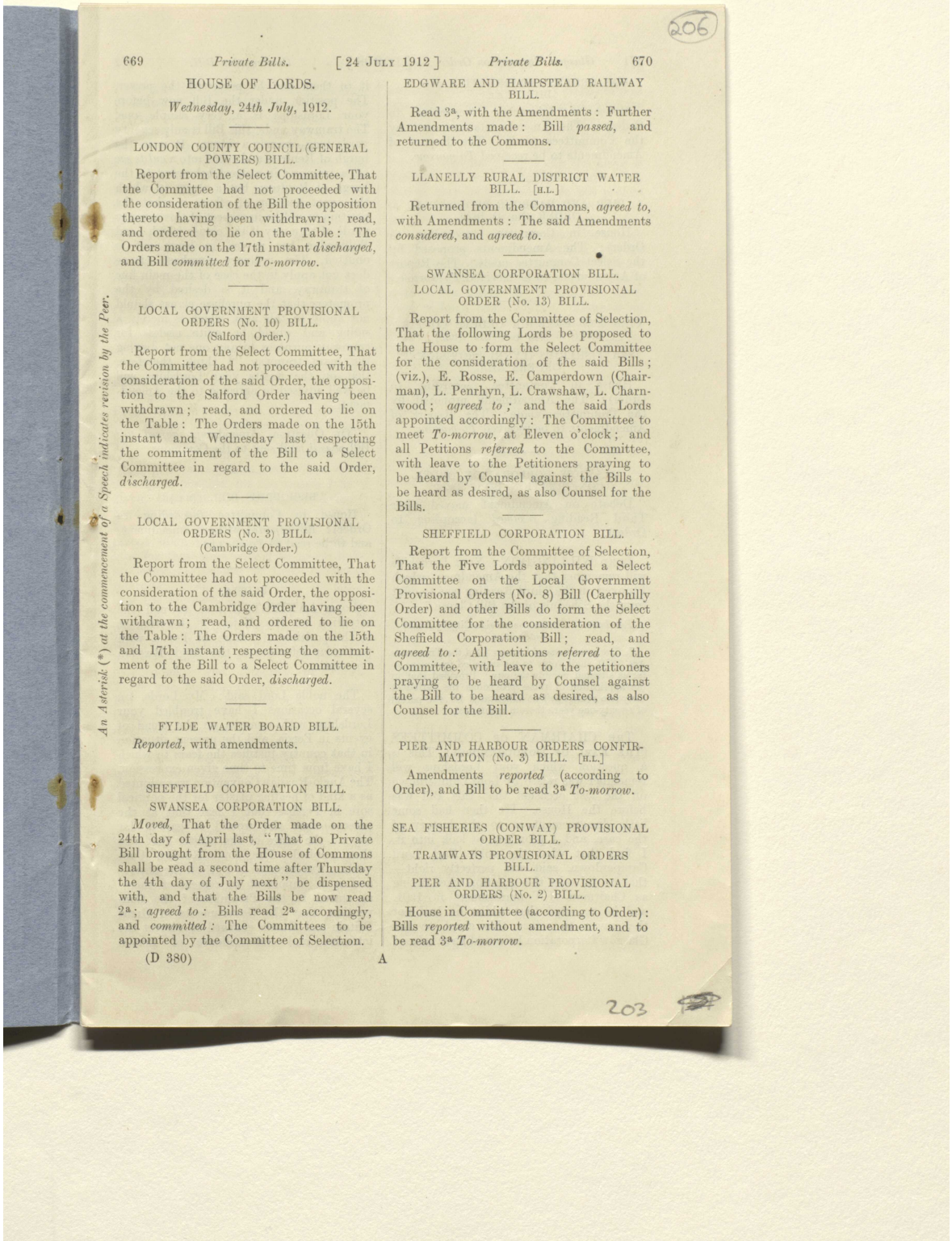

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HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 24th July, 1912.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (GENERAL POWERS) BILL.

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The Orders made on the 17th instant *discharged*, and Bill *committed* for *To-morrow*.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL.
(Salford Order.)

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the said Order, the opposition to the Salford Order having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The Orders made on the 15th instant and Wednesday last respecting the commitment of the Bill to a Select Committee in regard to the said Order, *discharged*.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.
(Cambridge Order.)

Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the said Order, the opposition to the Cambridge Order having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table: The Orders made on the 15th and 17th instant respecting the commitment of the Bill to a Select Committee in regard to the said Order, *discharged*.

FYLDE WATER BOARD BILL.

Reported, with amendments.

SHEFFIELD CORPORATION BILL.
SWANSEA CORPORATION BILL.

Moved, That the Order made on the 24th day of April last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 4th day of July next" be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª; *agreed to*: Bills read 2ª accordingly, and *committed*: The Committees to be appointed by the Committee of Selection.

EDGWARE AND HAMPSTEAD RAILWAY BILL.

Read 3ª, with the Amendments: Further Amendments made: Bill *passed*, and returned to the Commons.

LLANELLY RURAL DISTRICT WATER BILL. [H.L.]

Returned from the Commons, *agreed to*, with Amendments: The said Amendments *considered*, and *agreed to*.

SWANSEA CORPORATION BILL.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 13) BILL.

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.), E. Rosse, E. Camperdown (Chairman), L. Penrhyn, L. Crawshaw, L. Charnwood; *agreed to*; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet *To-morrow*, at Eleven o'clock; and all Petitions *referred* to the Committee, with leave to the Petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bills.

SHEFFIELD CORPORATION BILL.

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill (Caerphilly Order) and other Bills do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the Sheffield Corporation Bill; read, and *agreed to*: All petitions *referred* to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bill to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bill.

PIER AND HARBOUR ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 3) BILL. [H.L.]

Amendments *reported* (according to Order), and Bill to be read 3ª *To-morrow*.

SEA FISHERIES (CONWAY) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.
TRAMWAYS PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.
PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order): Bills *reported* without amendment, and to be read 3ª *To-morrow*.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Peer.

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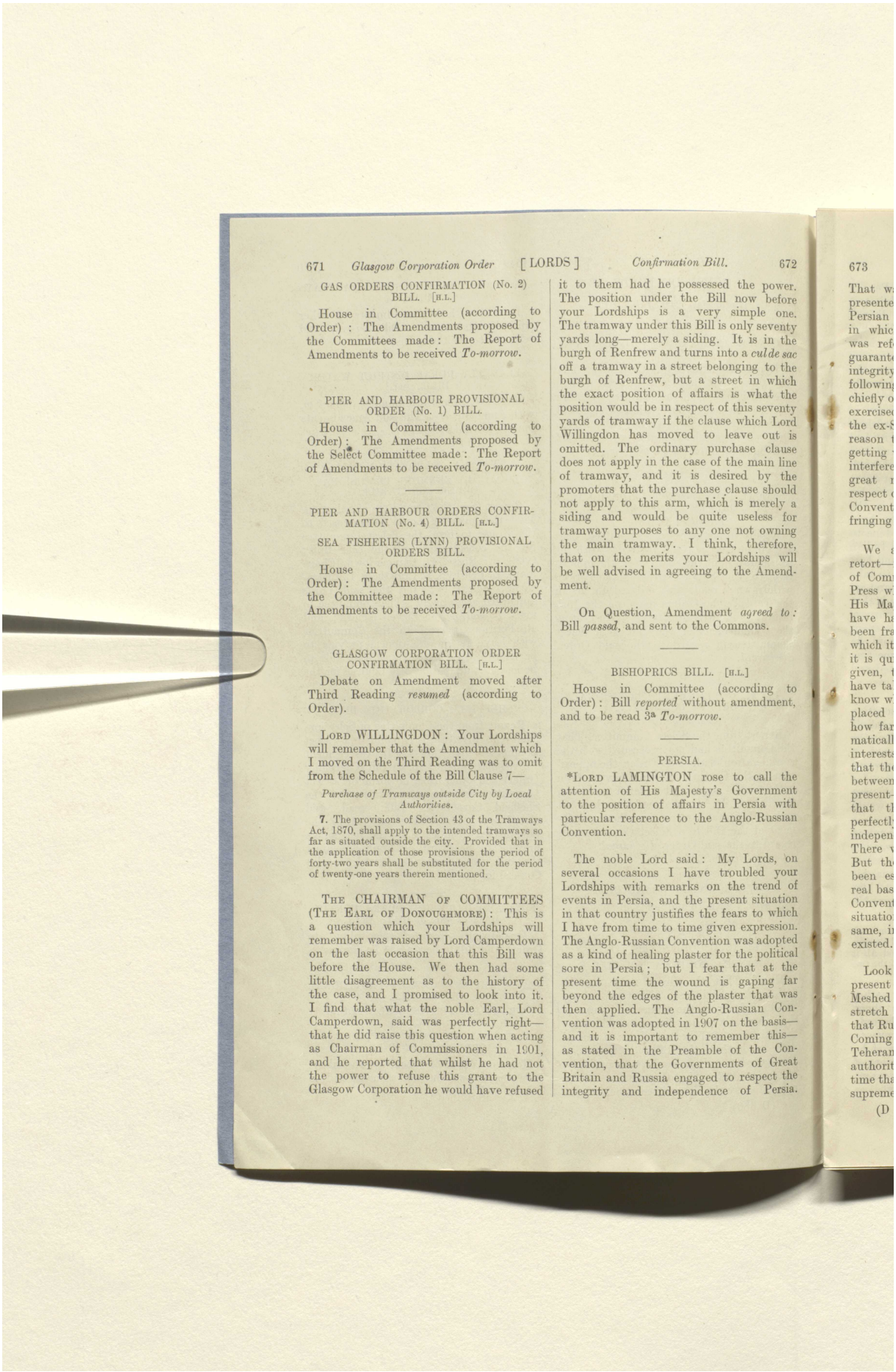

671 *Glasgow Corporation Order* [LORDS] *Confirmation Bill.* 672

GAS ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 2) BILL. [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order) : The Amendments proposed by the Committees made : The Report of Amendments to be received *To-morrow*.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 1) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order) : The Amendments proposed by the Select Committee made : The Report of Amendments to be received *To-morrow*.

PIER AND HARBOUR ORDERS CONFIRMATION (No. 4) BILL. [H.L.]

SEA FISHERIES (LYNN) PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order) : The Amendments proposed by the Committee made : The Report of Amendments to be received *To-morrow*.

GLASGOW CORPORATION ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL. [H.L.]

Debate on Amendment moved after Third Reading *resumed* (according to Order).

LORD WILLINGDON : Your Lordships will remember that the Amendment which I moved on the Third Reading was to omit from the Schedule of the Bill Clause 7—

Purchase of Tramways outside City by Local Authorities.

7. The provisions of Section 43 of the Tramways Act, 1870, shall apply to the intended tramways so far as situated outside the city. Provided that in the application of those provisions the period of forty-two years shall be substituted for the period of twenty-one years therein mentioned.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE) : This is a question which your Lordships will remember was raised by Lord Camperdown on the last occasion that this Bill was before the House. We then had some little disagreement as to the history of the case, and I promised to look into it. I find that what the noble Earl, Lord Camperdown, said was perfectly right—that he did raise this question when acting as Chairman of Commissioners in 1901, and he reported that whilst he had not the power to refuse this grant to the Glasgow Corporation he would have refused it to them had he possessed the power. The position under the Bill now before your Lordships is a very simple one. The tramway under this Bill is only seventy yards long—merely a siding. It is in the burgh of Renfrew and turns into a *cul de sac* off a tramway in a street belonging to the burgh of Renfrew, but a street in which the exact position of affairs is what the position would be in respect of this seventy yards of tramway if the clause which Lord Willingdon has moved to leave out is omitted. The ordinary purchase clause does not apply in the case of the main line of tramway, and it is desired by the promoters that the purchase clause should not apply to this arm, which is merely a siding and would be quite useless for tramway purposes to any one not owning the main tramway. I think, therefore, that on the merits your Lordships will be well advised in agreeing to the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment *agreed to* : Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

BISHOPRICS BILL. [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order) : Bill *reported* without amendment, and to be read 3ª *To-morrow*.

PERSIA.

*LORD LAMINGTON rose to call the attention of His Majesty's Government to the position of affairs in Persia with particular reference to the Anglo-Russian Convention.

The noble Lord said : My Lords, on several occasions I have troubled your Lordships with remarks on the trend of events in Persia, and the present situation in that country justifies the fears to which I have from time to time given expression. The Anglo-Russian Convention was adopted as a kind of healing plaster for the political sore in Persia ; but I fear that at the present time the wound is gaping far beyond the edges of the plaster that was then applied. The Anglo-Russian Convention was adopted in 1907 on the basis—and it is important to remember this—as stated in the Preamble of the Convention, that the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia.

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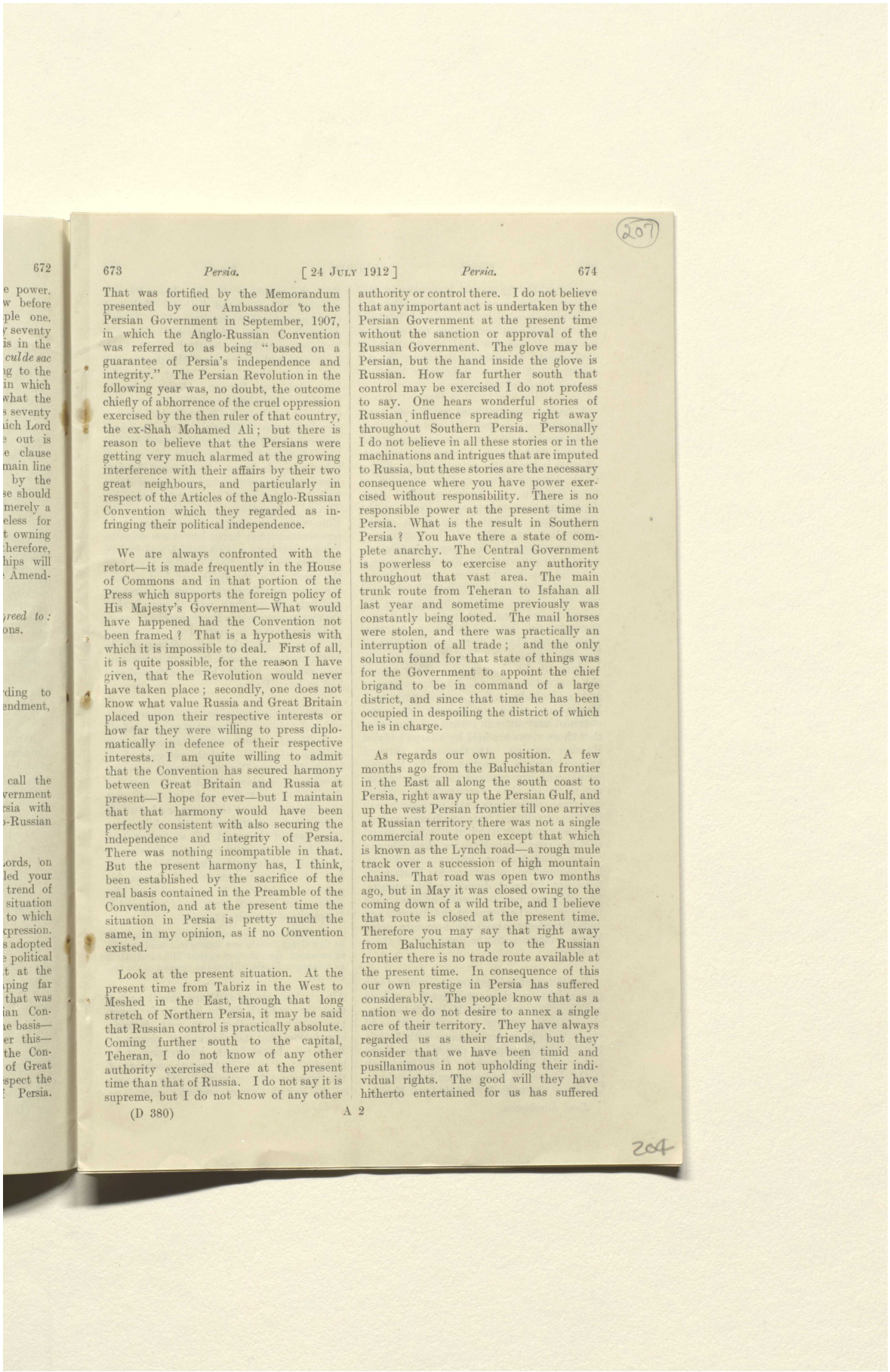

That was fortified by the Memorandum presented by our Ambassador to the Persian Government in September, 1907, in which the Anglo-Russian Convention was referred to as being "based on a guarantee of Persia's independence and integrity." The Persian Revolution in the following year was, no doubt, the outcome chiefly of abhorrence of the cruel oppression exercised by the then ruler of that country, the ex-Shah Mohamed Ali; but there is reason to believe that the Persians were getting very much alarmed at the growing interference with their affairs by their two great neighbours, and particularly in respect of the Articles of the Anglo-Russian Convention which they regarded as infringing their political independence.

We are always confronted with the retort—it is made frequently in the House of Commons and in that portion of the Press which supports the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government—What would have happened had the Convention not been framed? That is a hypothesis with which it is impossible to deal. First of all, it is quite possible, for the reason I have given, that the Revolution would never have taken place; secondly, one does not know what value Russia and Great Britain placed upon their respective interests or how far they were willing to press diplomatically in defence of their respective interests. I am quite willing to admit that the Convention has secured harmony between Great Britain and Russia at present—I hope for ever—but I maintain that that harmony would have been perfectly consistent with also securing the independence and integrity of Persia. There was nothing incompatible in that. But the present harmony has, I think, been established by the sacrifice of the real basis contained in the Preamble of the Convention, and at the present time the situation in Persia is pretty much the same, in my opinion, as if no Convention existed.

Look at the present situation. At the present time from Tabriz in the West to Meshed in the East, through that long stretch of Northern Persia, it may be said that Russian control is practically absolute. Coming further south to the capital, Teheran, I do not know of any other authority exercised there at the present time than that of Russia. I do not say it is supreme, but I do not know of any other authority or control there. I do not believe that any important act is undertaken by the Persian Government at the present time without the sanction or approval of the Russian Government. The glove may be Persian, but the hand inside the glove is Russian. How far further south that control may be exercised I do not profess to say. One hears wonderful stories of Russian influence spreading right away throughout Southern Persia. Personally I do not believe in all these stories or in the machinations and intrigues that are imputed to Russia, but these stories are the necessary consequence where you have power exercised without responsibility. There is no responsible power at the present time in Persia. What is the result in Southern Persia? You have there a state of complete anarchy. The Central Government is powerless to exercise any authority throughout that vast area. The main trunk route from Teheran to Isfahan all last year and sometime previously was constantly being looted. The mail horses were stolen, and there was practically an interruption of all trade; and the only solution found for that state of things was for the Government to appoint the chief brigand to be in command of a large district, and since that time he has been occupied in despoiling the district of which he is in charge.

As regards our own position. A few months ago from the Baluchistan frontier in the East all along the south coast to Persia, right away up the Persian Gulf, and up the west Persian frontier till one arrives at Russian territory there was not a single commercial route open except that which is known as the Lynch road—a rough mule track over a succession of high mountain chains. That road was open two months ago, but in May it was closed owing to the coming down of a wild tribe, and I believe that route is closed at the present time. Therefore you may say that right away from Baluchistan up to the Russian frontier there is no trade route available at the present time. In consequence of this our own prestige in Persia has suffered considerably. The people know that as a nation we do not desire to annex a single acre of their territory. They have always regarded us as their friends, but they consider that we have been timid and pusillanimous in not upholding their individual rights. The good will they have hitherto entertained for us has suffered

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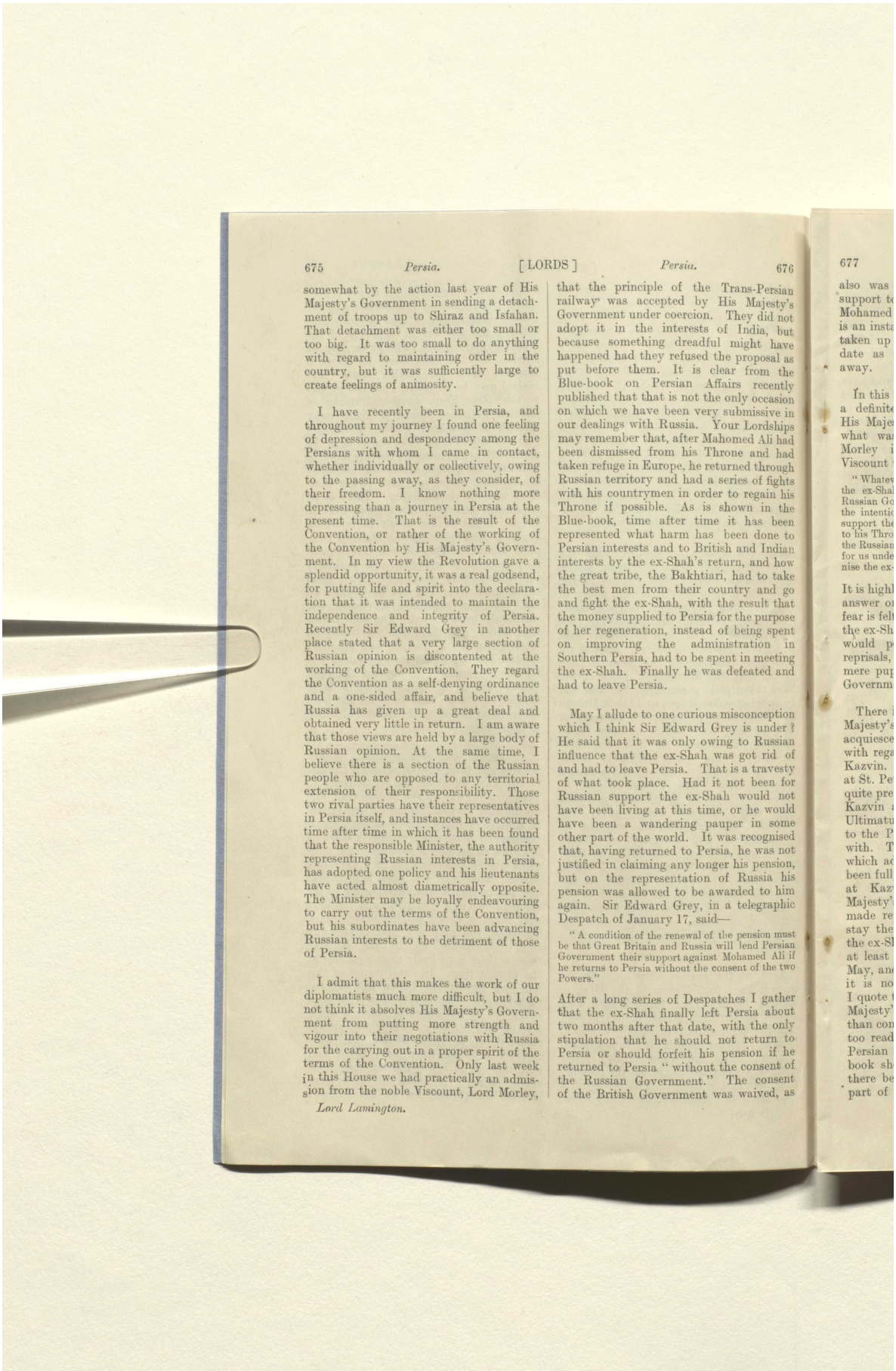

675 *Persia.* [LORDS] *Persia.* 676

somewhat by the action last year of His Majesty's Government in sending a detachment of troops up to Shiraz and Isfahan. That detachment was either too small or too big. It was too small to do anything with regard to maintaining order in the country, but it was sufficiently large to create feelings of animosity.

I have recently been in Persia, and throughout my journey I found one feeling of depression and despondency among the Persians with whom I came in contact, whether individually or collectively, owing to the passing away, as they consider, of their freedom. I know nothing more depressing than a journey in Persia at the present time. That is the result of the Convention, or rather of the working of the Convention by His Majesty's Government. In my view the Revolution gave a splendid opportunity, it was a real godsend, for putting life and spirit into the declaration that it was intended to maintain the independence and integrity of Persia. Recently Sir Edward Grey in another place stated that a very large section of Russian opinion is discontented at the working of the Convention. They regard the Convention as a self-denying ordinance and a one-sided affair, and believe that Russia has given up a great deal and obtained very little in return. I am aware that those views are held by a large body of Russian opinion. At the same time, I believe there is a section of the Russian people who are opposed to any territorial extension of their responsibility. Those two rival parties have their representatives in Persia itself, and instances have occurred time after time in which it has been found that the responsible Minister, the authority representing Russian interests in Persia, has adopted one policy and his lieutenants have acted almost diametrically opposite. The Minister may be loyally endeavouring to carry out the terms of the Convention, but his subordinates have been advancing Russian interests to the detriment of those of Persia.

I admit that this makes the work of our diplomatists much more difficult, but I do not think it absolves His Majesty's Government from putting more strength and vigour into their negotiations with Russia for the carrying out in a proper spirit of the terms of the Convention. Only last week in this House we had practically an admission from the noble Viscount, Lord Morley,

Lord Lamington.

that the principle of the Trans-Persian railway was accepted by His Majesty's Government under coercion. They did not adopt it in the interests of India, but because something dreadful might have happened had they refused the proposal as put before them. It is clear from the Blue-book on Persian Affairs recently published that that is not the only occasion on which we have been very submissive in our dealings with Russia. Your Lordships may remember that, after Mahomed Ali had been dismissed from his Throne and had taken refuge in Europe, he returned through Russian territory and had a series of fights with his countrymen in order to regain his Throne if possible. As is shown in the Blue-book, time after time it has been represented what harm has been done to Persian interests and to British and Indian interests by the ex-Shah's return, and how the great tribe, the Bakhtiari, had to take the best men from their country and go and fight the ex-Shah, with the result that the money supplied to Persia for the purpose of her regeneration, instead of being spent on improving the administration in Southern Persia, had to be spent in meeting the ex-Shah. Finally he was defeated and had to leave Persia.

May I allude to one curious misconception which I think Sir Edward Grey is under? He said that it was only owing to Russian influence that the ex-Shah was got rid of and had to leave Persia. That is a travesty of what took place. Had it not been for Russian support the ex-Shah would not have been living at this time, or he would have been a wandering pauper in some other part of the world. It was recognised that, having returned to Persia, he was not justified in claiming any longer his pension, but on the representation of Russia his pension was allowed to be awarded to him again. Sir Edward Grey, in a telegraphic Despatch of January 17, said—

"A condition of the renewal of the pension must be that Great Britain and Russia will lend Persian Government their support against Mohamed Ali if he returns to Persia without the consent of the two Powers."

After a long series of Despatches I gather that the ex-Shah finally left Persia about two months after that date, with the only stipulation that he should not return to Persia or should forfeit his pension if he returned to Persia "without the consent of the Russian Government." The consent of the British Government was waived, as

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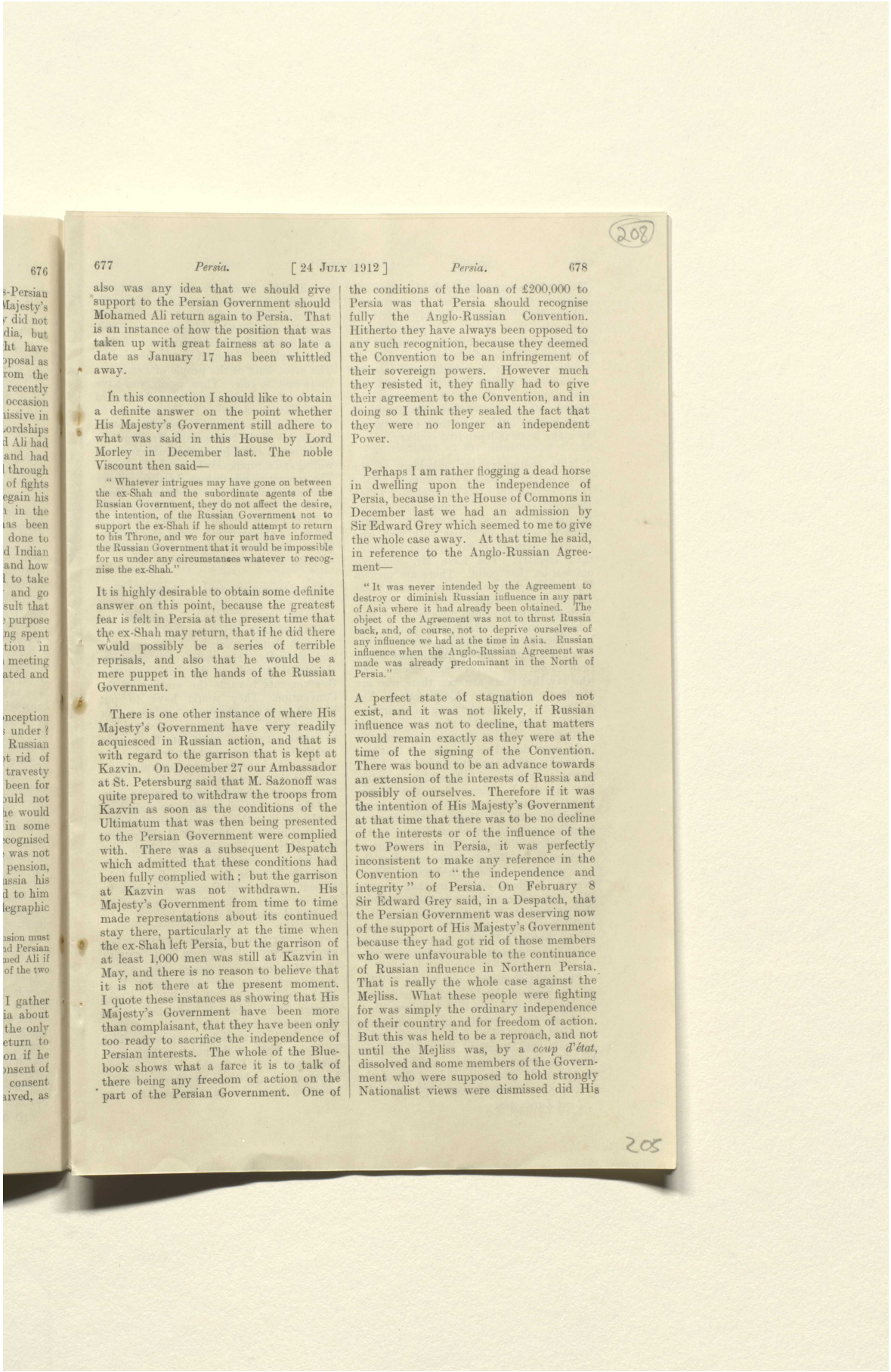

also was any idea that we should give support to the Persian Government should Mohamed Ali return again to Persia. That is an instance of how the position that was taken up with great fairness at so late a date as January 17 has been whittled away.

In this connection I should like to obtain a definite answer on the point whether His Majesty's Government still adhere to what was said in this House by Lord Morley in December last. The noble Viscount then said—

"Whatever intrigues may have gone on between the ex-Shah and the subordinate agents of the Russian Government, they do not affect the desire, the intention, of the Russian Government not to support the ex-Shah if he should attempt to return to his Throne, and we for our part have informed the Russian Government that it would be impossible for us under any circumstances whatever to recognise the ex-Shah."

It is highly desirable to obtain some definite answer on this point, because the greatest fear is felt in Persia at the present time that the ex-Shah may return, that if he did there would possibly be a series of terrible reprisals, and also that he would be a mere puppet in the hands of the Russian Government.

There is one other instance of where His Majesty's Government have very readily acquiesced in Russian action, and that is with regard to the garrison that is kept at Kazvin. On December 27 our Ambassador at St. Petersburg said that M. Sazonoff was quite prepared to withdraw the troops from Kazvin as soon as the conditions of the Ultimatum that was then being presented to the Persian Government were complied with. There was a subsequent Despatch which admitted that these conditions had been fully complied with; but the garrison at Kazvin was not withdrawn. His Majesty's Government from time to time made representations about its continued stay there, particularly at the time when the ex-Shah left Persia, but the garrison of at least 1,000 men was still at Kazvin in May, and there is no reason to believe that it is not there at the present moment. I quote these instances as showing that His Majesty's Government have been more than complaisant, that they have been only too ready to sacrifice the independence of Persian interests. The whole of the Blue-book shows what a farce it is to talk of there being any freedom of action on the part of the Persian Government. One of the conditions of the loan of £200,000 to Persia was that Persia should recognise fully the Anglo-Russian Convention. Hitherto they have always been opposed to any such recognition, because they deemed the Convention to be an infringement of their sovereign powers. However much they resisted it, they finally had to give their agreement to the Convention, and in doing so I think they sealed the fact that they were no longer an independent Power.

Perhaps I am rather flogging a dead horse in dwelling upon the independence of Persia, because in the House of Commons in December last we had an admission by Sir Edward Grey which seemed to me to give the whole case away. At that time he said, in reference to the Anglo-Russian Agreement—

"It was never intended by the Agreement to destroy or diminish Russian influence in any part of Asia where it had already been obtained. The object of the Agreement was not to thrust Russia back, and, of course, not to deprive ourselves of any influence we had at the time in Asia. Russian influence when the Anglo-Russian Agreement was made was already predominant in the North of Persia."

A perfect state of stagnation does not exist, and it was not likely, if Russian influence was not to decline, that matters would remain exactly as they were at the time of the signing of the Convention. There was bound to be an advance towards an extension of the interests of Russia and possibly of ourselves. Therefore if it was the intention of His Majesty's Government at that time that there was to be no decline of the interests or of the influence of the two Powers in Persia, it was perfectly inconsistent to make any reference in the Convention to "the independence and integrity" of Persia. On February 8 Sir Edward Grey said, in a Despatch, that the Persian Government was deserving now of the support of His Majesty's Government because they had got rid of those members who were unfavourable to the continuance of Russian influence in Northern Persia. That is really the whole case against the Mejliss. What these people were fighting for was simply the ordinary independence of their country and for freedom of action. But this was held to be a reproach, and not until the Mejliss was, by a *coup d'état*, dissolved and some members of the Government who were supposed to hold strongly Nationalist views were dismissed did His

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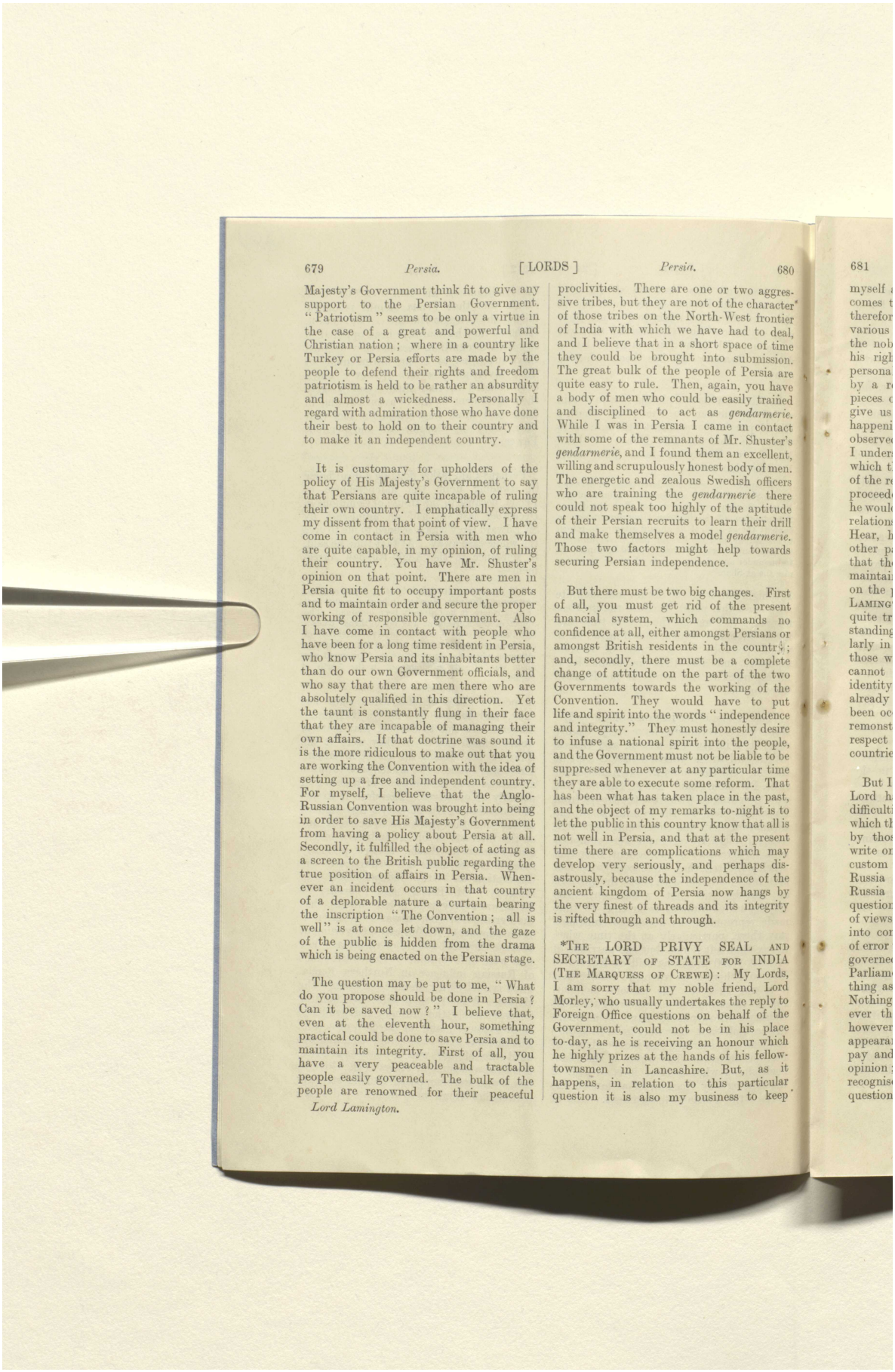

679 *Persia.* [LORDS] *Persia.* 680

Majesty's Government think fit to give any support to the Persian Government. "Patriotism" seems to be only a virtue in the case of a great and powerful and Christian nation; where in a country like Turkey or Persia efforts are made by the people to defend their rights and freedom patriotism is held to be rather an absurdity and almost a wickedness. Personally I regard with admiration those who have done their best to hold on to their country and to make it an independent country.

It is customary for upholders of the policy of His Majesty's Government to say that Persians are quite incapable of ruling their own country. I emphatically express my dissent from that point of view. I have come in contact in Persia with men who are quite capable, in my opinion, of ruling their country. You have Mr. Shuster's opinion on that point. There are men in Persia quite fit to occupy important posts and to maintain order and secure the proper working of responsible government. Also I have come in contact with people who have been for a long time resident in Persia, who know Persia and its inhabitants better than do our own Government officials, and who say that there are men there who are absolutely qualified in this direction. Yet the taunt is constantly flung in their face that they are incapable of managing their own affairs. If that doctrine was sound it is the more ridiculous to make out that you are working the Convention with the idea of setting up a free and independent country. For myself, I believe that the Anglo-Russian Convention was brought into being in order to save His Majesty's Government from having a policy about Persia at all. Secondly, it fulfilled the object of acting as a screen to the British public regarding the true position of affairs in Persia. Whenever an incident occurs in that country of a deplorable nature a curtain bearing the inscription "The Convention; all is well" is at once let down, and the gaze of the public is hidden from the drama which is being enacted on the Persian stage.

The question may be put to me, "What do you propose should be done in Persia? Can it be saved now?" I believe that, even at the eleventh hour, something practical could be done to save Persia and to maintain its integrity. First of all, you have a very peaceable and tractable people easily governed. The bulk of the people are renowned for their peaceful

Lord Lamington.

proclivities. There are one or two aggressive tribes, but they are not of the character of those tribes on the North-West frontier of India with which we have had to deal, and I believe that in a short space of time they could be brought into submission. The great bulk of the people of Persia are quite easy to rule. Then, again, you have a body of men who could be easily trained and disciplined to act as *gendarmerie*. While I was in Persia I came in contact with some of the remnants of Mr. Shuster's *gendarmerie*, and I found them an excellent, willing and scrupulously honest body of men. The energetic and zealous Swedish officers who are training the *gendarmerie* there could not speak too highly of the aptitude of their Persian recruits to learn their drill and make themselves a model *gendarmerie*. Those two factors might help towards securing Persian independence.

But there must be two big changes. First of all, you must get rid of the present financial system, which commands no confidence at all, either amongst Persians or amongst British residents in the country; and, secondly, there must be a complete change of attitude on the part of the two Governments towards the working of the Convention. They would have to put life and spirit into the words "independence and integrity." They must honestly desire to infuse a national spirit into the people, and the Government must not be liable to be suppressed whenever at any particular time they are able to execute some reform. That has been what has taken place in the past, and the object of my remarks to-night is to let the public in this country know that all is not well in Persia, and that at the present time there are complications which may develop very seriously, and perhaps disastrously, because the independence of the ancient kingdom of Persia now hangs by the very finest of threads and its integrity is rifted through and through.

*THE LORD PRIVY SEAL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (THE MARQUESS OF CREWE): My Lords, I am sorry that my noble friend, Lord Morley, who usually undertakes the reply to Foreign Office questions on behalf of the Government, could not be in his place to-day, as he is receiving an honour which he highly prizes at the hands of his fellow-townsmen in Lancashire. But, as it happens, in relation to this particular question it is also my business to keep

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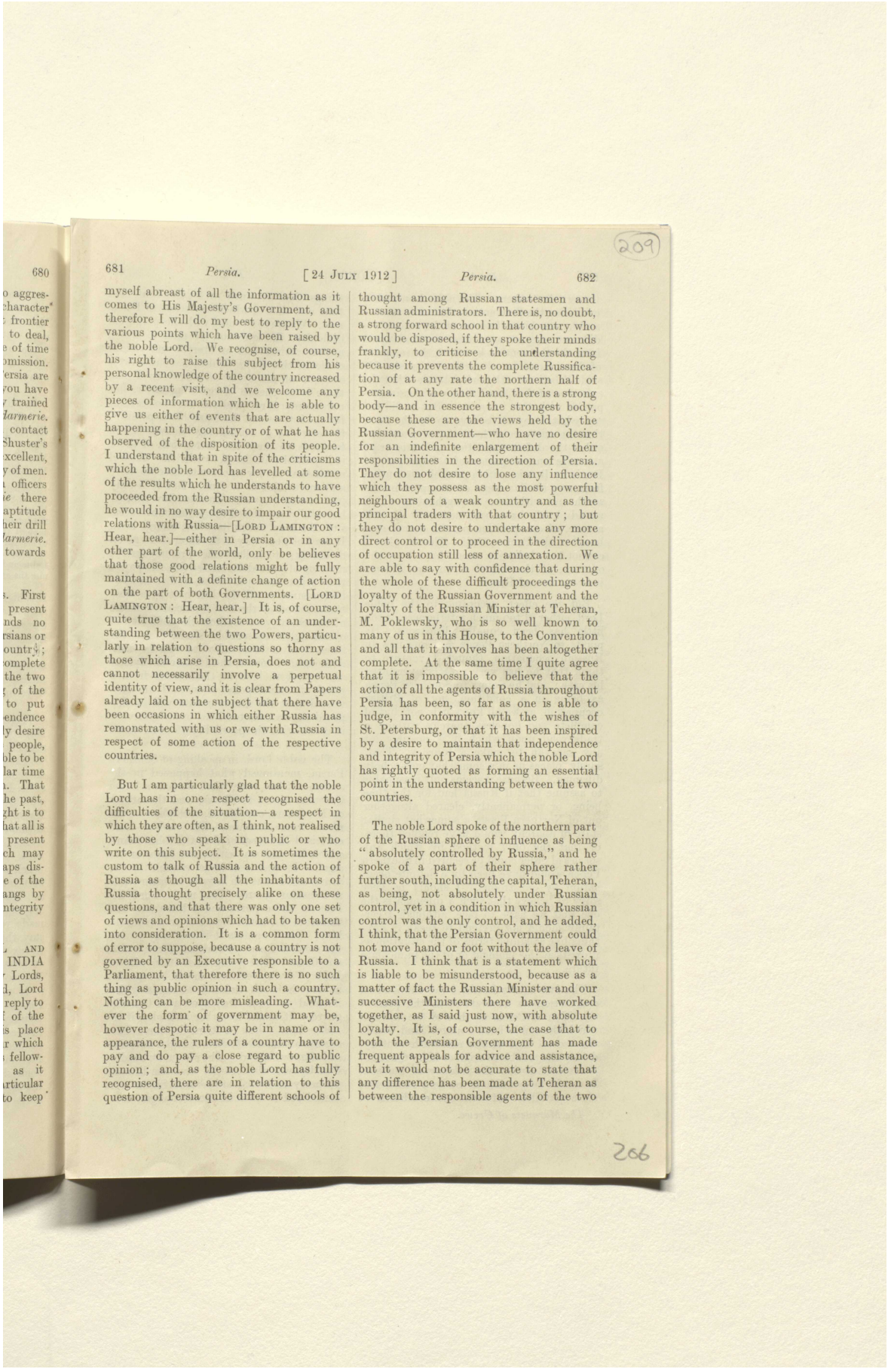

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681 *Persia.* [24 JULY 1912] *Persia.* 682

myself abreast of all the information as it comes to His Majesty's Government, and therefore I will do my best to reply to the various points which have been raised by the noble Lord. We recognise, of course, his right to raise this subject from his personal knowledge of the country increased by a recent visit, and we welcome any pieces of information which he is able to give us either of events that are actually happening in the country or of what he has observed of the disposition of its people. I understand that in spite of the criticisms which the noble Lord has levelled at some of the results which he understands to have proceeded from the Russian understanding, he would in no way desire to impair our good relations with Russia—[LORD LAMINGTON: Hear, hear.]—either in Persia or in any other part of the world, only be believes that those good relations might be fully maintained with a definite change of action on the part of both Governments. [LORD LAMINGTON: Hear, hear.] It is, of course, quite true that the existence of an understanding between the two Powers, particularly in relation to questions so thorny as those which arise in Persia, does not and cannot necessarily involve a perpetual identity of view, and it is clear from Papers already laid on the subject that there have been occasions in which either Russia has remonstrated with us or we with Russia in respect of some action of the respective countries.

But I am particularly glad that the noble Lord has in one respect recognised the difficulties of the situation—a respect in which they are often, as I think, not realised by those who speak in public or who write on this subject. It is sometimes the custom to talk of Russia and the action of Russia as though all the inhabitants of Russia thought precisely alike on these questions, and that there was only one set of views and opinions which had to be taken into consideration. It is a common form of error to suppose, because a country is not governed by an Executive responsible to a Parliament, that therefore there is no such thing as public opinion in such a country. Nothing can be more misleading. Whatever the form of government may be, however despotic it may be in name or in appearance, the rulers of a country have to pay and do pay a close regard to public opinion; and, as the noble Lord has fully recognised, there are in relation to this question of Persia quite different schools of thought among Russian statesmen and Russian administrators. There is, no doubt, a strong forward school in that country who would be disposed, if they spoke their minds frankly, to criticise the understanding because it prevents the complete Russification of at any rate the northern half of Persia. On the other hand, there is a strong body—and in essence the strongest body, because these are the views held by the Russian Government—who have no desire for an indefinite enlargement of their responsibilities in the direction of Persia. They do not desire to lose any influence which they possess as the most powerful neighbours of a weak country and as the principal traders with that country; but they do not desire to undertake any more direct control or to proceed in the direction of occupation still less of annexation. We are able to say with confidence that during the whole of these difficult proceedings the loyalty of the Russian Government and the loyalty of the Russian Minister at Teheran, M. Poklewsky, who is so well known to many of us in this House, to the Convention and all that it involves has been altogether complete. At the same time I quite agree that it is impossible to believe that the action of all the agents of Russia throughout Persia has been, so far as one is able to judge, in conformity with the wishes of St. Petersburg, or that it has been inspired by a desire to maintain that independence and integrity of Persia which the noble Lord has rightly quoted as forming an essential point in the understanding between the two countries.

The noble Lord spoke of the northern part of the Russian sphere of influence as being "absolutely controlled by Russia," and he spoke of a part of their sphere rather further south, including the capital, Teheran, as being, not absolutely under Russian control, yet in a condition in which Russian control was the only control, and he added, I think, that the Persian Government could not move hand or foot without the leave of Russia. I think that is a statement which is liable to be misunderstood, because as a matter of fact the Russian Minister and our successive Ministers there have worked together, as I said just now, with absolute loyalty. It is, of course, the case that to both the Persian Government has made frequent appeals for advice and assistance, but it would not be accurate to state that any difference has been made at Teheran as between the responsible agents of the two

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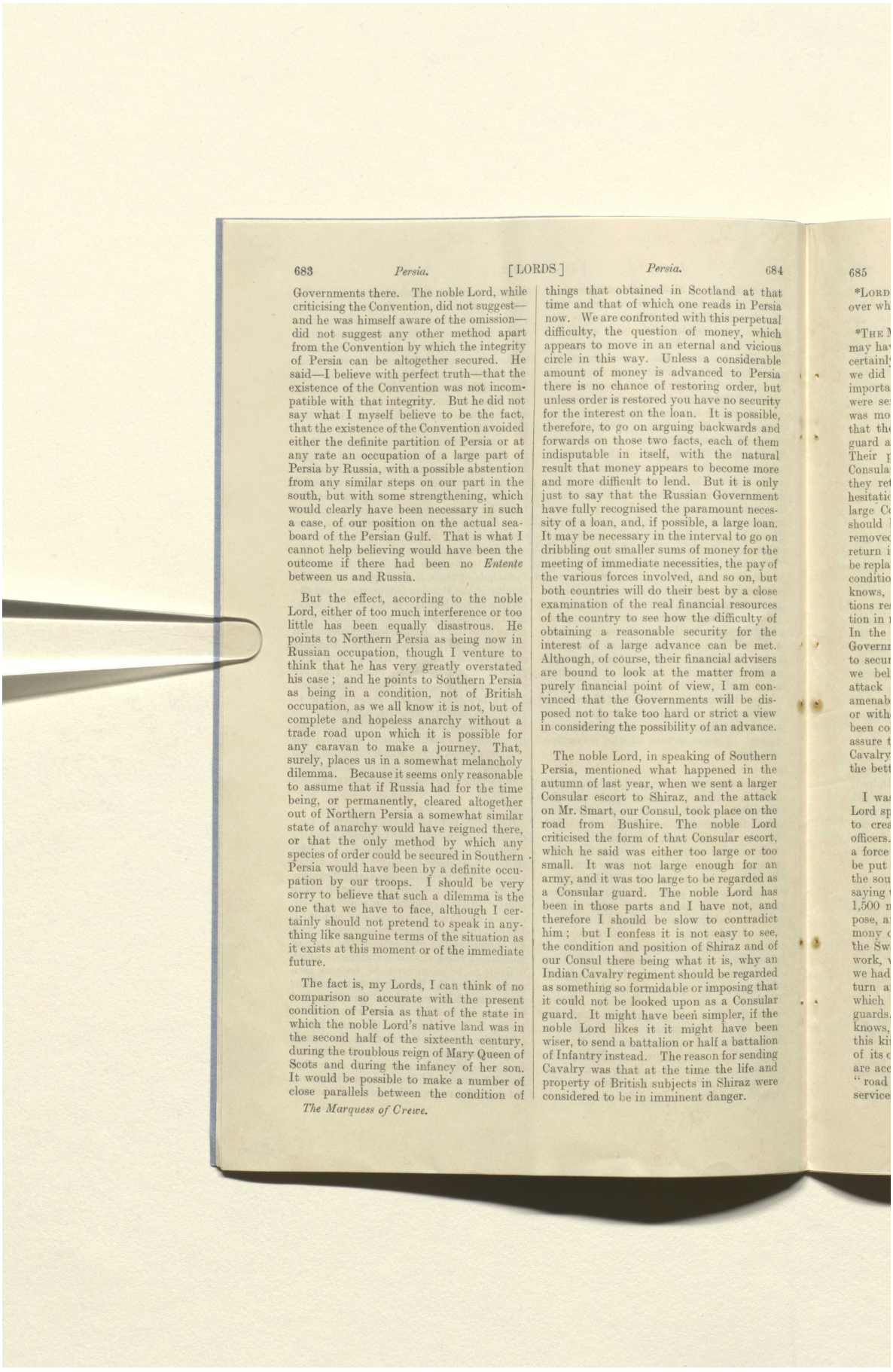

683 *Persia.* [LORDS] *Persia.* 684

Governments there. The noble Lord, while criticising the Convention, did not suggest—and he was himself aware of the omission—did not suggest any other method apart from the Convention by which the integrity of Persia can be altogether secured. He said—I believe with perfect truth—that the existence of the Convention was not incompatible with that integrity. But he did not say what I myself believe to be the fact, that the existence of the Convention avoided either the definite partition of Persia or at any rate an occupation of a large part of Persia by Russia, with a possible abstention from any similar steps on our part in the south, but with some strengthening, which would clearly have been necessary in such a case, of our position on the actual seaboard of the Persian Gulf. That is what I cannot help believing would have been the outcome if there had been no *Entente* between us and Russia.

But the effect, according to the noble Lord, either of too much interference or too little has been equally disastrous. He points to Northern Persia as being now in Russian occupation, though I venture to think that he has very greatly overstated his case; and he points to Southern Persia as being in a condition, not of British occupation, as we all know it is not, but of complete and hopeless anarchy without a trade road upon which it is possible for any caravan to make a journey. That, surely, places us in a somewhat melancholy dilemma. Because it seems only reasonable to assume that if Russia had for the time being, or permanently, cleared altogether out of Northern Persia a somewhat similar state of anarchy would have reigned there, or that the only method by which any species of order could be secured in Southern Persia would have been by a definite occupation by our troops. I should be very sorry to believe that such a dilemma is the one that we have to face, although I certainly should not pretend to speak in anything like sanguine terms of the situation as it exists at this moment or of the immediate future.

The fact is, my Lords, I can think of no comparison so accurate with the present condition of Persia as that of the state in which the noble Lord's native land was in the second half of the sixteenth century, during the troublous reign of Mary Queen of Scots and during the infancy of her son. It would be possible to make a number of close parallels between the condition of things that obtained in Scotland at that time and that of which one reads in Persia now. We are confronted with this perpetual difficulty, the question of money, which appears to move in an eternal and vicious circle in this way. Unless a considerable amount of money is advanced to Persia there is no chance of restoring order, but unless order is restored you have no security for the interest on the loan. It is possible, therefore, to go on arguing backwards and forwards on those two facts, each of them indisputable in itself, with the natural result that money appears to become more and more difficult to lend. But it is only just to say that the Russian Government have fully recognised the paramount necessity of a loan, and, if possible, a large loan. It may be necessary in the interval to go on dribbling out smaller sums of money for the meeting of immediate necessities, the pay of the various forces involved, and so on, but both countries will do their best by a close examination of the real financial resources of the country to see how the difficulty of obtaining a reasonable security for the interest of a large advance can be met. Although, of course, their financial advisers are bound to look at the matter from a purely financial point of view, I am convinced that the Governments will be disposed not to take too hard or strict a view in considering the possibility of an advance.

The noble Lord, in speaking of Southern Persia, mentioned what happened in the autumn of last year, when we sent a larger Consular escort to Shiraz, and the attack on Mr. Smart, our Consul, took place on the road from Bushire. The noble Lord criticised the form of that Consular escort, which he said was either too large or too small. It was not large enough for an army, and it was too large to be regarded as a Consular guard. The noble Lord has been in those parts and I have not, and therefore I should be slow to contradict him; but I confess it is not easy to see, the condition and position of Shiraz and of our Consul there being what it is, why an Indian Cavalry regiment should be regarded as something so formidable or imposing that it could not be looked upon as a Consular guard. It might have been simpler, if the noble Lord likes it it might have been wiser, to send a battalion or half a battalion of Infantry instead. The reason for sending Cavalry was that at the time the life and property of British subjects in Shiraz were considered to be in imminent danger.

The Marquess of Crewe.

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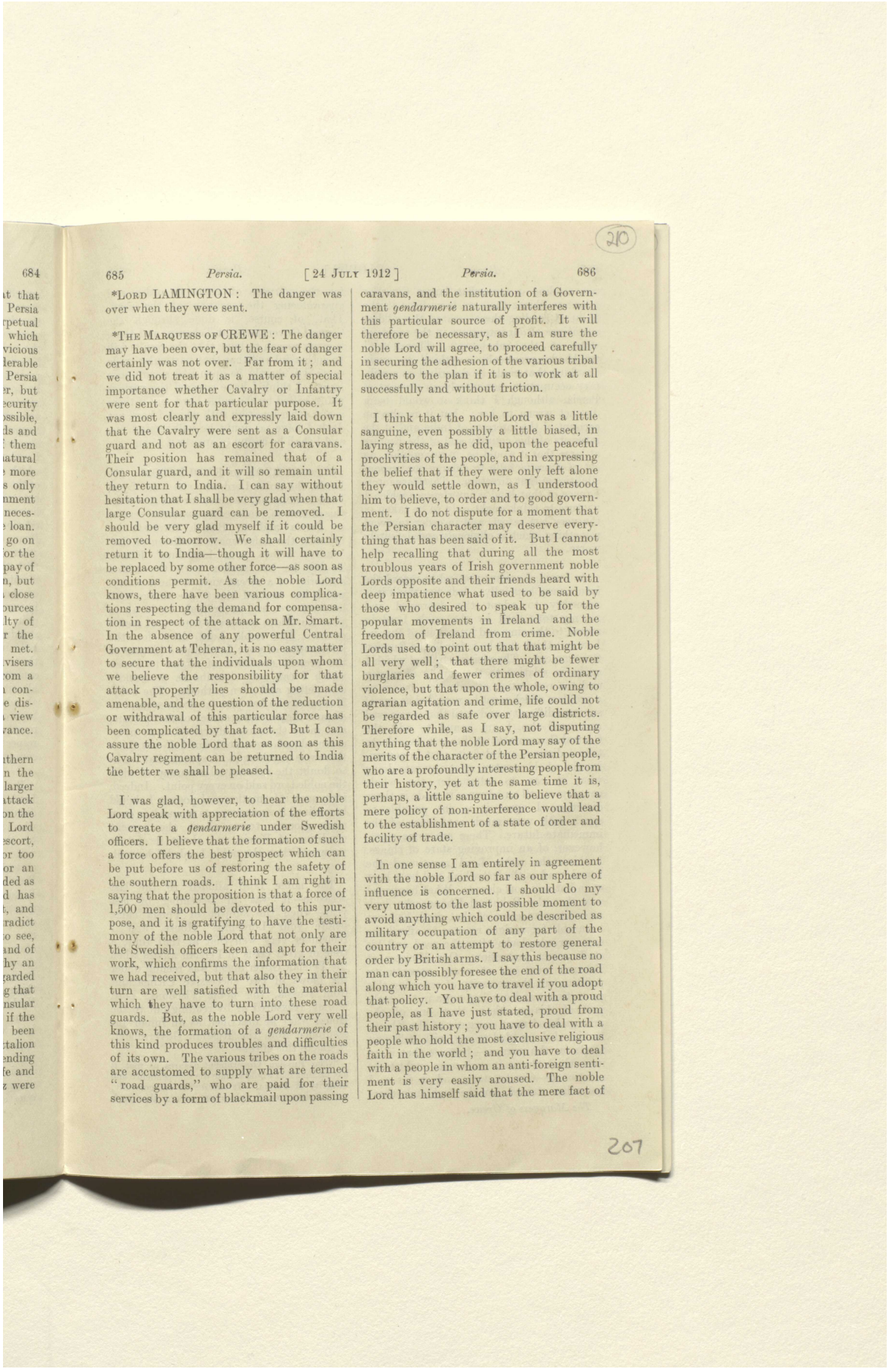

*LORD LAMINGTON: The danger was over when they were sent.

*THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: The danger may have been over, but the fear of danger certainly was not over. Far from it; and we did not treat it as a matter of special importance whether Cavalry or Infantry were sent for that particular purpose. It was most clearly and expressly laid down that the Cavalry were sent as a Consular guard and not as an escort for caravans. Their position has remained that of a Consular guard, and it will so remain until they return to India. I can say without hesitation that I shall be very glad when that large Consular guard can be removed. I should be very glad myself if it could be removed to-morrow. We shall certainly return it to India—though it will have to be replaced by some other force—as soon as conditions permit. As the noble Lord knows, there have been various complications respecting the demand for compensation in respect of the attack on Mr. Smart. In the absence of any powerful Central Government at Teheran, it is no easy matter to secure that the individuals upon whom we believe the responsibility for that attack properly lies should be made amenable, and the question of the reduction or withdrawal of this particular force has been complicated by that fact. But I can assure the noble Lord that as soon as this Cavalry regiment can be returned to India the better we shall be pleased.

I was glad, however, to hear the noble Lord speak with appreciation of the efforts to create a *gendarmerie* under Swedish officers. I believe that the formation of such a force offers the best prospect which can be put before us of restoring the safety of the southern roads. I think I am right in saying that the proposition is that a force of 1,500 men should be devoted to this purpose, and it is gratifying to have the testimony of the noble Lord that not only are the Swedish officers keen and apt for their work, which confirms the information that we had received, but that also they in their turn are well satisfied with the material which they have to turn into these road guards. But, as the noble Lord very well knows, the formation of a *gendarmerie* of this kind produces troubles and difficulties of its own. The various tribes on the roads are accustomed to supply what are termed "road guards," who are paid for their services by a form of blackmail upon passing caravans, and the institution of a Government *gendarmerie* naturally interferes with this particular source of profit. It will therefore be necessary, as I am sure the noble Lord will agree, to proceed carefully in securing the adhesion of the various tribal leaders to the plan if it is to work at all successfully and without friction.

I think that the noble Lord was a little sanguine, even possibly a little biased, in laying stress, as he did, upon the peaceful proclivities of the people, and in expressing the belief that if they were only left alone they would settle down, as I understood him to believe, to order and to good government. I do not dispute for a moment that the Persian character may deserve everything that has been said of it. But I cannot help recalling that during all the most troublous years of Irish government noble Lords opposite and their friends heard with deep impatience what used to be said by those who desired to speak up for the popular movements in Ireland and the freedom of Ireland from crime. Noble Lords used to point out that that might be all very well; that there might be fewer burglaries and fewer crimes of ordinary violence, but that upon the whole, owing to agrarian agitation and crime, life could not be regarded as safe over large districts. Therefore while, as I say, not disputing anything that the noble Lord may say of the merits of the character of the Persian people, who are a profoundly interesting people from their history, yet at the same time it is, perhaps, a little sanguine to believe that a mere policy of non-interference would lead to the establishment of a state of order and facility of trade.

In one sense I am entirely in agreement with the noble Lord so far as our sphere of influence is concerned. I should do my very utmost to the last possible moment to avoid anything which could be described as military occupation of any part of the country or an attempt to restore general order by British arms. I say this because no man can possibly foresee the end of the road along which you have to travel if you adopt that policy. You have to deal with a proud people, as I have just stated, proud from their past history; you have to deal with a people who hold the most exclusive religious faith in the world; and you have to deal with a people in whom an anti-foreign sentiment is very easily aroused. The noble Lord has himself said that the mere fact of

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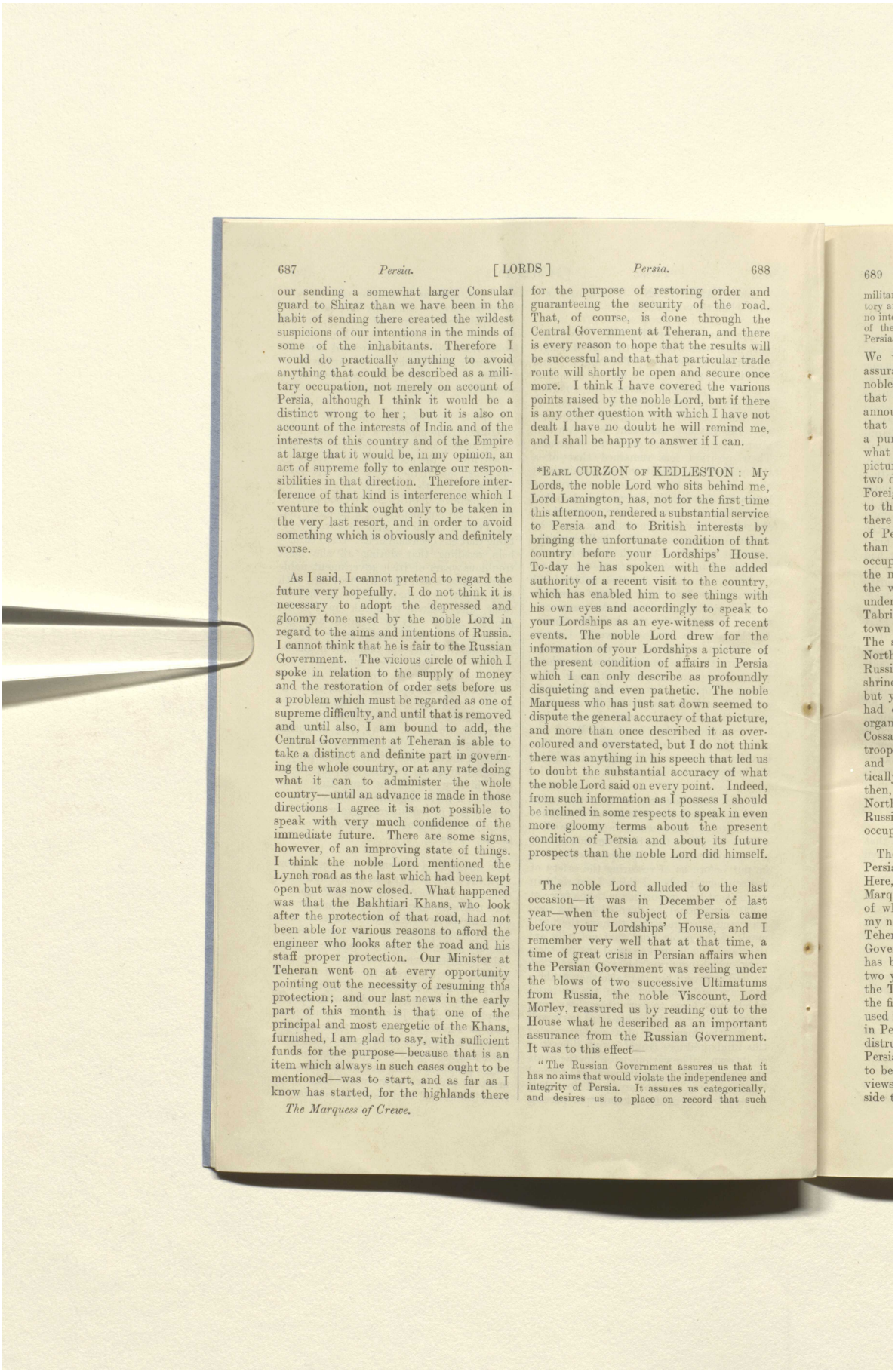

687 *Persia.* [LORDS] *Persia.* 688

our sending a somewhat larger Consular guard to Shiraz than we have been in the habit of sending there created the wildest suspicions of our intentions in the minds of some of the inhabitants. Therefore I would do practically anything to avoid anything that could be described as a military occupation, not merely on account of Persia, although I think it would be a distinct wrong to her; but it is also on account of the interests of India and of the interests of this country and of the Empire at large that it would be, in my opinion, an act of supreme folly to enlarge our responsibilities in that direction. Therefore interference of that kind is interference which I venture to think ought only to be taken in the very last resort, and in order to avoid something which is obviously and definitely worse.

As I said, I cannot pretend to regard the future very hopefully. I do not think it is necessary to adopt the depressed and gloomy tone used by the noble Lord in regard to the aims and intentions of Russia. I cannot think that he is fair to the Russian Government. The vicious circle of which I spoke in relation to the supply of money and the restoration of order sets before us a problem which must be regarded as one of supreme difficulty, and until that is removed and until also, I am bound to add, the Central Government at Teheran is able to take a distinct and definite part in governing the whole country, or at any rate doing what it can to administer the whole country—until an advance is made in those directions I agree it is not possible to speak with very much confidence of the immediate future. There are some signs, however, of an improving state of things. I think the noble Lord mentioned the Lynch road as the last which had been kept open but was now closed. What happened was that the Bakhtiari Khans, who look after the protection of that road, had not been able for various reasons to afford the engineer who looks after the road and his staff proper protection. Our Minister at Teheran went on at every opportunity pointing out the necessity of resuming this protection; and our last news in the early part of this month is that one of the principal and most energetic of the Khans, furnished, I am glad to say, with sufficient funds for the purpose—because that is an item which always in such cases ought to be mentioned—was to start, and as far as I know has started, for the highlands there for the purpose of restoring order and guaranteeing the security of the road. That, of course, is done through the Central Government at Teheran, and there is every reason to hope that the results will be successful and that that particular trade route will shortly be open and secure once more. I think I have covered the various points raised by the noble Lord, but if there is any other question with which I have not dealt I have no doubt he will remind me, and I shall be happy to answer if I can.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, the noble Lord who sits behind me, Lord Lamington, has, not for the first time this afternoon, rendered a substantial service to Persia and to British interests by bringing the unfortunate condition of that country before your Lordships' House. To-day he has spoken with the added authority of a recent visit to the country, which has enabled him to see things with his own eyes and accordingly to speak to your Lordships as an eye-witness of recent events. The noble Lord drew for the information of your Lordships a picture of the present condition of affairs in Persia which I can only describe as profoundly disquieting and even pathetic. The noble Marquess who has just sat down seemed to dispute the general accuracy of that picture, and more than once described it as over-coloured and overstated, but I do not think there was anything in his speech that led us to doubt the substantial accuracy of what the noble Lord said on every point. Indeed, from such information as I possess I should be inclined in some respects to speak in even more gloomy terms about the present condition of Persia and about its future prospects than the noble Lord did himself.

The noble Lord alluded to the last occasion—it was in December of last year—when the subject of Persia came before your Lordships' House, and I remember very well that at that time, a time of great crisis in Persian affairs when the Persian Government was reeling under the blows of two successive Ultimatums from Russia, the noble Viscount, Lord Morley, reassured us by reading out to the House what he described as an important assurance from the Russian Government. It was to this effect—

"The Russian Government assures us that it has no aims that would violate the independence and integrity of Persia. It assures us categorically, and desires us to place on record that such

The Marquess of Crewe.

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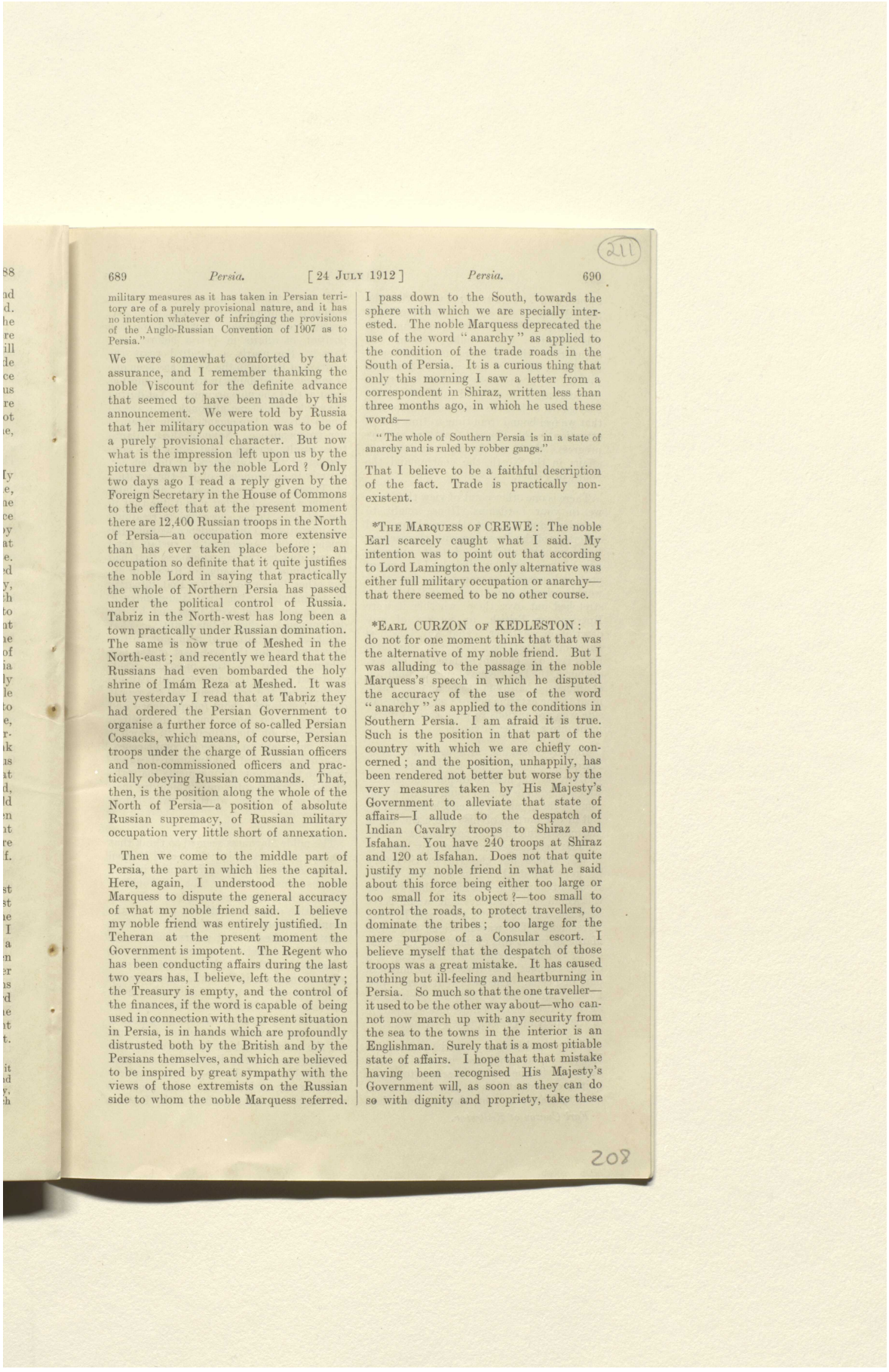

military measures as it has taken in Persian territory are of a purely provisional nature, and it has no intention whatever of infringing the provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 as to Persia."

We were somewhat comforted by that assurance, and I remember thanking the noble Viscount for the definite advance that seemed to have been made by this announcement. We were told by Russia that her military occupation was to be of a purely provisional character. But now what is the impression left upon us by the picture drawn by the noble Lord? Only two days ago I read a reply given by the Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons to the effect that at the present moment there are 12,400 Russian troops in the North of Persia—an occupation more extensive than has ever taken place before; an occupation so definite that it quite justifies the noble Lord in saying that practically the whole of Northern Persia has passed under the political control of Russia. Tabriz in the North-west has long been a town practically under Russian domination. The same is now true of Meshed in the North-east; and recently we heard that the Russians had even bombarded the holy shrine of Imám Reza at Meshed. It was but yesterday I read that at Tabriz they had ordered the Persian Government to organise a further force of so-called Persian Cossacks, which means, of course, Persian troops under the charge of Russian officers and non-commissioned officers and practically obeying Russian commands. That, then, is the position along the whole of the North of Persia—a position of absolute Russian supremacy, of Russian military occupation very little short of annexation.

Then we come to the middle part of Persia, the part in which lies the capital. Here, again, I understood the noble Marquess to dispute the general accuracy of what my noble friend said. I believe my noble friend was entirely justified. In Teheran at the present moment the Government is impotent. The Regent who has been conducting affairs during the last two years has, I believe, left the country; the Treasury is empty, and the control of the finances, if the word is capable of being used in connection with the present situation in Persia, is in hands which are profoundly distrusted both by the British and by the Persians themselves, and which are believed to be inspired by great sympathy with the views of those extremists on the Russian side to whom the noble Marquess referred. I pass down to the South, towards the sphere with which we are specially interested. The noble Marquess deprecated the use of the word "anarchy" as applied to the condition of the trade roads in the South of Persia. It is a curious thing that only this morning I saw a letter from a correspondent in Shiraz, written less than three months ago, in which he used these words—

"The whole of Southern Persia is in a state of anarchy and is ruled by robber gangs."

That I believe to be a faithful description of the fact. Trade is practically non-existent.

*THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: The noble Earl scarcely caught what I said. My intention was to point out that according to Lord Lamington the only alternative was either full military occupation or anarchy—that there seemed to be no other course.

*EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON: I do not for one moment think that that was the alternative of my noble friend. But I was alluding to the passage in the noble Marquess's speech in which he disputed the accuracy of the use of the word "anarchy" as applied to the conditions in Southern Persia. I am afraid it is true. Such is the position in that part of the country with which we are chiefly concerned; and the position, unhappily, has been rendered not better but worse by the very measures taken by His Majesty's Government to alleviate that state of affairs—I allude to the despatch of Indian Cavalry troops to Shiraz and Isfahan. You have 240 troops at Shiraz and 120 at Isfahan. Does not that quite justify my noble friend in what he said about this force being either too large or too small for its object?—too small to control the roads, to protect travellers, to dominate the tribes; too large for the mere purpose of a Consular escort. I believe myself that the despatch of those troops was a great mistake. It has caused nothing but ill-feeling and heartburning in Persia. So much so that the one traveller—it used to be the other way about—who cannot now march up with any security from the sea to the towns in the interior is an Englishman. Surely that is a most pitiable state of affairs. I hope that that mistake having been recognised His Majesty's Government will, as soon as they can do so with dignity and propriety, take these

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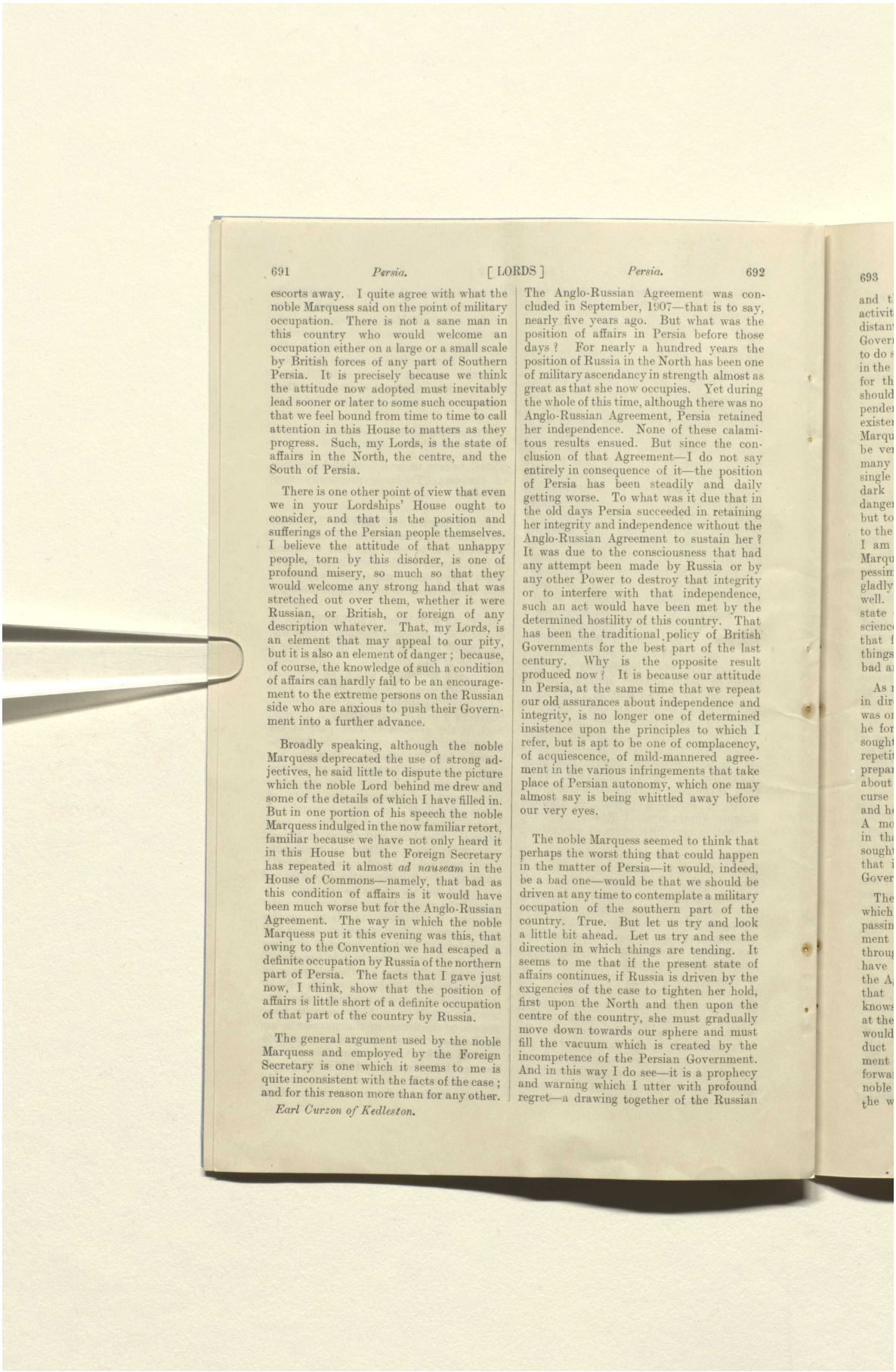

escorts away. I quite agree with what the noble Marquess said on the point of military occupation. There is not a sane man in this country who would welcome an occupation either on a large or a small scale by British forces of any part of Southern Persia. It is precisely because we think the attitude now adopted must inevitably lead sooner or later to some such occupation that we feel bound from time to time to call attention in this House to matters as they progress. Such, my Lords, is the state of affairs in the North, the centre, and the South of Persia.

There is one other point of view that even we in your Lordships' House ought to consider, and that is the position and sufferings of the Persian people themselves. I believe the attitude of that unhappy people, torn by this disorder, is one of profound misery, so much so that they would welcome any strong hand that was stretched out over them, whether it were Russian, or British, or foreign of any description whatever. That, my Lords, is an element that may appeal to our pity, but it is also an element of danger; because, of course, the knowledge of such a condition of affairs can hardly fail to be an encouragement to the extreme persons on the Russian side who are anxious to push their Government into a further advance.

Broadly speaking, although the noble Marquess deprecated the use of strong adjectives, he said little to dispute the picture which the noble Lord behind me drew and some of the details of which I have filled in. But in one portion of his speech the noble Marquess indulged in the now familiar retort, familiar because we have not only heard it in this House but the Foreign Secretary has repeated it almost *ad nauseam* in the House of Commons—namely, that bad as this condition of affairs is it would have been much worse but for the Anglo-Russian Agreement. The way in which the noble Marquess put it this evening was this, that owing to the Convention we had escaped a definite occupation by Russia of the northern part of Persia. The facts that I gave just now, I think, show that the position of affairs is little short of a definite occupation of that part of the country by Russia.

The general argument used by the noble Marquess and employed by the Foreign Secretary is one which it seems to me is quite inconsistent with the facts of the case; and for this reason more than for any other.

Earl Curzon of Kedleston.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement was concluded in September, 1907—that is to say, nearly five years ago. But what was the position of affairs in Persia before those days? For nearly a hundred years the position of Russia in the North has been one of military ascendancy in strength almost as great as that she now occupies. Yet during the whole of this time, although there was no Anglo-Russian Agreement, Persia retained her independence. None of these calamitous results ensued. But since the conclusion of that Agreement—I do not say entirely in consequence of it—the position of Persia has been steadily and daily getting worse. To what was it due that in the old days Persia succeeded in retaining her integrity and independence without the Anglo-Russian Agreement to sustain her? It was due to the consciousness that had any attempt been made by Russia or by any other Power to destroy that integrity or to interfere with that independence, such an act would have been met by the determined hostility of this country. That has been the traditional policy of British Governments for the best part of the last century. Why is the opposite result produced now? It is because our attitude in Persia, at the same time that we repeat our old assurances about independence and integrity, is no longer one of determined insistence upon the principles to which I refer, but is apt to be one of complacency, of acquiescence, of mild-mannered agreement in the various infringements that take place of Persian autonomy, which one may almost say is being whittled away before our very eyes.

The noble Marquess seemed to think that perhaps the worst thing that could happen in the matter of Persia—it would, indeed, be a bad one—would be that we should be driven at any time to contemplate a military occupation of the southern part of the country. True. But let us try and look a little bit ahead. Let us try and see the direction in which things are tending. It seems to me that if the present state of affairs continues, if Russia is driven by the exigencies of the case to tighten her hold, first upon the North and then upon the centre of the country, she must gradually move down towards our sphere and must fill the vacuum which is created by the incompetence of the Persian Government. And in this way I do see—it is a prophecy and warning which I utter with profound regret—a drawing together of the Russian

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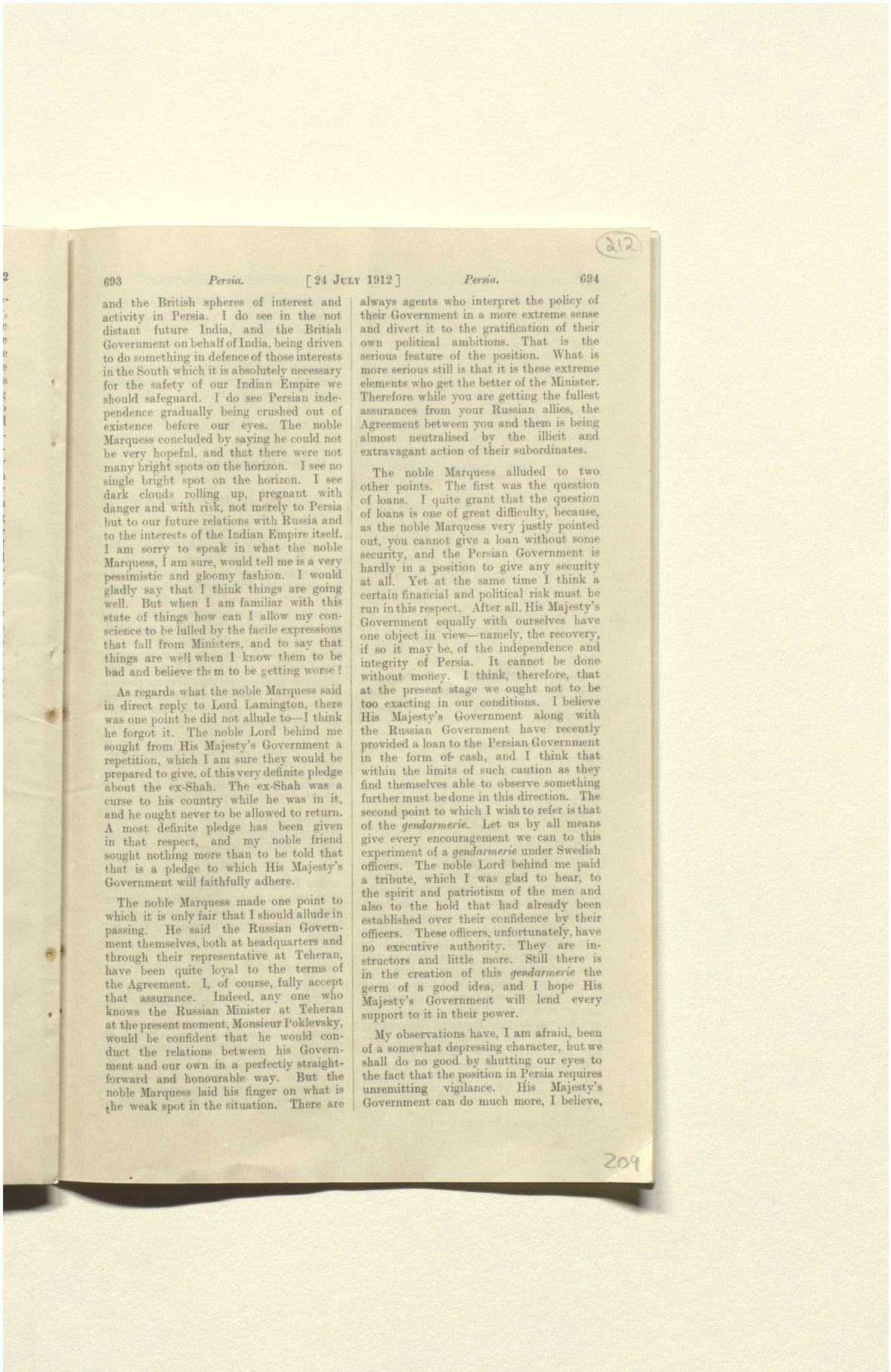

and the British spheres of interest and activity in Persia. I do see in the not distant future India, and the British Government on behalf of India, being driven to do something in defence of those interests in the South which it is absolutely necessary for the safety of our Indian Empire we should safeguard. I do see Persian independence gradually being crushed out of existence before our eyes. The noble Marquess concluded by saying he could not be very hopeful, and that there were not many bright spots on the horizon. I see no single bright spot on the horizon. I see dark clouds rolling up, pregnant with danger and with risk, not merely to Persia but to our future relations with Russia and to the interests of the Indian Empire itself. I am sorry to speak in what the noble Marquess, I am sure, would tell me is a very pessimistic and gloomy fashion. I would gladly say that I think things are going well. But when I am familiar with this state of things how can I allow my conscience to be lulled by the facile expressions that fall from Ministers, and to say that things are well when I know them to be bad and believe them to be getting worse?

As regards what the noble Marquess said in direct reply to Lord Lamington, there was one point he did not allude to—I think he forgot it. The noble Lord behind me sought from His Majesty's Government a repetition, which I am sure they would be prepared to give, of this very definite pledge about the ex-Shah. The ex-Shah was a curse to his country while he was in it, and he ought never to be allowed to return. A most definite pledge has been given in that respect, and my noble friend sought nothing more than to be told that that is a pledge to which His Majesty's Government will faithfully adhere.

The noble Marquess made one point to which it is only fair that I should allude in passing. He said the Russian Government themselves, both at headquarters and through their representative at Teheran, have been quite loyal to the terms of the Agreement. I, of course, fully accept that assurance. Indeed, any one who knows the Russian Minister at Teheran at the present moment, Monsieur Poklevsky, would be confident that he would conduct the relations between his Government and our own in a perfectly straightforward and honourable way. But the noble Marquess laid his finger on what is the weak spot in the situation. There are always agents who interpret the policy of their Government in a more extreme sense and divert it to the gratification of their own political ambitions. That is the serious feature of the position. What is more serious still is that it is these extreme elements who get the better of the Minister. Therefore while you are getting the fullest assurances from your Russian allies, the Agreement between you and them is being almost neutralised by the illicit and extravagant action of their subordinates.

The noble Marquess alluded to two other points. The first was the question of loans. I quite grant that the question of loans is one of great difficulty, because, as the noble Marquess very justly pointed out, you cannot give a loan without some security, and the Persian Government is hardly in a position to give any security at all. Yet at the same time I think a certain financial and political risk must be run in this respect. After all, His Majesty's Government equally with ourselves have one object in view—namely, the recovery, if so it may be, of the independence and integrity of Persia. It cannot be done without money. I think, therefore, that at the present stage we ought not to be too exacting in our conditions. I believe His Majesty's Government along with the Russian Government have recently provided a loan to the Persian Government in the form of cash, and I think that within the limits of such caution as they find themselves able to observe something further must be done in this direction. The second point to which I wish to refer is that of the *gendarmerie*. Let us by all means give every encouragement we can to this experiment of a *gendarmerie* under Swedish officers. The noble Lord behind me paid a tribute, which I was glad to hear, to the spirit and patriotism of the men and also to the hold that had already been established over their confidence by their officers. These officers, unfortunately, have no executive authority. They are instructors and little more. Still there is in the creation of this *gendarmerie* the germ of a good idea, and I hope His Majesty's Government will lend every support to it in their power.

My observations have, I am afraid, been of a somewhat depressing character, but we shall do no good by shutting our eyes to the fact that the position in Persia requires unremitting vigilance. His Majesty's Government can do much more, I believe,

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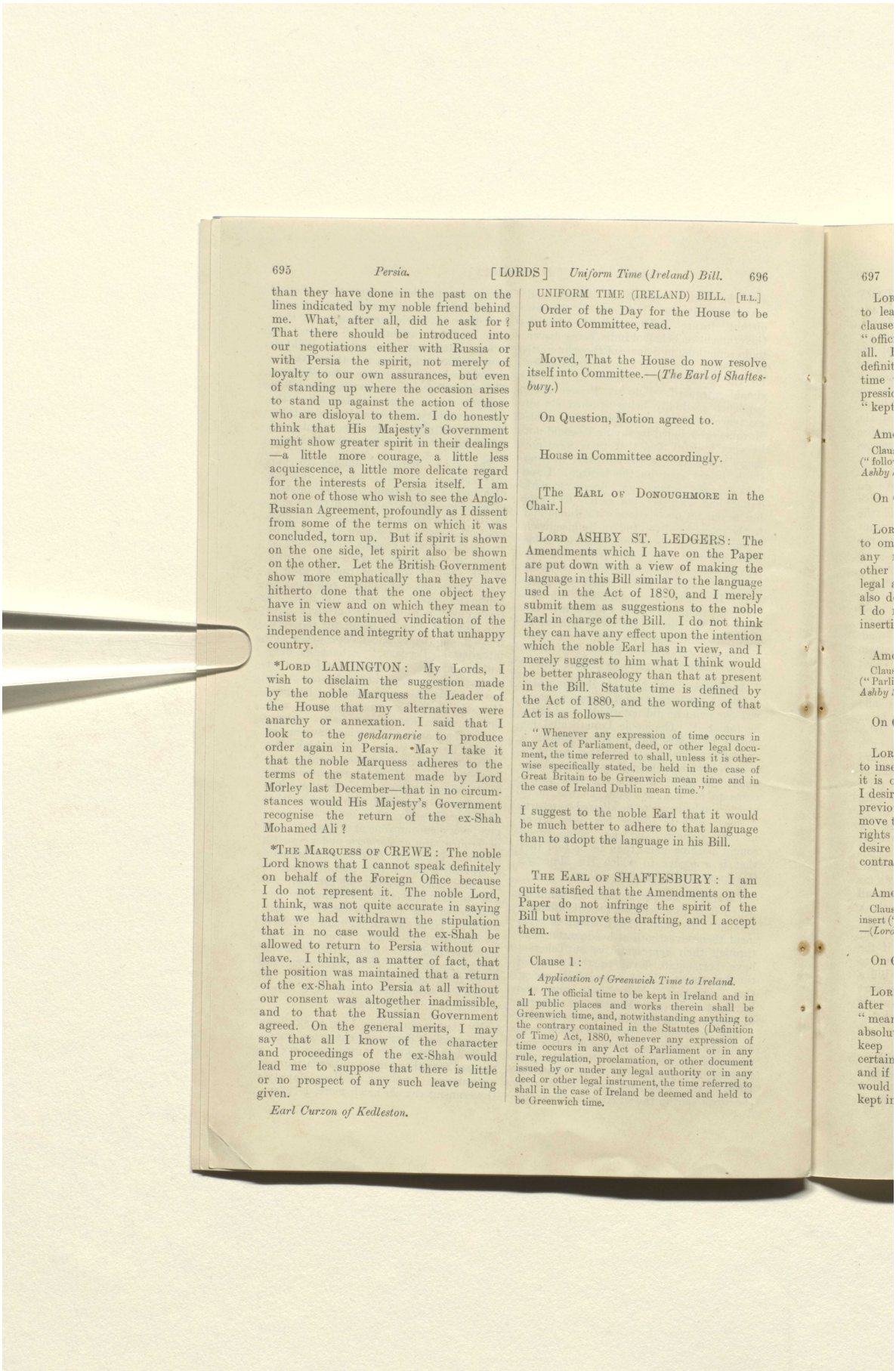

than they have done in the past on the lines indicated by my noble friend behind me. What, after all, did he ask for? That there should be introduced into our negotiations either with Russia or with Persia the spirit, not merely of loyalty to our own assurances, but even of standing up where the occasion arises to stand up against the action of those who are disloyal to them. I do honestly think that His Majesty's Government might show greater spirit in their dealings—a little more courage, a little less acquiescence, a little more delicate regard for the interests of Persia itself. I am not one of those who wish to see the Anglo-Russian Agreement, profoundly as I dissent from some of the terms on which it was concluded, torn up. But if spirit is shown on the one side, let spirit also be shown on the other. Let the British Government show more emphatically than they have hitherto done that the one object they have in view and on which they mean to insist is the continued vindication of the independence and integrity of that unhappy country.

*LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, I wish to disclaim the suggestion made by the noble Marquess the Leader of the House that my alternatives were anarchy or annexation. I said that I look to the *gendarmerie* to produce order again in Persia. May I take it that the noble Marquess adheres to the terms of the statement made by Lord Morley last December—that in no circumstances would His Majesty's Government recognise the return of the ex-Shah Mohamed Ali?

*THE MARQUESS OF CREWE: The noble Lord knows that I cannot speak definitely on behalf of the Foreign Office because I do not represent it. The noble Lord, I think, was not quite accurate in saying that we had withdrawn the stipulation that in no case would the ex-Shah be allowed to return to Persia without our leave. I think, as a matter of fact, that the position was maintained that a return of the ex-Shah into Persia at all without our consent was altogether inadmissible, and to that the Russian Government agreed. On the general merits, I may say that all I know of the character and proceedings of the ex-Shah would lead me to suppose that there is little or no prospect of any such leave being given.

Earl Curzon of Kedleston.

UNIFORM TIME (IRELAND) BILL. [H.L.]

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Moved, That the House do now resolve itself into Committee.—(*The Earl of Shaftesbury.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The EARL OF DONOUGHMORE in the Chair.]

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: The Amendments which I have on the Paper are put down with a view of making the language in this Bill similar to the language used in the Act of 1880, and I merely submit them as suggestions to the noble Earl in charge of the Bill. I do not think they can have any effect upon the intention which the noble Earl has in view, and I merely suggest to him what I think would be better phraseology than that at present in the Bill. Statute time is defined by the Act of 1880, and the wording of that Act is as follows—

"Whenever any expression of time occurs in any Act of Parliament, deed, or other legal document, the time referred to shall, unless it is otherwise specifically stated, be held in the case of Great Britain to be Greenwich mean time and in the case of Ireland Dublin mean time."

I suggest to the noble Earl that it would be much better to adhere to that language than to adopt the language in his Bill.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: I am quite satisfied that the Amendments on the Paper do not infringe the spirit of the Bill but improve the drafting, and I accept them.

Clause 1:

Application of Greenwich Time to Ireland.

1. The official time to be kept in Ireland and in all public places and works therein shall be Greenwich time, and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act, 1880, whenever any expression of time occurs in any Act of Parliament or in any rule, regulation, proclamation, or other document issued by or under any legal authority or in any deed or other legal instrument, the time referred to shall in the case of Ireland be deemed and held to be Greenwich time.

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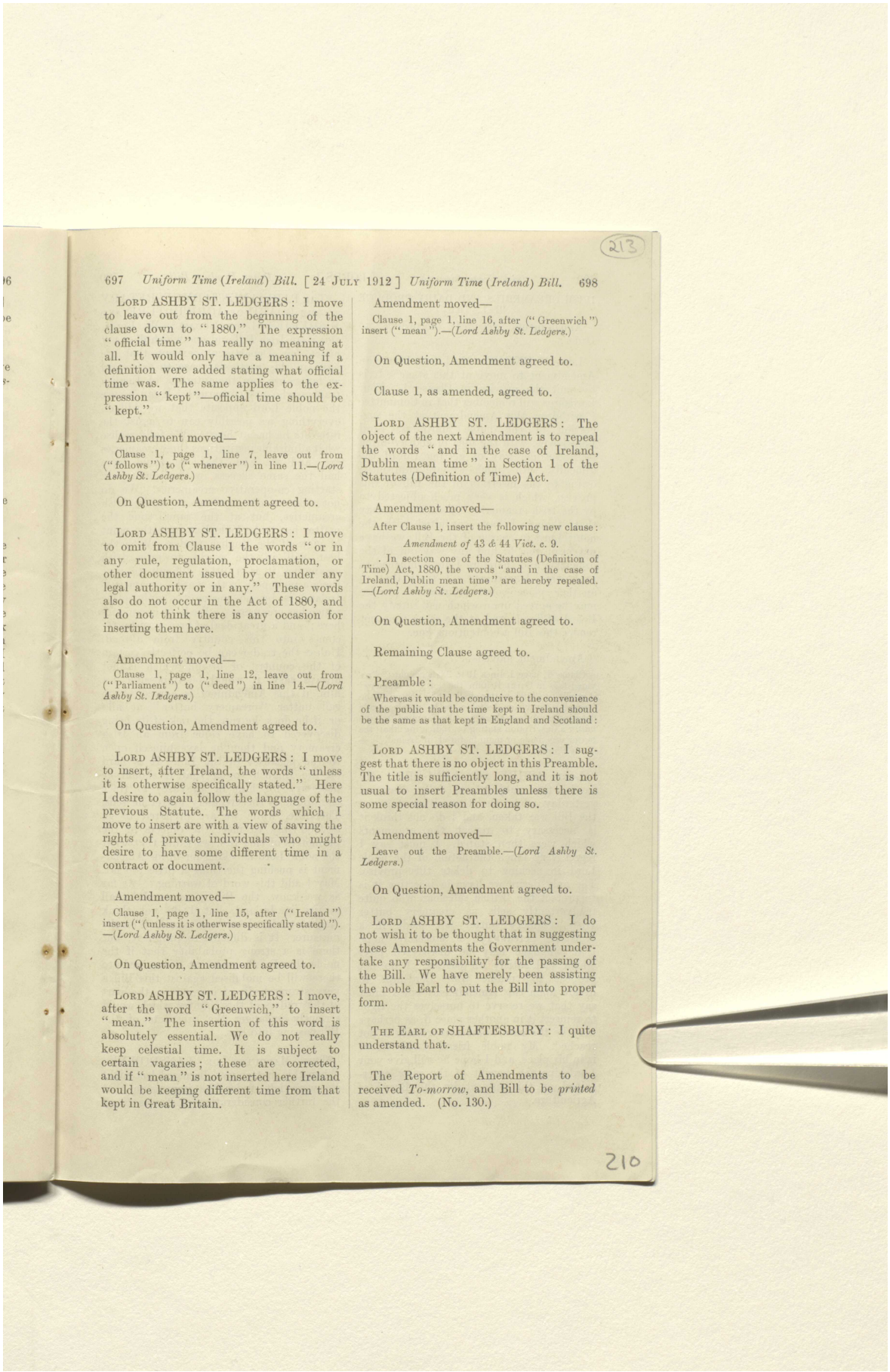

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697 *Uniform Time (Ireland) Bill.* [24 JULY 1912] *Uniform Time (Ireland) Bill.* 698

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I move to leave out from the beginning of the clause down to "1880." The expression "official time" has really no meaning at all. It would only have a meaning if a definition were added stating what official time was. The same applies to the expression "kept"—official time should be "kept."

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, line 7, leave out from ("follows") to ("whenever") in line 11.—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I move to omit from Clause 1 the words "or in any rule, regulation, proclamation, or other document issued by or under any legal authority or in any." These words also do not occur in the Act of 1880, and I do not think there is any occasion for inserting them here.

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, line 12, leave out from ("Parliament") to ("deed") in line 14.—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I move to insert, after Ireland, the words "unless it is otherwise specifically stated." Here I desire to again follow the language of the previous Statute. The words which I move to insert are with a view of saving the rights of private individuals who might desire to have some different time in a contract or document.

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, line 15, after ("Ireland") insert ("(unless it is otherwise specifically stated)").—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I move, after the word "Greenwich," to insert "mean." The insertion of this word is absolutely essential. We do not really keep celestial time. It is subject to certain vagaries; these are corrected, and if "mean" is not inserted here Ireland would be keeping different time from that kept in Great Britain.

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, line 16, after ("Greenwich") insert ("mean").—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: The object of the next Amendment is to repeal the words "and in the case of Ireland, Dublin mean time" in Section 1 of the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act.

Amendment moved—

After Clause 1, insert the following new clause:

Amendment of 43 & 44 *Vict. c.* 9.

. In section one of the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act, 1880, the words "and in the case of Ireland, Dublin mean time" are hereby repealed.—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining Clause agreed to.

Preamble:

Whereas it would be conducive to the convenience of the public that the time kept in Ireland should be the same as that kept in England and Scotland:

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I suggest that there is no object in this Preamble. The title is sufficiently long, and it is not usual to insert Preambles unless there is some special reason for doing so.

Amendment moved—

Leave out the Preamble.—(*Lord Ashby St. Ledgers.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: I do not wish it to be thought that in suggesting these Amendments the Government undertake any responsibility for the passing of the Bill. We have merely been assisting the noble Earl to put the Bill into proper form.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: I quite understand that.

The Report of Amendments to be received *To-morrow*, and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 130.)

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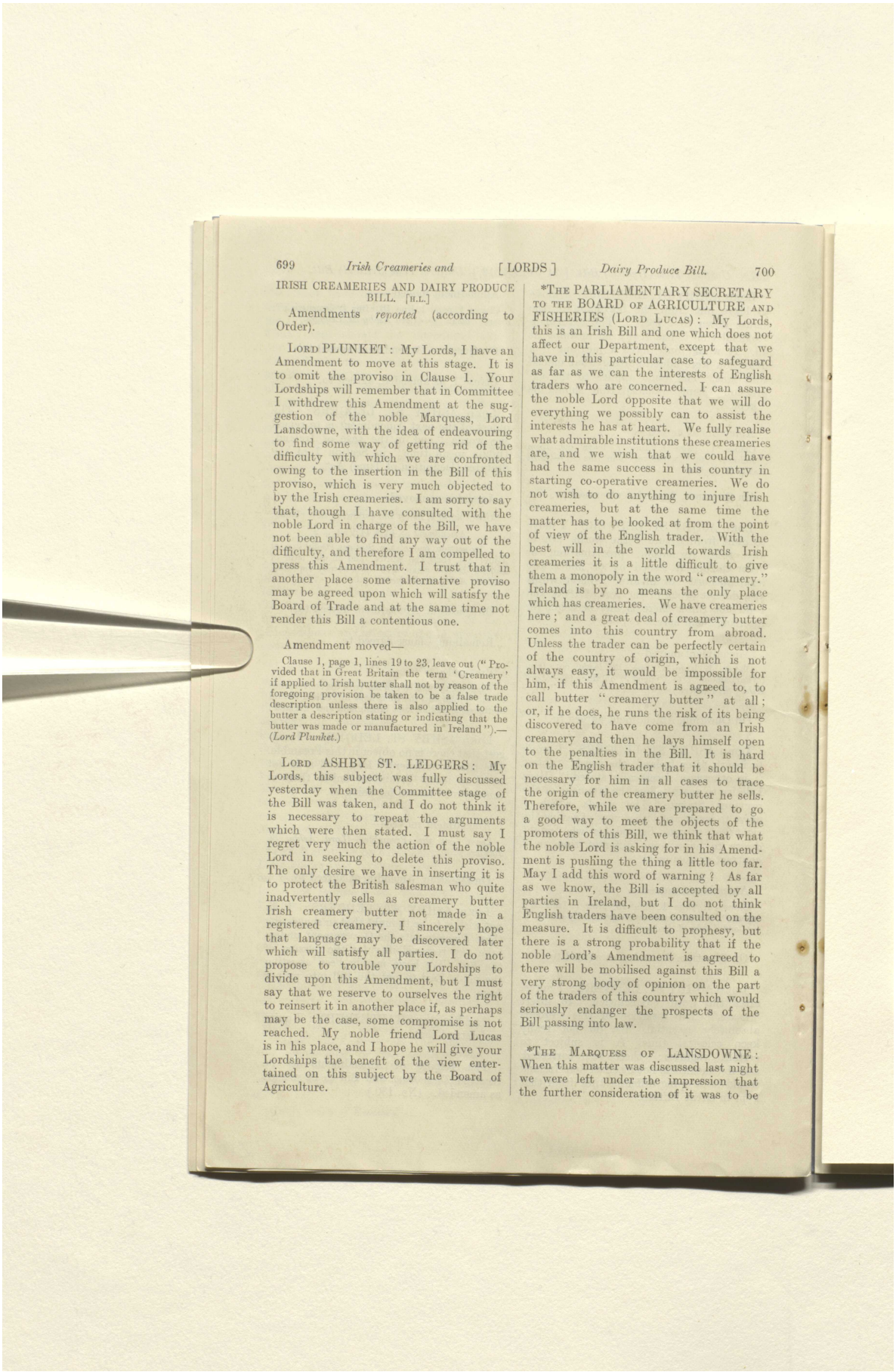

699 *Irish Creameries and* [LORDS] *Dairy Produce Bill.* 700

IRISH CREAMERIES AND DAIRY PRODUCE BILL. [H.L.]

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

LORD PLUNKET: My Lords, I have an Amendment to move at this stage. It is to omit the proviso in Clause 1. Your Lordships will remember that in Committee I withdrew this Amendment at the suggestion of the noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, with the idea of endeavouring to find some way of getting rid of the difficulty with which we are confronted owing to the insertion in the Bill of this proviso, which is very much objected to by the Irish creameries. I am sorry to say that, though I have consulted with the noble Lord in charge of the Bill, we have not been able to find any way out of the difficulty, and therefore I am compelled to press this Amendment. I trust that in another place some alternative proviso may be agreed upon which will satisfy the Board of Trade and at the same time not render this Bill a contentious one.

Amendment moved—

Clause 1, page 1, lines 19 to 23, leave out ("Provided that in Great Britain the term 'Creamery' if applied to Irish butter shall not by reason of the foregoing provision be taken to be a false trade description unless there is also applied to the butter a description stating or indicating that the butter was made or manufactured in Ireland").—(*Lord Plunket.*)

LORD ASHBY ST. LEDGERS: My Lords, this subject was fully discussed yesterday when the Committee stage of the Bill was taken, and I do not think it is necessary to repeat the arguments which were then stated. I must say I regret very much the action of the noble Lord in seeking to delete this proviso. The only desire we have in inserting it is to protect the British salesman who quite inadvertently sells as creamery butter Irish creamery butter not made in a registered creamery. I sincerely hope that language may be discovered later which will satisfy all parties. I do not propose to trouble your Lordships to divide upon this Amendment, but I must say that we reserve to ourselves the right to reinsert it in another place if, as perhaps may be the case, some compromise is not reached. My noble friend Lord Lucas is in his place, and I hope he will give your Lordships the benefit of the view entertained on this subject by the Board of Agriculture.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (LORD LUCAS): My Lords, this is an Irish Bill and one which does not affect our Department, except that we have in this particular case to safeguard as far as we can the interests of English traders who are concerned. I can assure the noble Lord opposite that we will do everything we possibly can to assist the interests he has at heart. We fully realise what admirable institutions these creameries are, and we wish that we could have had the same success in this country in starting co-operative creameries. We do not wish to do anything to injure Irish creameries, but at the same time the matter has to be looked at from the point of view of the English trader. With the best will in the world towards Irish creameries it is a little difficult to give them a monopoly in the word "creamery." Ireland is by no means the only place which has creameries. We have creameries here; and a great deal of creamery butter comes into this country from abroad. Unless the trader can be perfectly certain of the country of origin, which is not always easy, it would be impossible for him, if this Amendment is agreed to, to call butter "creamery butter" at all; or, if he does, he runs the risk of its being discovered to have come from an Irish creamery and then he lays himself open to the penalties in the Bill. It is hard on the English trader that it should be necessary for him in all cases to trace the origin of the creamery butter he sells. Therefore, while we are prepared to go a good way to meet the objects of the promoters of this Bill, we think that what the noble Lord is asking for in his Amendment is pushing the thing a little too far. May I add this word of warning? As far as we know, the Bill is accepted by all parties in Ireland, but I do not think English traders have been consulted on the measure. It is difficult to prophesy, but there is a strong probability that if the noble Lord's Amendment is agreed to there will be mobilised against this Bill a very strong body of opinion on the part of the traders of this country which would seriously endanger the prospects of the Bill passing into law.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: When this matter was discussed last night we were left under the impression that the further consideration of it was to be

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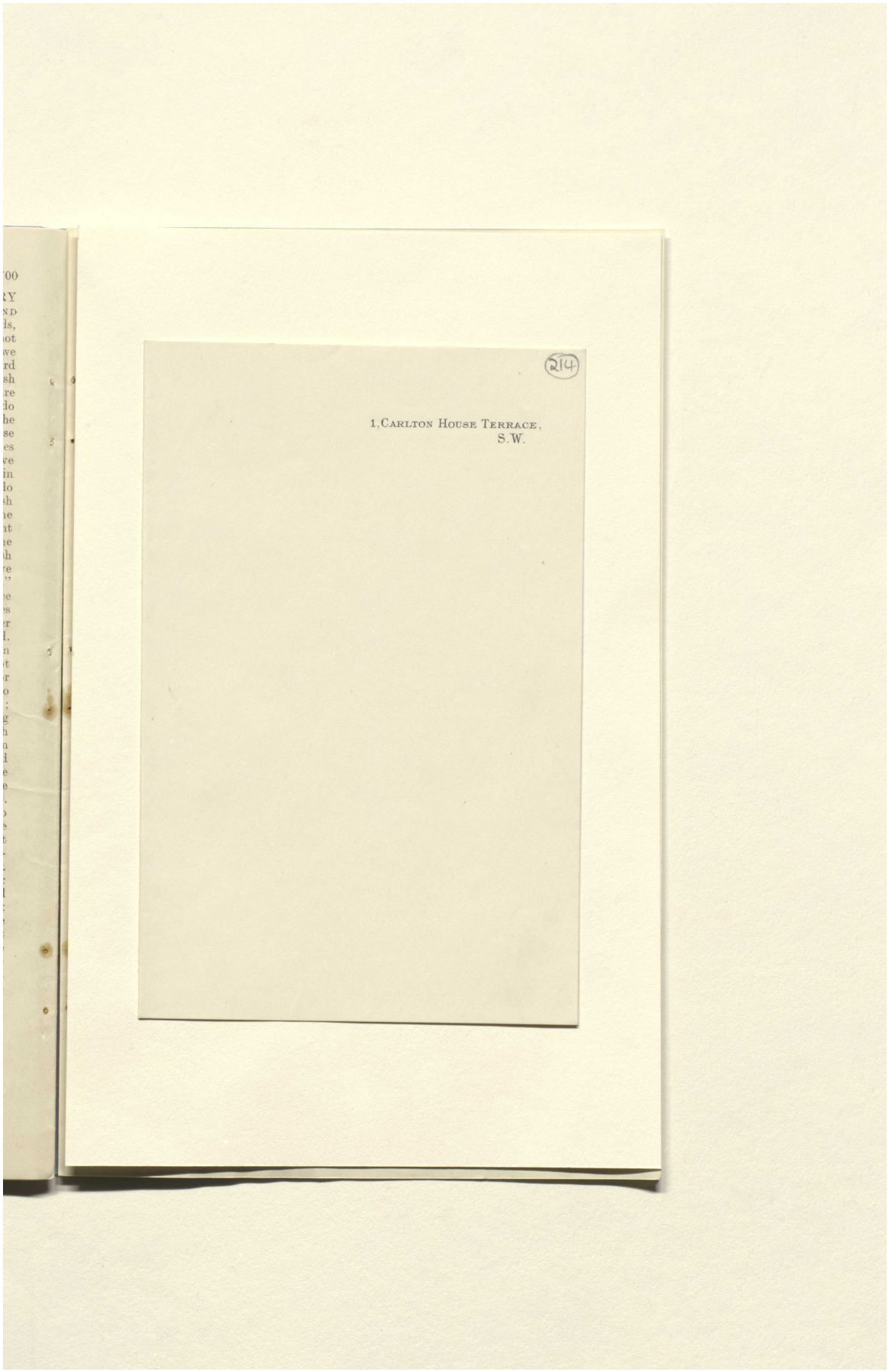

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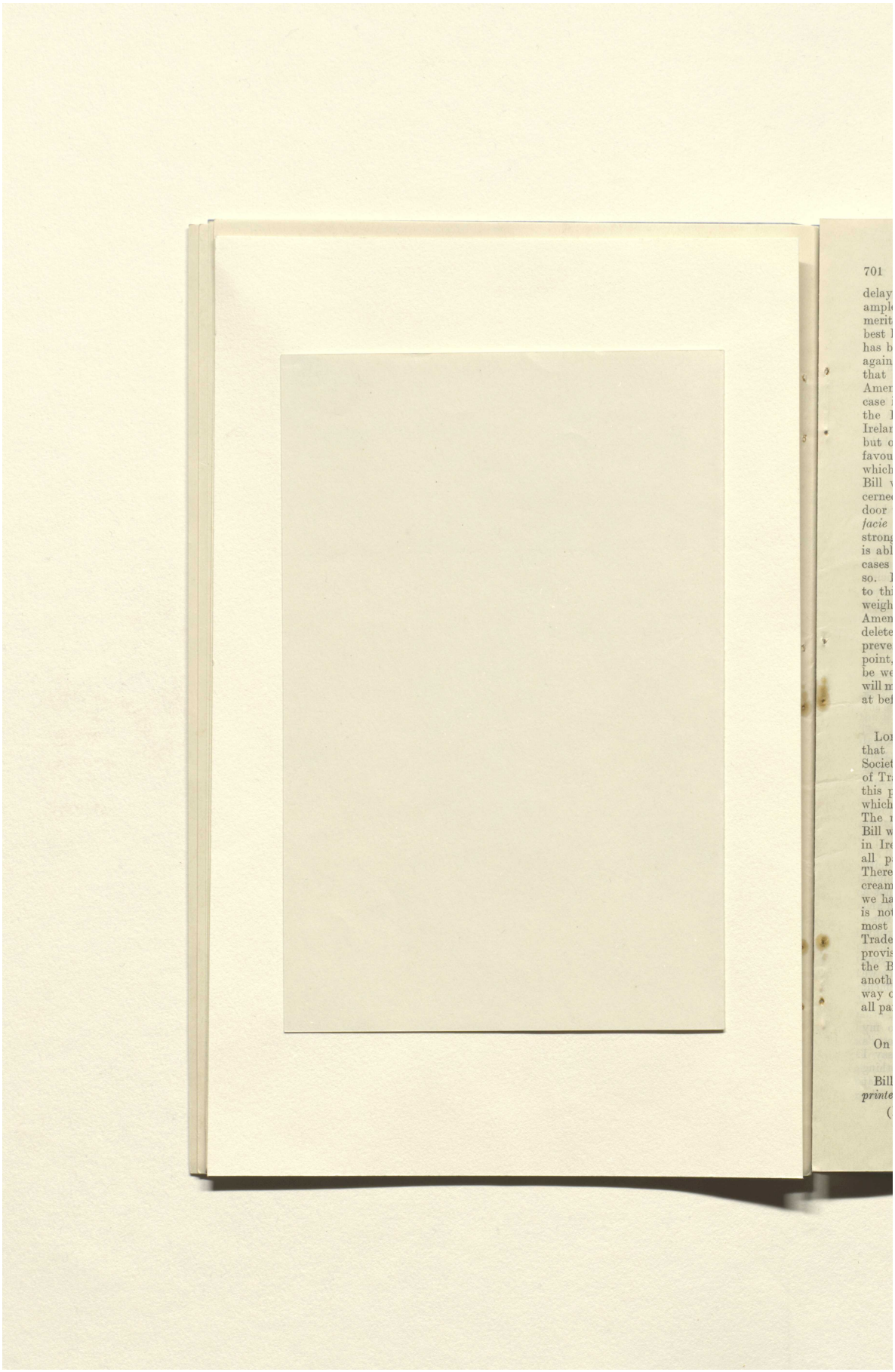

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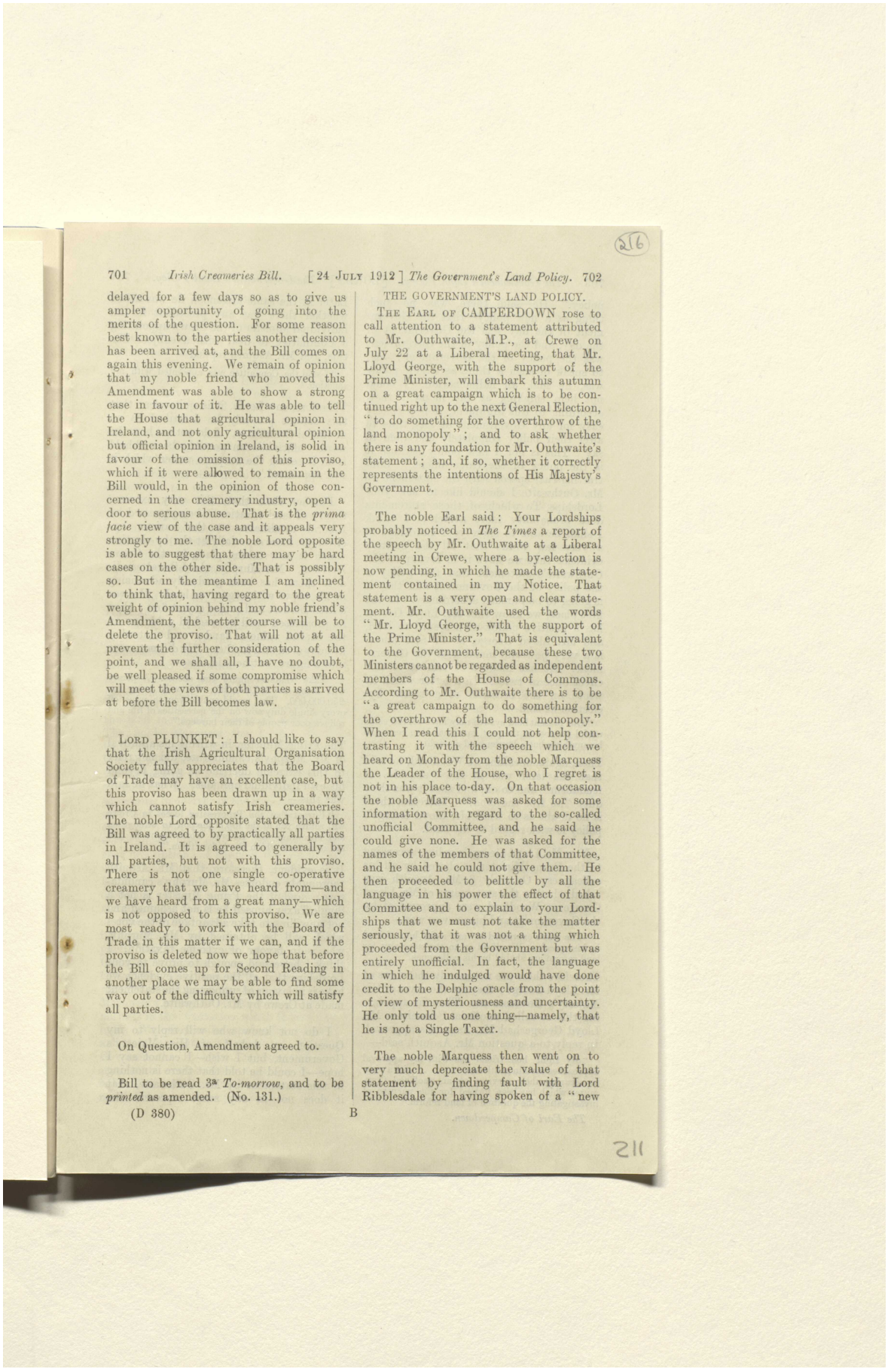

delayed for a few days so as to give us ampler opportunity of going into the merits of the question. For some reason best known to the parties another decision has been arrived at, and the Bill comes on again this evening. We remain of opinion that my noble friend who moved this Amendment was able to show a strong case in favour of it. He was able to tell the House that agricultural opinion in Ireland, and not only agricultural opinion but official opinion in Ireland, is solid in favour of the omission of this proviso, which if it were allowed to remain in the Bill would, in the opinion of those concerned in the creamery industry, open a door to serious abuse. That is the *prima facie* view of the case and it appeals very strongly to me. The noble Lord opposite is able to suggest that there may be hard cases on the other side. That is possibly so. But in the meantime I am inclined to think that, having regard to the great weight of opinion behind my noble friend's Amendment, the better course will be to delete the proviso. That will not at all prevent the further consideration of the point, and we shall all, I have no doubt, be well pleased if some compromise which will meet the views of both parties is arrived at before the Bill becomes law.

LORD PLUNKET: I should like to say that the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society fully appreciates that the Board of Trade may have an excellent case, but this proviso has been drawn up in a way which cannot satisfy Irish creameries. The noble Lord opposite stated that the Bill was agreed to by practically all parties in Ireland. It is agreed to generally by all parties, but not with this proviso. There is not one single co-operative creamery that we have heard from—and we have heard from a great many—which is not opposed to this proviso. We are most ready to work with the Board of Trade in this matter if we can, and if the proviso is deleted now we hope that before the Bill comes up for Second Reading in another place we may be able to find some way out of the difficulty which will satisfy all parties.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª *To-morrow*, and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 131.)

THE GOVERNMENT'S LAND POLICY.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN rose to call attention to a statement attributed to Mr. Outhwaite, M.P., at Crewe on July 22 at a Liberal meeting, that Mr. Lloyd George, with the support of the Prime Minister, will embark this autumn on a great campaign which is to be continued right up to the next General Election, "to do something for the overthrow of the land monopoly"; and to ask whether there is any foundation for Mr. Outhwaite's statement; and, if so, whether it correctly represents the intentions of His Majesty's Government.

The noble Earl said: Your Lordships probably noticed in *The Times* a report of the speech by Mr. Outhwaite at a Liberal meeting in Crewe, where a by-election is now pending, in which he made the statement contained in my Notice. That statement is a very open and clear statement. Mr. Outhwaite used the words "Mr. Lloyd George, with the support of the Prime Minister." That is equivalent to the Government, because these two Ministers cannot be regarded as independent members of the House of Commons. According to Mr. Outhwaite there is to be "a great campaign to do something for the overthrow of the land monopoly." When I read this I could not help contrasting it with the speech which we heard on Monday from the noble Marquess the Leader of the House, who I regret is not in his place to-day. On that occasion the noble Marquess was asked for some information with regard to the so-called unofficial Committee, and he said he could give none. He was asked for the names of the members of that Committee, and he said he could not give them. He then proceeded to belittle by all the language in his power the effect of that Committee and to explain to your Lordships that we must not take the matter seriously, that it was not a thing which proceeded from the Government but was entirely unofficial. In fact, the language in which he indulged would have done credit to the Delphic oracle from the point of view of mysteriousness and uncertainty. He only told us one thing—namely, that he is not a Single Taxer.

The noble Marquess then went on to very much depreciate the value of that statement by finding fault with Lord Ribblesdale for having spoken of a "new

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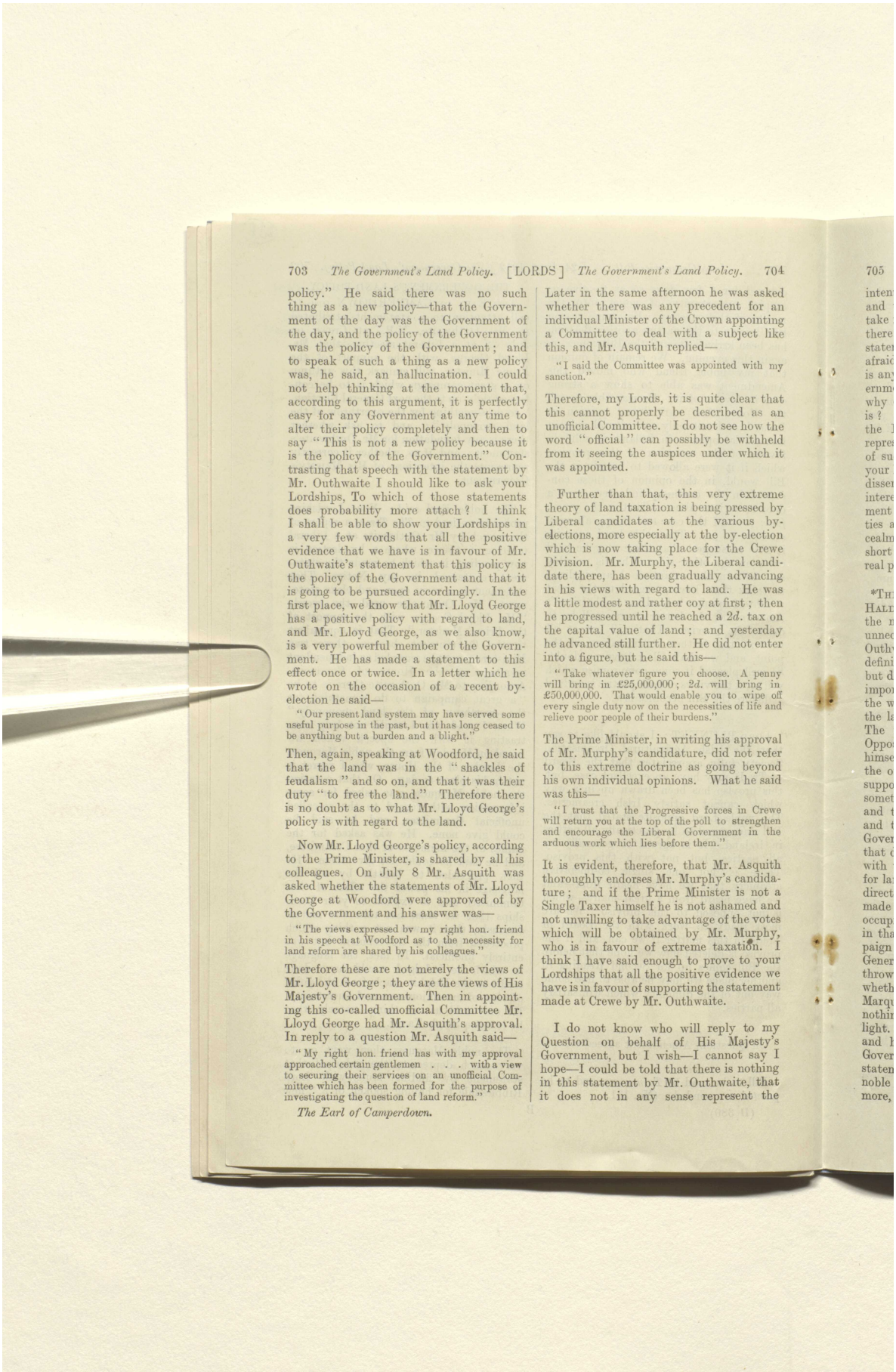

policy." He said there was no such thing as a new policy—that the Government of the day was the Government of the day, and the policy of the Government was the policy of the Government; and to speak of such a thing as a new policy was, he said, an hallucination. I could not help thinking at the moment that, according to this argument, it is perfectly easy for any Government at any time to alter their policy completely and then to say "This is not a new policy because it is the policy of the Government." Contrasting that speech with the statement by Mr. Outhwaite I should like to ask your Lordships, To which of those statements does probability more attach? I think I shall be able to show your Lordships in a very few words that all the positive evidence that we have is in favour of Mr. Outhwaite's statement that this policy is the policy of the Government and that it is going to be pursued accordingly. In the first place, we know that Mr. Lloyd George has a positive policy with regard to land, and Mr. Lloyd George, as we also know, is a very powerful member of the Government. He has made a statement to this effect once or twice. In a letter which he wrote on the occasion of a recent by-election he said—

"Our present land system may have served some useful purpose in the past, but it has long ceased to be anything but a burden and a blight."

Then, again, speaking at Woodford, he said that the land was in the "shackles of feudalism" and so on, and that it was their duty "to free the land." Therefore there is no doubt as to what Mr. Lloyd George's policy is with regard to the land.

Now Mr. Lloyd George's policy, according to the Prime Minister, is shared by all his colleagues. On July 8 Mr. Asquith was asked whether the statements of Mr. Lloyd George at Woodford were approved of by the Government and his answer was—

"The views expressed by my right hon. friend in his speech at Woodford as to the necessity for land reform are shared by his colleagues."

Therefore these are not merely the views of Mr. Lloyd George; they are the views of His Majesty's Government. Then in appointing this co-called unofficial Committee Mr. Lloyd George had Mr. Asquith's approval. In reply to a question Mr. Asquith said—

"My right hon. friend has with my approval approached certain gentlemen . . . with a view to securing their services on an unofficial Committee which has been formed for the purpose of investigating the question of land reform."

The Earl of Camperdown.

Later in the same afternoon he was asked whether there was any precedent for an individual Minister of the Crown appointing a Committee to deal with a subject like this, and Mr. Asquith replied—

"I said the Committee was appointed with my sanction."

Therefore, my Lords, it is quite clear that this cannot properly be described as an unofficial Committee. I do not see how the word "official" can possibly be withheld from it seeing the auspices under which it was appointed.

Further than that, this very extreme theory of land taxation is being pressed by Liberal candidates at the various by-elections, more especially at the by-election which is now taking place for the Crewe Division. Mr. Murphy, the Liberal candidate there, has been gradually advancing in his views with regard to land. He was a little modest and rather coy at first; then he progressed until he reached a 2*d.* tax on the capital value of land; and yesterday he advanced still further. He did not enter into a figure, but he said this—

"Take whatever figure you choose. A penny will bring in £25,000,000; 2*d.* will bring in £50,000,000. That would enable you to wipe off every single duty now on the necessities of life and relieve poor people of their burdens."

The Prime Minister, in writing his approval of Mr. Murphy's candidature, did not refer to this extreme doctrine as going beyond his own individual opinions. What he said was this—

"I trust that the Progressive forces in Crewe will return you at the top of the poll to strengthen and encourage the Liberal Government in the arduous work which lies before them."

It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Asquith thoroughly endorses Mr. Murphy's candidature; and if the Prime Minister is not a Single Taxer himself he is not ashamed and not unwilling to take advantage of the votes which will be obtained by Mr. Murphy, who is in favour of extreme taxation. I think I have said enough to prove to your Lordships that all the positive evidence we have is in favour of supporting the statement made at Crewe by Mr. Outhwaite.

I do not know who will reply to my Question on behalf of His Majesty's Government, but I wish—I cannot say I hope—I could be told that there is nothing in this statement by Mr. Outhwaite, that it does not in any sense represent the

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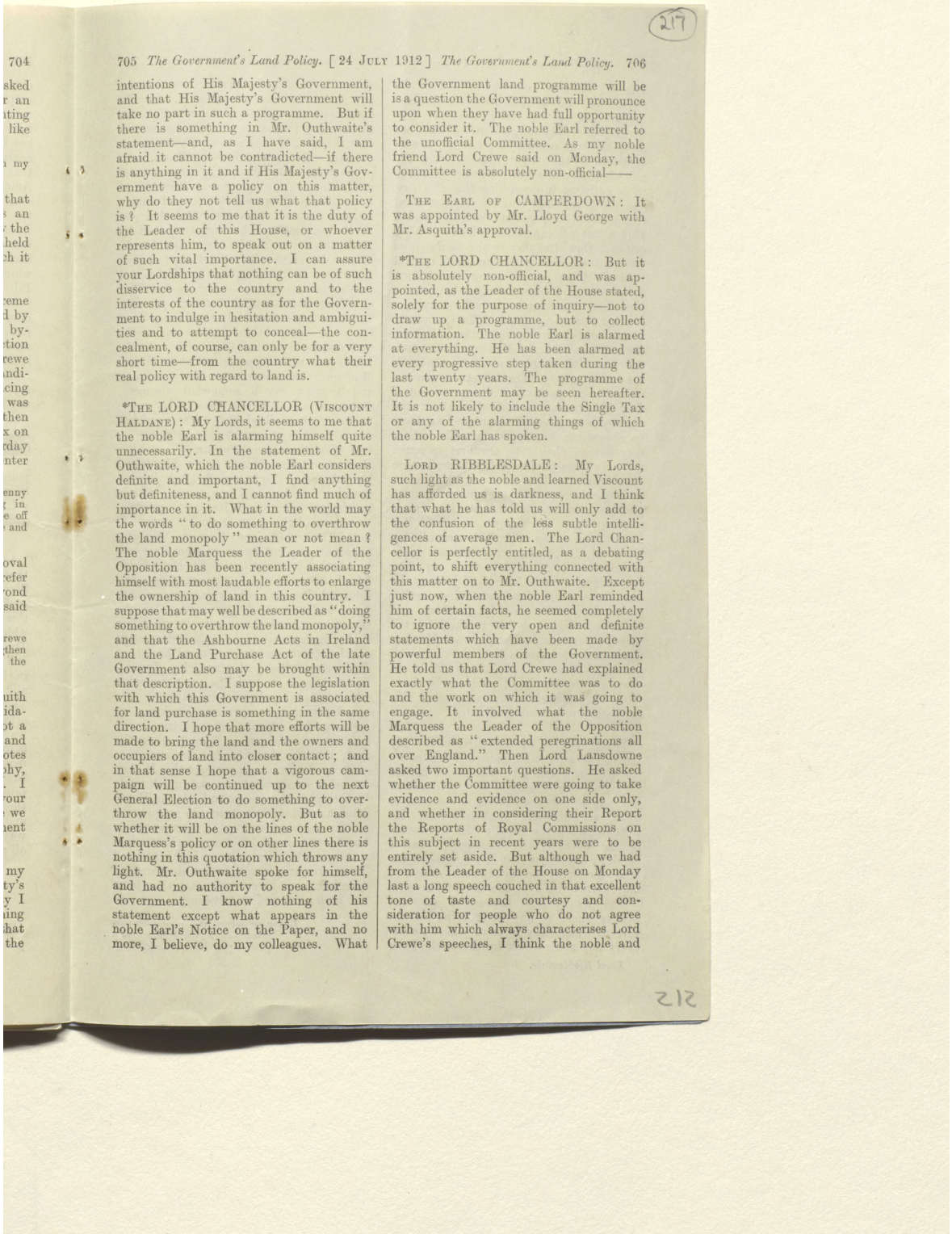

intentions of His Majesty's Government, and that His Majesty's Government will take no part in such a programme. But if there is something in Mr. Outhwaite's statement—and, as I have said, I am afraid it cannot be contradicted—if there is anything in it and if His Majesty's Government have a policy on this matter, why do they not tell us what that policy is? It seems to me that it is the duty of the Leader of this House, or whoever represents him, to speak out on a matter of such vital importance. I can assure your Lordships that nothing can be of such disservice to the country and to the interests of the country as for the Government to indulge in hesitation and ambiguities and to attempt to conceal—the concealment, of course, can only be for a very short time—from the country what their real policy with regard to land is.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR (VISCOUNT HALDANE): My Lords, it seems to me that the noble Earl is alarming himself quite unnecessarily. In the statement of Mr. Outhwaite, which the noble Earl considers definite and important, I find anything but definiteness, and I cannot find much of importance in it. What in the world may the words "to do something to overthrow the land monopoly" mean or not mean? The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition has been recently associating himself with most laudable efforts to enlarge the ownership of land in this country. I suppose that may well be described as "doing something to overthrow the land monopoly," and that the Ashbourne Acts in Ireland and the Land Purchase Act of the late Government also may be brought within that description. I suppose the legislation with which this Government is associated for land purchase is something in the same direction. I hope that more efforts will be made to bring the land and the owners and occupiers of land into closer contact; and in that sense I hope that a vigorous campaign will be continued up to the next General Election to do something to overthrow the land monopoly. But as to whether it will be on the lines of the noble Marquess's policy or on other lines there is nothing in this quotation which throws any light. Mr. Outhwaite spoke for himself, and had no authority to speak for the Government. I know nothing of his statement except what appears in the noble Earl's Notice on the Paper, and no more, I believe, do my colleagues. What the Government land programme will be is a question the Government will pronounce upon when they have had full opportunity to consider it. The noble Earl referred to the unofficial Committee. As my noble friend Lord Crewe said on Monday, the Committee is absolutely non-official——

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: It was appointed by Mr. Lloyd George with Mr. Asquith's approval.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR: But it is absolutely non-official, and was appointed, as the Leader of the House stated, solely for the purpose of inquiry—not to draw up a programme, but to collect information. The noble Earl is alarmed at everything. He has been alarmed at every progressive step taken during the last twenty years. The programme of the Government may be seen hereafter. It is not likely to include the Single Tax or any of the alarming things of which the noble Earl has spoken.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: My Lords, such light as the noble and learned Viscount has afforded us is darkness, and I think that what he has told us will only add to the confusion of the less subtle intelligences of average men. The Lord Chancellor is perfectly entitled, as a debating point, to shift everything connected with this matter on to Mr. Outhwaite. Except just now, when the noble Earl reminded him of certain facts, he seemed completely to ignore the very open and definite statements which have been made by powerful members of the Government. He told us that Lord Crewe had explained exactly what the Committee was to do and the work on which it was going to engage. It involved what the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition described as "extended peregrinations all over England." Then Lord Lansdowne asked two important questions. He asked whether the Committee were going to take evidence and evidence on one side only, and whether in considering their Report the Reports of Royal Commissions on this subject in recent years were to be entirely set aside. But although we had from the Leader of the House on Monday last a long speech couched in that excellent tone of taste and courtesy and consideration for people who do not agree with him which always characterises Lord Crewe's speeches, I think the noble and

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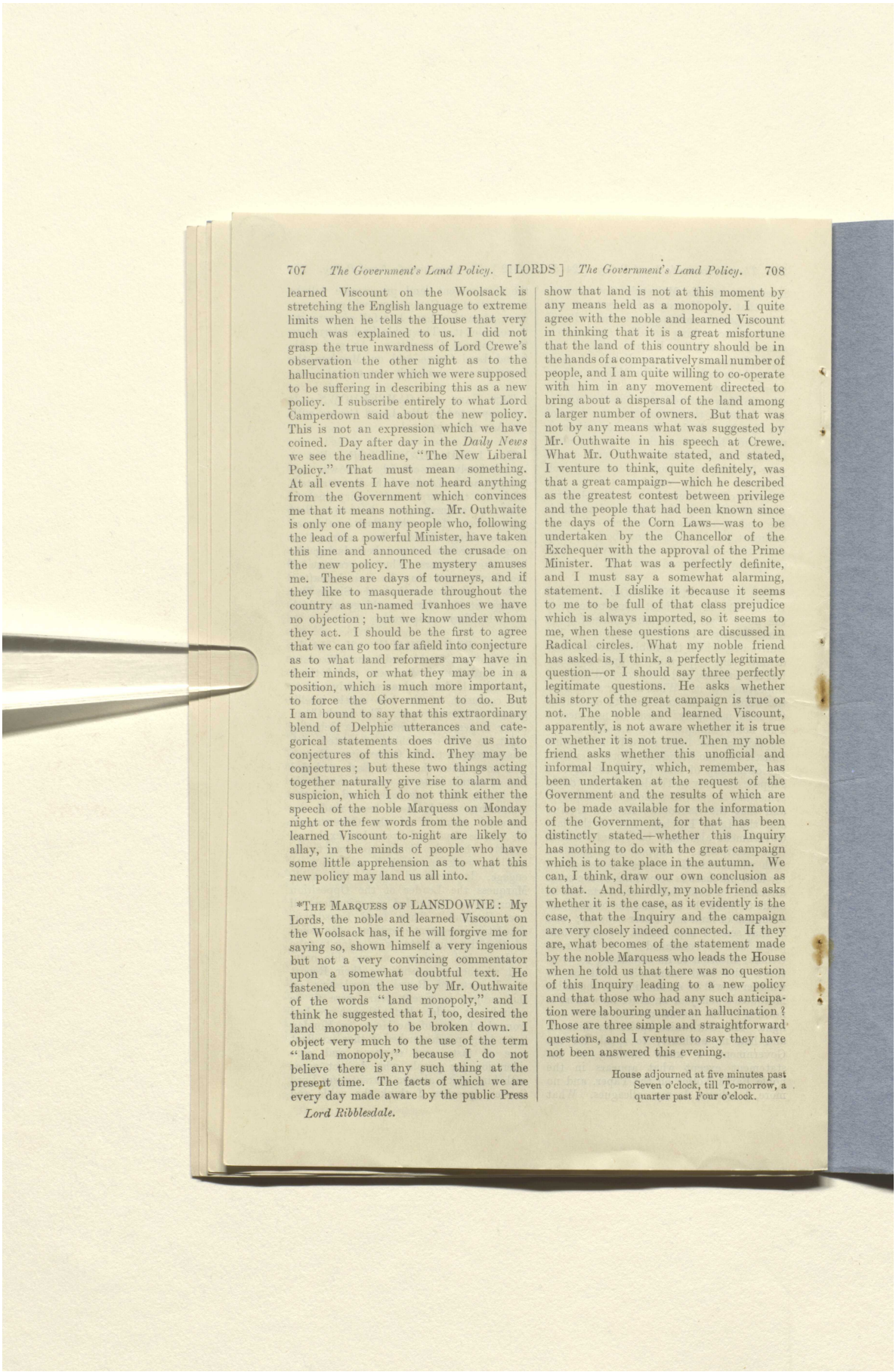

learned Viscount on the Woolsack is stretching the English language to extreme limits when he tells the House that very much was explained to us. I did not grasp the true inwardness of Lord Crewe's observation the other night as to the hallucination under which we were supposed to be suffering in describing this as a new policy. I subscribe entirely to what Lord Camperdown said about the new policy. This is not an expression which we have coined. Day after day in the *Daily News* we see the headline, "The New Liberal Policy." That must mean something. At all events I have not heard anything from the Government which convinces me that it means nothing. Mr. Outhwaite is only one of many people who, following the lead of a powerful Minister, have taken this line and announced the crusade on the new policy. The mystery amuses me. These are days of tourneys, and if they like to masquerade throughout the country as un-named Ivanhoes we have no objection; but we know under whom they act. I should be the first to agree that we can go too far afield into conjecture as to what land reformers may have in their minds, or what they may be in a position, which is much more important, to force the Government to do. But I am bound to say that this extraordinary blend of Delphic utterances and categorical statements does drive us into conjectures of this kind. They may be conjectures; but these two things acting together naturally give rise to alarm and suspicion, which I do not think either the speech of the noble Marquess on Monday night or the few words from the noble and learned Viscount to-night are likely to allay, in the minds of people who have some little apprehension as to what this new policy may land us all into.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble and learned Viscount on the Woolsack has, if he will forgive me for saying so, shown himself a very ingenious but not a very convincing commentator upon a somewhat doubtful text. He fastened upon the use by Mr. Outhwaite of the words "land monopoly," and I think he suggested that I, too, desired the land monopoly to be broken down. I object very much to the use of the term "land monopoly," because I do not believe there is any such thing at the present time. The facts of which we are every day made aware by the public Press show that land is not at this moment by any means held as a monopoly. I quite agree with the noble and learned Viscount in thinking that it is a great misfortune that the land of this country should be in the hands of a comparatively small number of people, and I am quite willing to co-operate with him in any movement directed to bring about a dispersal of the land among a larger number of owners. But that was not by any means what was suggested by Mr. Outhwaite in his speech at Crewe. What Mr. Outhwaite stated, and stated, I venture to think, quite definitely, was that a great campaign—which he described as the greatest contest between privilege and the people that had been known since the days of the Corn Laws—was to be undertaken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the approval of the Prime Minister. That was a perfectly definite, and I must say a somewhat alarming, statement. I dislike it because it seems to me to be full of that class prejudice which is always imported, so it seems to me, when these questions are discussed in Radical circles. What my noble friend has asked is, I think, a perfectly legitimate question—or I should say three perfectly legitimate questions. He asks whether this story of the great campaign is true or not. The noble and learned Viscount, apparently, is not aware whether it is true or whether it is not true. Then my noble friend asks whether this unofficial and informal Inquiry, which, remember, has been undertaken at the request of the Government and the results of which are to be made available for the information of the Government, for that has been distinctly stated—whether this Inquiry has nothing to do with the great campaign which is to take place in the autumn. We can, I think, draw our own conclusion as to that. And, thirdly, my noble friend asks whether it is the case, as it evidently is the case, that the Inquiry and the campaign are very closely indeed connected. If they are, what becomes of the statement made by the noble Marquess who leads the House when he told us that there was no question of this Inquiry leading to a new policy and that those who had any such anticipation were labouring under an hallucination? Those are three simple and straightforward questions, and I venture to say they have not been answered this evening.

House adjourned at five minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

Lord Ribblesdale.

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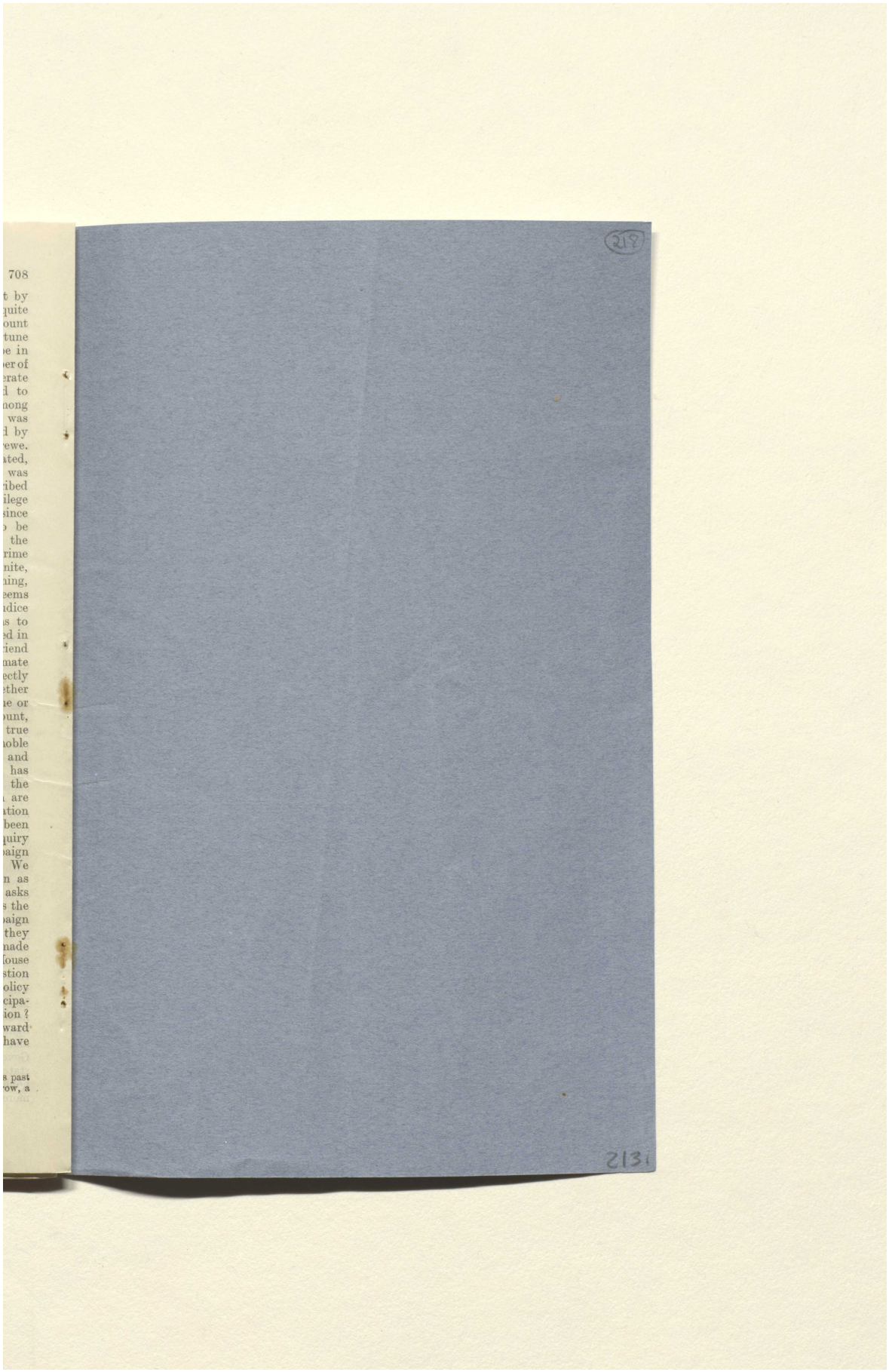

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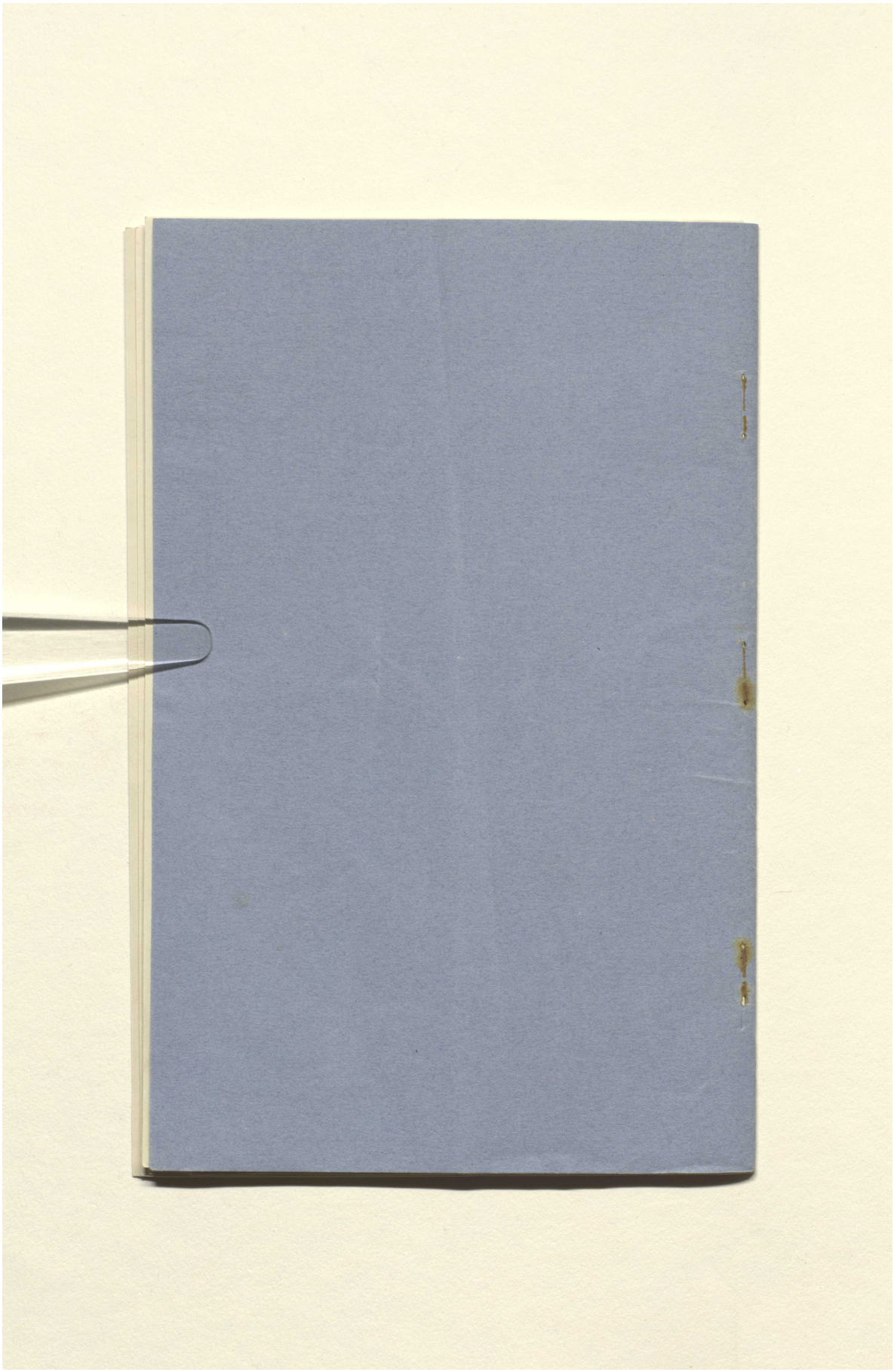

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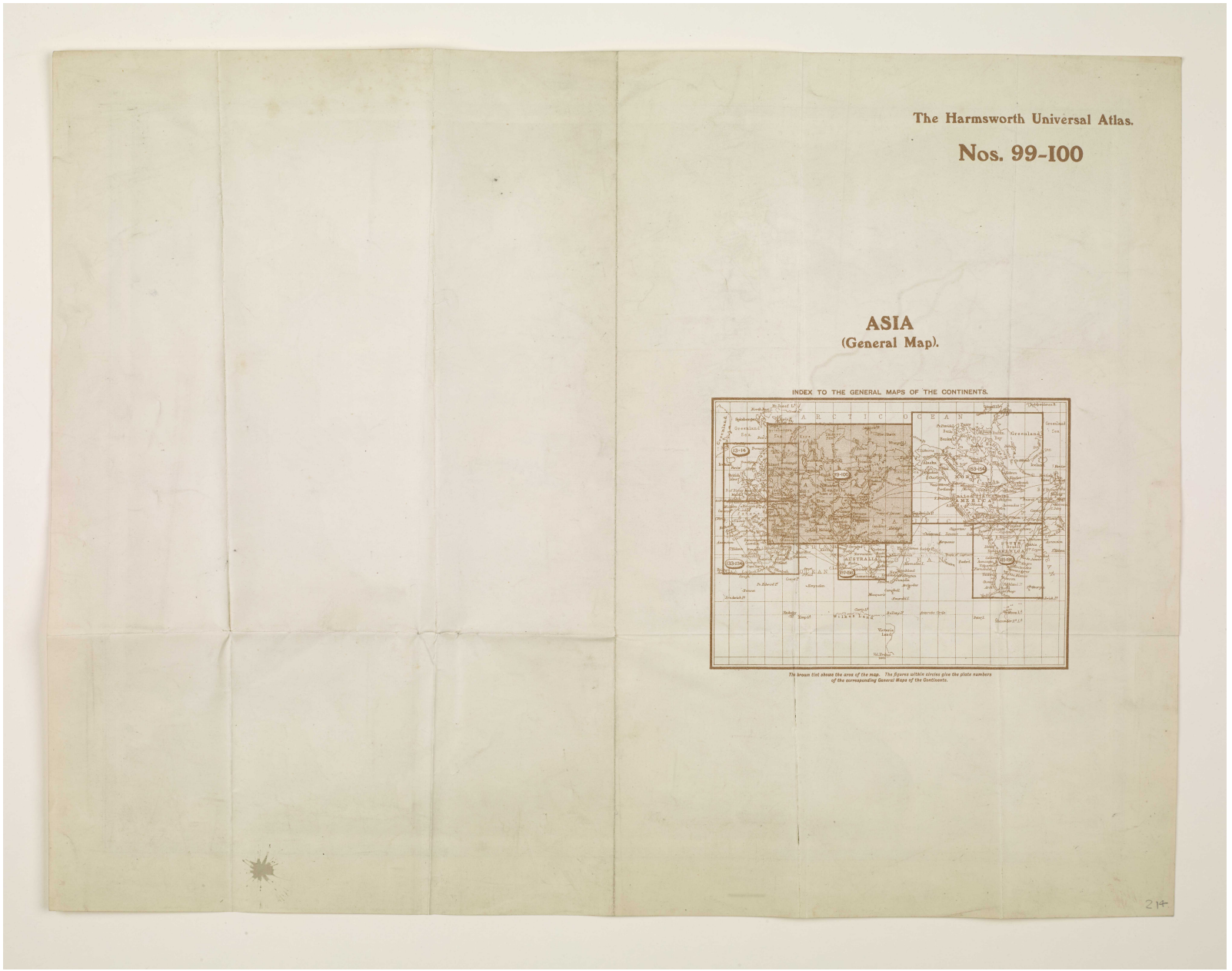

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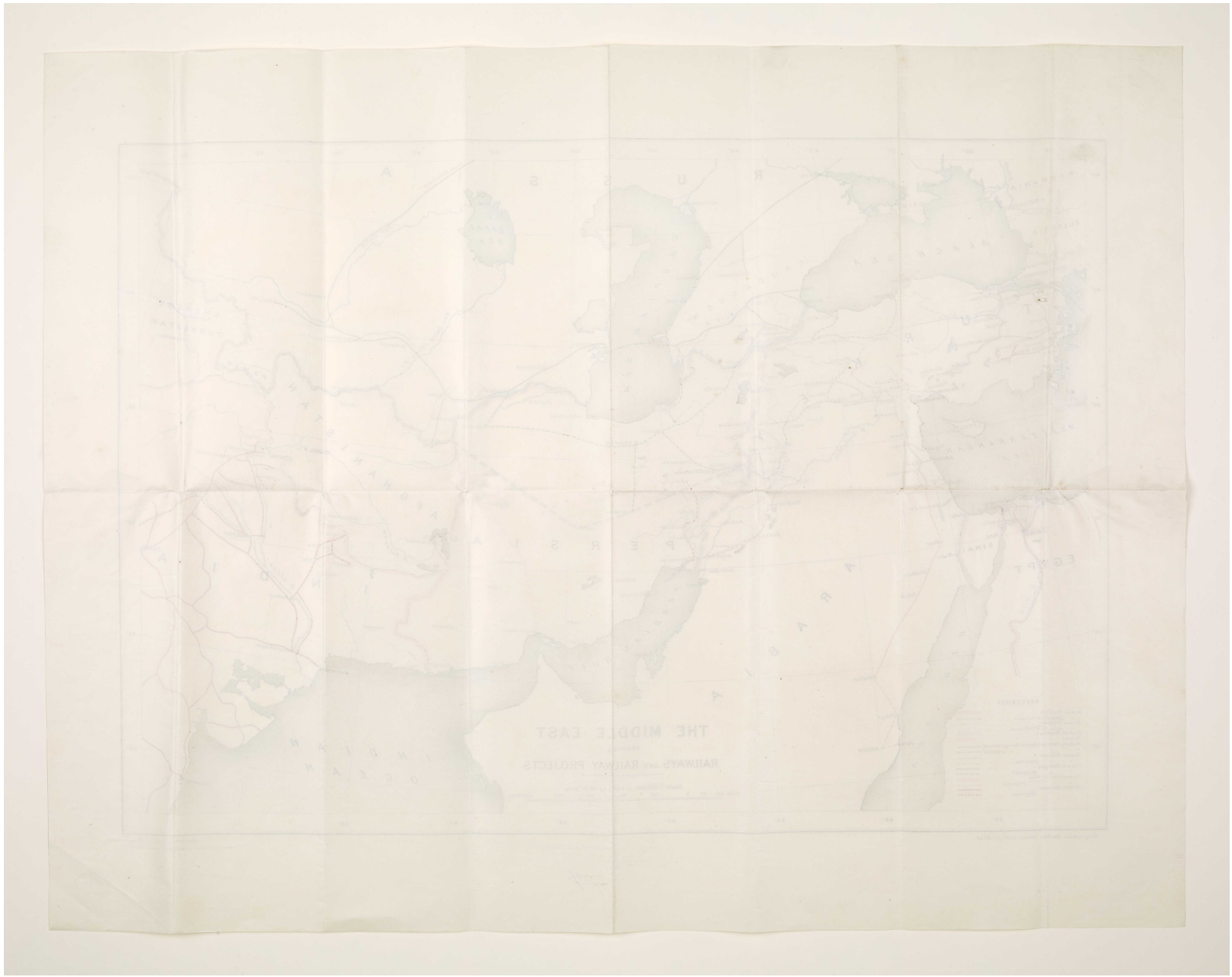

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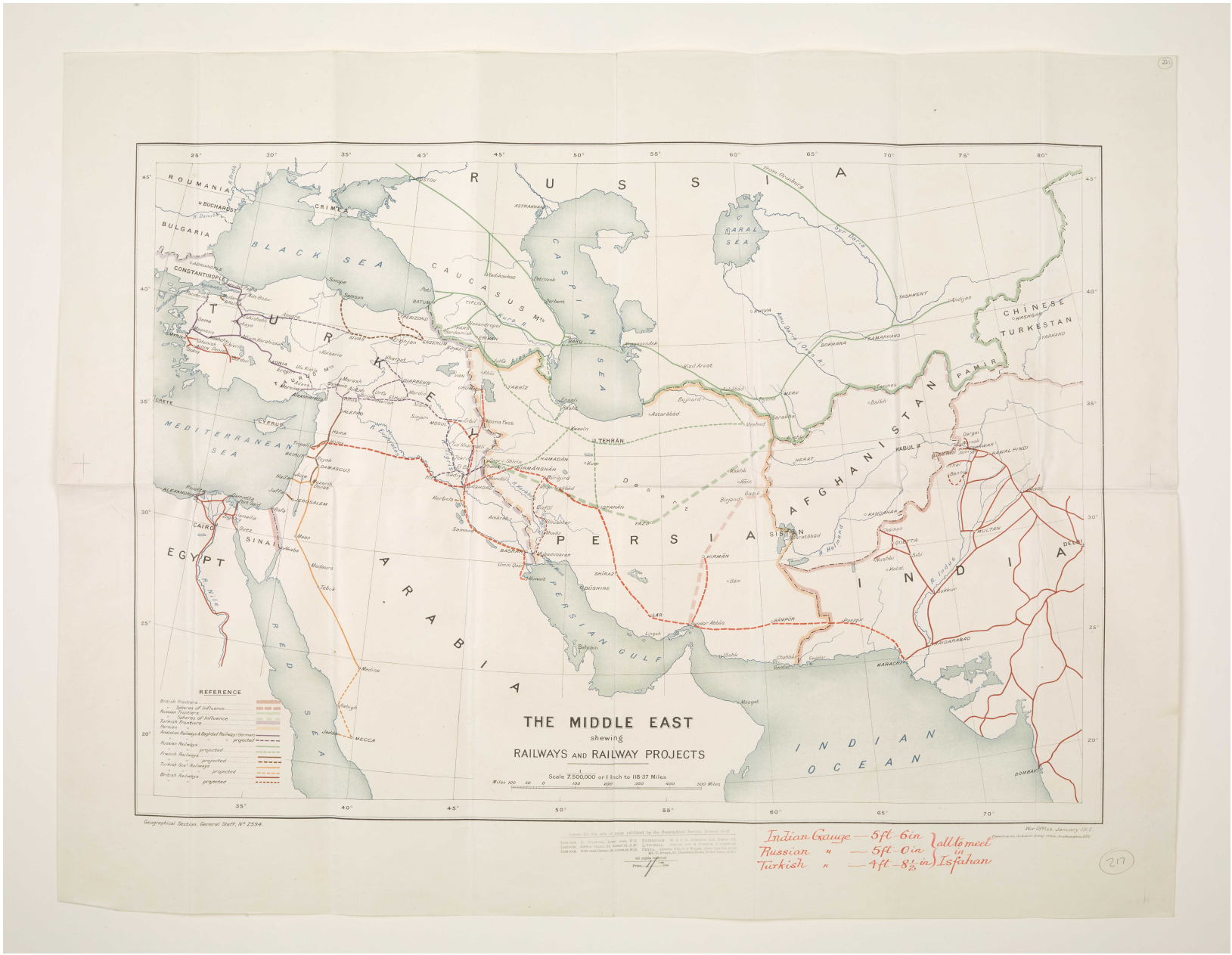

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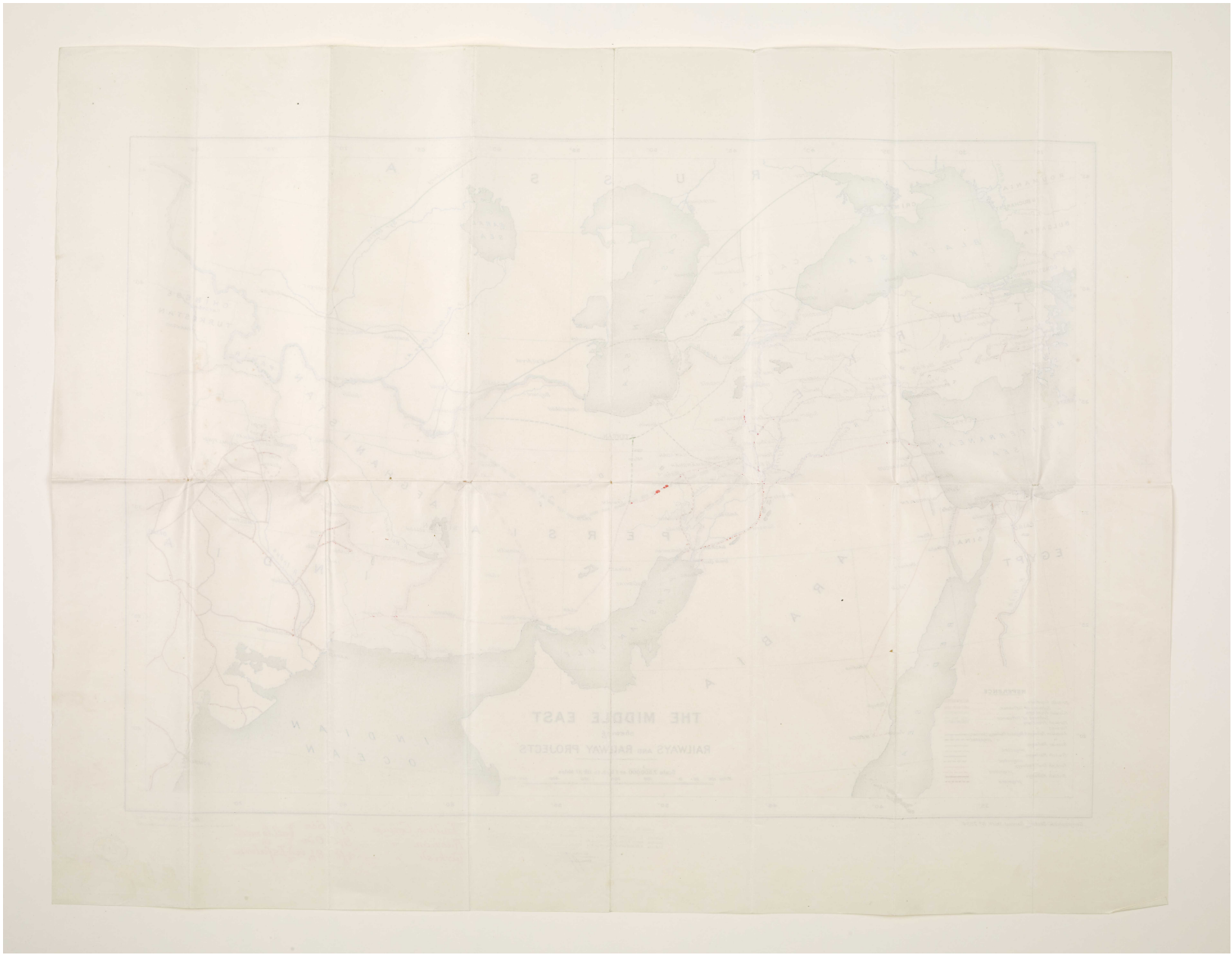

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