

T SHEPSTONE AND CETCHWAYO, 1873 - 1879.

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1873-74
PREFACE.

This thesis deals with the relations between Zululand, Natal and the Transvaal in the period between the accession of Cetshwayo in 1873 and the outbreak of the Zulu War in 1879. Up to 1876 Theophilus Shepstone was Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal. From 1877 he was Administrator of the Transvaal, having annexed it to the British Crown in April of that year. The new position from which he viewed Zululand produced a great change in his attitude towards the Zulus. The hostile attitude that Shepstone adopted towards the Zulu King is an important element in the events that led to the Zulu War of 1879.

This account of Zululand and its white neighbours in the period 1873 - 1879 is thus to a great extent an account of the relations between Cetshwayo, the ruler of Zululand, and Shepstone, the ruler of the Transvaal from 1877, and, as far as the Zulus were concerned, the ruler of Natal until 1876.

☆ The border dispute between Zululand and the Transvaal, around which so much of the subject of this thesis revolves, has its origin in certain events of the 1850s and 1860s. I have therefore been obliged to write in some detail on events well outside the period 1873-9. My excuse for this is that the events of 1873-9 are not fully explicable unless these earlier events are first explained.

The motives and policies of the Imperial Government are not the subject of this thesis. There has been a tendency in the past to see the history of Africa and Asia as of significance only in its repercussions on the diplomatic history of Europe. This Europe-centred view of history is in my view becoming increasingly inappropriate to the modern age; I have therefore treated the policies of the Imperial Government only as the datum or backdrop against which the events of these years in this corner of Africa were played out. In particular, I have attempted to elucidate the views and motives of the Zulus, as of importance and interest in themselves.

I have used the following abbreviations in the footnotes:

S.N.A. - Secretary for Native Affairs.
A.S.N.A. - Acting Secretary for Native Affairs.
R.M. - Resident Magistrate.
A.R.M. - Acting Resident Magistrate.
B.A. - Border Agent.
A.B.A. - Administrator and Border Agent.
S.A.R. - South African Republic.
n.d. - no date.
n. - footnote.

Abbreviations within brackets in the footnotes, which refer to the various categories of material, are explained in the Bibliography. Books are referred to by the names of their authors. Where it is necessary to distinguish between two books by the same author (or by different authors with the same name), an abbreviated form of the title of the book in question is also given.

I wish to thank Dr. E.H. Brookes for his encouragement and assistance; and the staffs of the Transvaal Archives in Pretoria, the Public Record Office in London, the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg, the Natal University Library in Pietermaritzburg, and in particular, the Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg, for the trouble they took on my behalf. Like most researchers on Natal and Zululand history I owe a debt of gratitude to the late Dr. Killie Campbell for her hospitality and kindness in permitting and assisting me to make use of her magnificent collection of Africana.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Zulus and the Trekkers - establishment of the Colony of Natal - Shepstone, his early career and work in Natal - Cetshwayo disputes the succession with Mbuyazi - battle of 'Ndondakusuka, 1856 - Shepstone's comments - Cetshwayo becomes effective ruler of Zululand - his relations with Natal influenced by presence in it of a possible rival - flight of Mthonga, and the origin of the Transvaal-Zulu border dispute - Zulu requests for Natal's intervention in the succession dispute - nomination of Cetshwayo as heir, 1861 - Zulu invasion scare of 1861 - long-term effects of Cetshwayo's nomination - Mthonga's later adventures - Natal-Zulu relations - belief in eventual British rule of Zululand - Shepstone's wish for a 'safety-valve' - Zulus' statements encourage British belief in Zulu acquiescence in eventual British rule - friendly relations between Natal and Zululand.

The influence of the military state founded by Dingiswayo and Shaka extended all over South-East Africa, but the kingdom itself may be said to have been bounded by the Drakensberg in the west, the Amaswazi and Amatonga in the north (although these people were vassals of the Zulu monarchy), the Indian ocean in the east and the Tongaat river in the south.

In 1837 the trekkers entered Natal. They found it almost empty of inhabitants, for Shaka had required those whose lives he had spared to move to Zululand proper. The Boer leader, Piet Retief, succeeded in negotiating a cession of the land south of the Tugela from Shaka's successor, Dingane. This was followed by Dingane's massacre of Retief and his followers, and the attack on the Boer encampment at Weenen. After the Boers had defeated the Zulus at Blood river (1838), a peace was patched up whereby the Tugela remained the boundary between Zululand and the Republic of Natalia. 1959

In 1839, Dingane's brother, Mpande, with thousands of his followers, defected to the Boers. He succeeded in winning their confidence and support, and a concerted invasion of Zululand resulted in the defeat and death of Dingane. Mpande was made King of the Zulus, under trekker suzerainty. The Boers, who had taken no part in the actual fighting, collected 30,000 cattle, and claimed, in addition, that Mpande owed them £1,725 "war expenses". In lieu of this sum, the land between the Black Mfolozi and the Tugela was added to the Republic of Natalia.

By British in 1838
Dingane
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1839 - 43

The Republic was short-lived, however. After much vacillation, Britain eventually decided to annex Natal, and in August, 1843, the Trekker Volksraad tendered its submission to Commissioner Henry Cloete.

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A treaty concluded in October 1843 between Cloete and Mpande fixed the Mogela and Bēffalo rivers as the boundary between Natal and Zululand, and this is where the boundary remained until 1897, when the countries were united.¹

Most of the Boers left after the British annexation. On the other hand, large numbers of Zulus crossed in Natal. They were described as 'refugees', but in fact most of them were returning to their ancestral lands, from which they had been forcibly removed by Shaka.

To deal with the administrative problem presented by this influx, Theophilus Shepstone was appointed Diplomatic Agent in 1845. Shepstone was born in Westbury, Wiltshire, on January 8th, 1817. When he was three years old, the family emigrated to the eastern district of the Cape Colony, where his father, the Rev. William Shepstone, established a mission station. It was at his father's station that Theophilus Shepstone received most of his education. He learned to speak the Xhosa language fluently, and during the Kafir War of 1835 was appointed the headquarters interpreter on the staff of the Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban. After occupying various positions, he was, in 1839, appointed British Resident among the Fingo and other tribes in Kaffraria.²

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In Natal, as Diplomatic Agent, and after 1856, as Secretary for Native Affairs, he succeeded in bringing order out of confusion. His knowledge of the Xhosa language enabled him very quickly to learn to speak Zulu (which is very similar to Xhosa) although it is

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1. For this brief account of early Natal and Zululand history, I have used as my principal source, G. Mackeurtan: The Cradle Days of Natal (London, 1930).
2. Dictionary of National Biography.

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said that he always spoke it with a Xhosa accent. Lack of funds prevented the putting into practice of his original plan for the administration of the Africans. He was obliged to make use of their own tribal organisation in order to rule them. Where the tribal system had broken down in the turmoil of the preceding years, it was artificially reconstructed. This policy did little to advance the Africans economically, socially or politically, but it achieved the not inconsiderable feat of preserving order. It is partly due to the diplomacy, intelligence and patience of Shepstone that Natal, which might easily have been a scene of unending racial strife, had a relatively peaceful history; he must also be given much of the credit for the peaceful and even friendly relations which were maintained with the Zulu kingdom.

Neither Shaka nor Dingane left any descendants, but Mpande had many wives and many children. Cetshwayo was the son of Ngqumbazi, who lived on the south bank of the Umhlatuzi river. About eighty miles away, on the south bank of the Black Mfolozi, lived another wife, Monase, and her son Mbuyazi. Mpande's chief residence was between them, at the White Mfolozi. Both Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi were ambitious to succeed their father as king, and both acquired followings in their respective parts of the country. Cetshwayo's party was known as the Usutu, and Mbuyazi's as the Izigqoza.³

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Mpande would not name an heir. A weak and ineffectual ruler, he was unable to control the two parties into which the nation divided. Matters came to a head in 1856, at the battle of 'Ndon-dakusuka, on the lower Tugela. Mbuyazi attempted to solicit the aid of the Natal Government through the Border Agent at the lower Tugela, in much the same way as Mpande had secured the aid of the Republic of Natalia. Indeed, it was said that Mbuyazi was acting

3. Gibson; pp.102-3.

on Mpande's orders.⁴ No official aid was received, but John Dunn, the trader, hunter and adventurer, who was at this time a clerk in the Border Agent's office, crossed the Tugela with 250 men, 50 armed with guns, ostensibly to negotiate between the two factions. In the event, however, he ended up fighting on Mbuyazi's side in the battle which ensued. Despite his help, Mbuyazi's outnumbered forces soon broke and fled, to be slaughtered in thousands by the pursuing Usutu. Thousands more, who tried to reach the sanctuary of Natal, were drowned in the swollen waters of the Tugela. Bodies were found littering the sea-shore as far south as Durban. Six of Mpande's sons lost their lives, including Mbuyazi himself. His body, however, was never found, and it was widely, though erroneously, believed in Zululand that he had succeeded in escaping to Natal and securing the protection and patronage of the Natal Government⁵.

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The Governor of Natal had received prior warning of the impending conflict⁶, and sent Shepstone to the border to offer the mediation of the Natal Government⁷. He found on his arrival that the battle had already taken place.

"The effect of today's proceedings", he reported, "is to establish Cetywayo as King of the Zulus. He will either pension his father or kill him, and that immediately." "I fear Cetywayo's success will make him a troublesome neighbour..... Panda acquired his power in consequence and by the assistance of the white man, Cetywayo in spite of him; these opposite considerations will create corresponding sentiments."⁸

Shepstone's expectations did not prove to be entirely correct. For the remainder of Mpande's reign Cetshwayo was the effective ruler of the country, but this is to be attributed as much to Mpande's weakness, age and immobility as to Cetshwayo's ambition; for the 'nobles' of the kingdom also attained a greater independence of action, and there seems to have been in this period a general decline

4. Shepstone to Scott, 4 December, 1856 ("Cetshwayo and Zululand Affairs", K.C.).
5. Information on the battle of 'Ndongakusuka from Gibson. pp.103-5; Binn pp. 36-8; Nourse, p.8; "Cetshwayo and Zululand Affairs", K.C.
6. V.C. Schreuder to J. Walmsley, 21 November, 1856 ("Cetshwayo and Zululand Affairs", K.C.).
7. Memorandum by Scott, 29 November, 1856 (ibid.).
8. Shepstone to Scott, 2 December, 1856 (ibid.).
9. Shepstone to Scott, 4 December, 1856 (ibid.).

in the central, royal authority¹⁰.

Nevertheless, Cetshwayo was restrained, by filial piety or political prudence, from formally supplanting his father, as Shepstone predicted he would do. His aim seems to have been, not immediate possession of the throne, but the certainty of eventually succeeding to it.

Shepstone's fears of Cetshwayo's possible hostility to Natal also proved unfounded. Cetshwayo knew better than to incur the enmity of Natal, for his succession was still far from certain, and the Natal Government had in its possession a high card it could play against Cetshwayo, if it chose to do so. This was another son of the old king, Mkhungo, who with his mother Monase, and half-brother Sikoto, had fled into Natal in 1856, the year of the battle of 'Ndondakusuka, in which his full brother Mbuyazi had been defeated¹¹. Mkhungo was placed, by the Natal Government, in the care of Bishop Colenso¹². It was widely supposed, both in Natal¹³ and Zululand¹⁴, that he was being prepared to succeed to the Zulu throne. Mpande was known to oppose Cetshwayo's succession, and was believed to favour Mkhungo, but he refused to nominate an heir. As long as Mkhungo remained in Natal, and Cetshwayo was not formally recognized as heir, the latter distrusted the intentions of the Natal Government, but dared do nothing to offend it.

In 1861, however the rumour spread in Zululand that Mpande intended nominating Mthonga, the son of another wife, Nomantshali. Cetshwayo prepared himself for the possibility that he might eventually have to flee into Natal¹⁵. But, in the event, he took sterner action. Nomantshali, who was ambitious that her son should succeed, was summarily put to death. Mthonga, with another brother and two indunas, succeeded in escaping to the Boers of Utrecht¹⁶. Cetshwayo

10. Report of the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C.1137, p.19).

11. Gibson, p.105.

12. Letter from Bishop Colenso, dated 25 July, 1873, The Natal Witness, 29 July, 1873.

13. Nourse, pp.35-6.

14. Shepstone to Scott, 22 June, 1861 (G.H. 338).

15. Message from Cetshwayo, 11 March, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.129).

16. Memorandum by Shepstone, 30 March, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

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moved after them with an armed force, but did not cross into the Utrecht district. Negotiations led to the Boers' returning Mthonga and his followers, on condition that they were not harmed. This condition was honoured. The Boers also claimed that Cetshwayo had ceded a strip of territory in return for his brothers. This Cetshwayo denied. This was the origin of the border dispute which festered for eighteen years before erupting in the Zulu War¹⁷.

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All this time the country was in a most disturbed and unsettled state. Mpande sent numerous messages to the Natal Government begging it to send Somtseu (Theophilus Shepstone) to visit Zululand and settle the affairs of the unhappy country. He would, he said, "be very glad if Mr. Shepstone would come to him, that he might point out to him the parties who have destroyed the peace of the Zulu Country"¹⁸. He "believed no-one could settle the minds of his people but Mr. Shepstone."¹⁹ He feared that Cetshwayo and his faction meant to kill him.²⁰ His enemies were restrained only by the fear of incurring the displeasure of the Natal Government. Its "countenance was the only support he had if it were withdrawn he would be put to death immediately".²¹ He wished Mr. Shepstone to come and settle the succession question. He was now old and wished to arrange that at his death no confusion should occur. "It would be but a friendly act", pleaded the old king, "to consent to prevent such trouble as he feels sure will occur in the Zulu nation if he should die before completing such arrangements."²²

Cetshwayo also sent messages requesting Shepstone to visit Zululand "as the country is rent in pieces and will not be settled until he has been."²³ He wished Shepstone "to be present at a

17. Vide infra. Chapter 2.

18. Message from Mpande, 10 October, 1857 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.170).

19. Message from Mpande, 25 February, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.196).

20. Message from Mpande, 20 July, 1857 (S.N.A. 1/7/3 p.158).

Message from Mpande, 13 April, 1859 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.247).

21. Message from Mpande, 18 February, 1859 (S.N.A. 1/6/2, No.34).

22. Message from Mpande, 13 July, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.209).

23. Message from Cetshwayo, 6 October, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.221).

meeting of all parties in the Zulu country at which all the questions which now distract the people may be discussed and finally settled."²⁴ His presence "would have the effect of settling the country by admitting the discussion of questions which now no-one in the Zulu Country could venture to discuss."²⁵ Cetshwayo had at this time never seen Shepstone, but, the Zulu messengers reported, "what he has heard of him induces him to ask for a particular Officer."²⁶ He had heard with alarm a report that the Governor had ordered an armed force to enter Zululand and destroy Cetshwayo and his followers. He wished Mr. Shepstone to visit the country so that he could explain his motives and conduct, which had been so misrepresented to the Natal Government by the faction hostile to him. He was not against Mpande, but merely wished to occupy his rightful place as Induna of the Zulu country, to which position, he claimed, his father had appointed him.²⁷ He protested his loyalty to the British Government. He wished "to shape all his actions in accordance with the wishes and advice of this Government"²⁸

The Government of Natal had no particular wish to involve itself in Zulu politics. But without the intervention both Mpande and Cetshwayo requested there seemed little chance of peace being restored to the country. The disturbances were causing large numbers of refugees to fly into Natal; and if Mpande died with the question still unsettled, worse disturbances were likely to ensue. It appeared to the Natal Government that Cetshwayo's succession was an almost absolute certainty, whether Mpande formally nominated him or not. His formal nomination, by destroying the hopes of rivals, would remove the cause of the continued family strife and party contention among the Zulus.²⁹

In April 1861, therefore, Lt-Governor Scott authorized Shepstone to proceed to Mpande's kraal, and induce him to bow to the inevitable

24. Message from Cetshwayo, 14 July, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.211).

25. Memorandum by Shepstone, 30 March, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

26. Message from Cetshwayo, 14 July, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/7/3, p.211).

27. Message from Cetshwayo, 9 June, 1859 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.4).

28. Message from Cetshwayo, 7 February, 1860 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.34).

29. Scott to Secretary of State, 5 July, 1861 ("Cetshwayo and Zululand Affairs", K.C.).

and declare Cetshwayo his heir.³⁰ He made this decision without first consulting the High Commissioner or the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In fact he knew that Sir George Grey, the High Commissioner, was opposed to any step that might further the consolidation of a single authority in Zululand, and favoured the division of the country among the sons of Mpande.³¹

Shepstone set off on April 19th, 1861. He was accompanied into Zululand by his son, Offy, Field-Cornet James Rorke, about fifty Natal Africans of position, and an equal number of baggage carriers.³² On entering Zululand, he received messages of welcome from both Mpande and Cetshwayo. The expedition reached Mpande's kraal on May 8th. Shepstone found Mpande very reluctant to nominate Cetshwayo. He spoke fondly of his sons in exile, and commended them to the personal care of Shepstone, and the protection of the British Government. "They are the seed which a wise man wishes kept until the sowing time arrives" he said. But he recognized that for the peace of the country he had no alternative but to nominate his unruly, but powerful, son Cetshwayo.

"Mpanda was induced by the force of circumstances alone to appoint Cetywayo his successor, he strongly deprecated the necessity, although he succumbed to it, and he fervently hopes that his appointment may prove a nullity", reported Shepstone.

Although he had requested Shepstone to come to Zululand, Cetshwayo was very suspicious of his intentions towards him.³³ He at first declined to appear at his father's kraal, and when he was eventually prevailed upon to do so, he came with a body-guard of 5,000 men. Shepstone noticed that each man had a single assigai, reversed, so as to conceal the blade, in his small travelling shield, whereas all the other Zulus present were unarmed.

On May 16th, in the presence of the notables of the Zulu nation

30. Scott to Shepstone, 15 April, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

31. Grey to Scott, 13 June, 1861, quoted in Nourse, p.24.

32. Information concerning this mission I have derived, except where otherwise stated, from Shepstone's two official reports, Shepstone to Scott, 22 June, 1861 (G.H. 338); and Confidential, Shepstone to Scott, 22 June, 1861 (G.H. 338).

33. Moodie, Battles and Adventures, Vol. II, p.458.

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and about fifteen thousand other Zulus, Cetshwayo was proclaimed by heralds, by his father's orders, as Heir, and Commander-in-Chief of the army.

The heralds then presented a demand from the Zulu nation to Shepstone, as representing the Natal Government, for the return of Mkhungo and Sikoto. Only their return would restore peace and quiet to Zululand, they declared, for as long as they remained in the Colony, the constant rumours of the Natal Government's intentions regarding them would cause apprehension and unsettledness. There are some highly-coloured accounts, written many years later by people who were not present, of the ensuing episode.³⁴ It is said that Shepstone was surrounded by a mob of shouting savages, who brandished assegais and showed every sign of intending to murder him, that for two hours he sat, showing no trace of emotion, until at length, when he got an opportunity of speaking, he rose and solemnly warned the Zulus of the terrible vengeance that the British would wreak upon his murderers; which cowed the yelling savages into an awed silence.

These accounts of the incident are not supported by Shepstone's official reports on the expedition. This may partly be accounted for by Shepstone's reticent nature, and by his natural wish to make the expedition appear a wise course of action successfully accomplished, and not a desperate adventure; but it seems likely that in the case of these later accounts, the story has grown in the telling. Despite its possible understatement, Shepstone's own account is probably the most accurate; and it is confirmed in the main by a letter written at the time by a resident in Natal to the Mission Field.³⁵

Shepstone wrote simply that "a discussion with me ensued, on the subject of the return of the Royal Children, which lasted several hours, during which Cetywayo and his party were much excited."

Language was used, he added, which was "more or less disrespectful

34. e.g. Barter, pp.11-12; Haggard, Cetywayo and his White Neighbours, pp.7-8.

35. Quoted in Mackenzie, Mission Life, pp.151-2. No indication of the author, or whether he was an eye-witness or not, is given.

and defiant" to the Natal Government. Shepstone, however, would not agree to the youths' being returned, unless they themselves wished to return, but he consented to convey the request to the Natal Government, at the same time holding out no hope of its being granted. The Boers of Utrecht had a few months earlier returned two of Cetshwayo's brothers, out of fear of the Zulus, or hopes of land. But Shepstone warned the Zulus that attempts to intimidate him or the Natal Government into returning the boys were useless; Natal was but a cattlekraal of the great British power, which cared nothing for the Zulus' assegais.³⁶

The Zulus of Cetshwayo's party, having been put in their place on this matter, then raised the question of the action of Ngoza, the induna in whose charge Mkhungo and Sikoto lived. Without permission, he had entered the Isigodhlo, or women's quarters of the Royal Kraal, to visit Mkhungo's sisters, and to give them a parcel of clothes which Monase had bought in Pietermaritzburg.³⁷ This was a grave breach of Zulu etiquette; but, worse than this, it had suspicious political overtones. The Zulus declared that it was this constant exchange of messages between the Natal and Zululand branches of the family that kept up a continual ferment about the Natal Government's intentions, and made it imperative that Mkhungo should be returned. There were clamorous demands that Ngoza should answer for himself; Shepstone was rudely told to sit down; but he remained determined and unyielding, and refused to allow Ngoza to speak. His firmness mastered the Zulus, and they gave way. Shepstone believed "from the excitement shown by Cetywayo and his five thousand attendants" that if he had not firmly resisted the demand that Ngoza should answer for himself, "the meeting might have had a very serious termination." The commanders of the body-guard evidently thought the same, for they came the next morning to thank Shepstone for having acted as he did and averting possible violence. When Shepstone, before returning to

36. Ibid., p.151.

37. Story of Xaba ka Luduza, 26 May, 1912 (Stuart Papers, K.C.).

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to Pietermaritzburg on the following day, took his leave of Mpande and Cetshwayo, the latter "apologized for anything said during the Meeting, which might have borne the appearance of rudeness or a want of courtesy....."

Writing in 1874, Shepstone thus summed up the effects of the mission of 1861:-

"The result was quiet to the Zulu country, and relief to this colony from continual apprehension of fresh disturbances; and with the exception of a serious alarm, which turned out to have no real foundation, although it cost the colony a considerable sum of money, those benefits have continued to this day."³⁸

The false alarm occurred barely a month after Shepstone's return from Zululand. The rumour got about in the outlying districts that Cetshwayo had concentrated a large force at his kraal, Ondine, and intended making a foray into the Colony. Border farmers abandoned their farms and retired into hastily-built laagers in the towns and villages. On the 13th July, a secret message came from Mpande, confirming the rumour, and stating that Cetshwayo intended invading Natal to sieze or kill Mkhungo and Sikoto. Troops were rushed to the frontier, and the Zulu princes were placed under protective guard in Fort Napier. But no invasion took place, and Cetshwayo assured the Natal Government that he never had any such intention. His explanations were accepted, and the troops were withdrawn.³⁹

Mpande's message, and the independent testimony of the messengers who brought it, show that there was a belief in Zululand that Cetshwayo intended invading Natal. The events at his formal nomination show that he was indeed very anxious to have the custody of the two princes.

On the other hand, there is the fact that he did not invade; and it may be doubted whether, having just won British support for his claims, Cetshwayo would have wished, by invading Natal, to have thrown it so recklessly away. Shepstone and Lt.-Governor Scott

38. Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone,
39. Nourse. n.d., (C.1137, p.6).

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were convinced that he had no intention to invade; but it must be remembered that in justifying Cetshwayo, they were justifying their own action in securing his nomination as heir to the Zulu monarchy.

The nomination brought peace to Zululand. For some time Mpande still feared that Cetshwayo meant to kill him, and pleaded vainly with the British to take over the country.⁴⁰ But he lived for another eleven years, and died peacefully of old age. The succession issue was settled, although the activities of Mthonga caused Cetshwayo some disquiet. This was the young prince who had fled to the Boers in 1861, and who was returned by them to Cetshwayo. In 1865 he succeeded in escaping to Natal. He lived for some time near Table Mountain as a tenant of Bishop Colenso (who found him "dissolute, disorderly and troublesome"),⁴¹ but moved in 1868, together with Mkhungo and Sikota, to land near Rorke's Drift.⁴² Cetshwayo looked with suspicion at their settling so near the Zulu border.⁴³ In 1872 Mthonga paid a clandestine visit to Mpande, and caused great excitement by assuring the Zulus he met that the Natal Government intended to place part of Zululand under his control. Some kraals, which believed his story, paid for their gullibility by being "eaten up" by Cetshwayo.⁴⁴ In response to Cetshwayo's complaints about his conduct, the Natal Government agreed to put him in the charge of an induna to the south of Pietermaritzburg, but Mthonga escaped once again to the Transvaal, where he remained.⁴⁵

40. Message from Mpande, 4 August, 1862 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.165); message from Mpande, 20 October, 1862 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.170).
41. Letter from Bishop Colenso, dated 25 July, 1873, The Natal Witness, 29 July, 1873.
42. Rorke to Shepstone, 14 October, 1868 (S.N.A. 1/6/6, No. 1289).
43. Rorke to Shepstone, 19 November, 1868 (S.N.A. 1/6/6, No. 1217).
44. Rorke to Shepstone, 9 February, 1872 (S.N.A. 1/6/6, No. 552); Message from Cetshwayo, 10 June, 1872 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.170); Musgrave to President, S.A.R., 30 October, 1872 (G.H. 637, No.11); Letter from Bishop Colenso, dated 25 July, 1873, The Natal Witness, 29 July, 1873.
45. Musgrave to President, S.A.R., 30 October, 1872 (G.H.637, No.11).

Until he was actually installed as king, Cetshwayo never ceased to fear the designs of his rivals, and could not divest his mind of a suspicion that the Natal Government secretly intended another of Mpande's sons to be the next Zulu king.⁴⁶

* It is time to say something, in more general terms, of the relations between Zululand and Natal in the period before the Zulu War. Shepstone did not favour written treaties with African tribes such as the Zulus. They involved, he said, an admission of equality which was not the true state of the case; and the exact provisions of the treaty were often forgotten or distorted by the illiterate party to it, so that it fostered misunderstanding, and, in effect, bound one side only.

"Ours is an elastic arrangement", he wrote, "by which every case of difficulty is treated as it arises upon its own merits. It has always been admitted that the Government of Natal is the superior, and the Zulus the inferior, power. Natal gives up the cattle of Zulu refugees, because by Zulu law they become confiscated to the King the moment it is attempted to move them out of his country. The refugees themselves are not given up, because the superior rank of the Government being recognized confers the right of deciding in each case whether the refugee shall be given up or not. On the other hand, Natives flying from Natal to Zululand are given up on demand without hesitation. This position carries with it the right to advise or remonstrate as the case may require, and that right has been freely used. It might be extended much further; but as the exercise of it too freely would probably involve serious and unnecessary responsibilities, it would soon become inconvenient."⁴⁷

* a common boundary
border on *

It is certainly true that the Zulus were very ready to defer to the wishes of the Natal Government; but it would perhaps be unwise to attribute this solely to the recognition by savages of the superiority of mid-Victorian British civilization. Zululand abutted on both Natal and the Transvaal, and its rulers followed a settled policy of keeping on the best possible terms with the former as a counterweight against the territorial encroachments of the latter. When he became ruler of the Transvaal, Shepstone discovered that reverence for Britain, and respect for the great Somtseu, counted for much less with the Zulus than the best interests

46. Vide infra, p.54

47. Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, undated, (C. 1137, p.18).

of Zululand. This provoked Shepstone to declare that the Zulu policy towards both Natal and the Transvaal had been "characterized by lying and treachery to an extent that I could not have believed even savages capable of."⁴⁸ This is a question which will be dealt with in its proper place. It will suffice here to say that this accusation was unjust; that Zulu policy was not one of naked, cynical real-politik; but that both Mpande and Cetshwayo, anxious to secure the support of Natal against the Boers, and against each other, may have misled Shepstone and the Natal Government by their emphatic and perhaps exaggerated expressions of veneration towards, and subordination to, the British power.

Mpande, for instance, declared that he was "faithful to the British Government,"⁴⁹ that he "belonged" to it,⁵⁰ and at times expressed the desire that the British would take over the country.⁵¹ Cetshwayo stated, at various times, that he wished "to shape all his actions in accordance with the wishes and advice" of the Natal Government,⁵² that he looked upon the Government "as protectors of the house of Chaka",⁵³ and upon himself as "a child of the Natal Government, having been placed by it at the head of the Zulu Nation."⁵⁴ The Governor, he said, was his "superior, he having Konza'd to the British Government".⁵⁵ In the years when the country was rent by the disagreements between Mpande and Cetshwayo, both freely and frequently begged the Natal Government to intervene in the domestic affairs of Zululand,⁵⁶ and both made many requests that a part of Zululand, the 'disputed territory', should be taken over by the British.⁵⁷

48. Shepstone to Bulwer, 10 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letterbook 2 p.302).
49. Message from Mpande, 13 July, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.78).
50. Message from Mpande, 19 July, 1858 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).
51. Message from Mpande, 4 August, 1862 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.165); Message from Mpande, 24 April, 1865 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.238).
52. Message from Cetshwayo, 7 February, 1860 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.34).
53. Message from Cetshwayo and Mpande, 27 December, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p. 138).
54. Message from Cetshwayo, 29 February, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.244).
55. Dunn to Shepstone, 13 January, 1865 (S.N.A. 1/6/3). "Konza" means to make obeisance.
56. Vide supra. pp. 6-7.
57. Vide infra. p.35.

These communications and requests must have encouraged the fairly general belief, or assumption, which seems to have existed both among the officials and the colonists in Natal, that Zululand would eventually come under British rule.⁵⁸ This belief should not be taken to imply that long-standing and secret plans of aggression against Zululand were being hatched in Natal. The submissive posture of the Zulus fostered the assumption that the country would slip, by imperceptible degrees, and with the consent of the Zulus, into a condition of more formal subordination. Such a change would be seen as part of the march of progress, of the supersession of barbarism by civilization. These beliefs make it easy to understand why the more 'independent' line adopted by Cetshwayo after 1876 should have awakened dormant, but never extinguished, fears of the Zulus and their powerful army.

Several considerations prompted the Natal Government to hope that Zululand would eventually come under British rule. It was well-known that the Transvaal had expansionist ambitions in that direction. Natal was very anxious that the country should not fall into the hands of the Transvaal, for this would provide it with an independent outlet to the sea, and almost certainly cause a great influx of Zulus into the already overcrowded Natal. And Shepstone saw in Zululand a possible solution to Natal's 'native problem'. This problem was, in brief, her "overwhelming and ever increasing native population".

"Her population per square mile", wrote Shepstone, "far exceeds that borne by any territory of equal extent in South Africa, the occupation by natives of farms and crown lands unoccupied by whites as yet prevents much inconvenient pressure, but should any sudden and considerable accession of white population take place, a matter quite beyond the control of any government, it is impossible to foresee what solution will be found to so serious and dangerous a problem. A safety-valve in the shape of adjoining territory has always been looked to as the only source of relief"⁵⁹

In the 1850's he sought this safety-valve to the south of the Colony. He proposed to move south of the Mzimkhulu where he would

58. Uys. p. 131.

59. Private Memorandum by Shepstone, 28 February, 1874 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

rule such Africans as would be willing to follow him, under Native Law, independently of the Colony. But the High Commissioner, Sir George Grey, vetoed the plan, mainly on the grounds of the disturbances it might cause on the Cape frontier.⁶⁰

Shepstone then turned to Zululand as a possible safety-valve. As early as January 1861 we find him suggesting to Cetshwayo a cession of part of Zululand "to provide for the wants of the natives in the Colony."⁶¹ In later years both Mpande and Cetshwayo made frequent requests of the Natal Government to take over the territory in dispute between the Zulus and the Transvaal. Shepstone was strongly in favour of accepting this offer, and did his utmost to persuade the Home authorities to take it up. Britain, however, could not accept, from the Zulus, territory which was also claimed by the Transvaal, without seriously damaging its relations with that state. Nothing, therefore, came of this plan.

Nevertheless, these considerations of a 'safety-valve' were a strong motive for the Natal Government's wishing to preserve and increase its influence in Zululand. Shepstone regretted, after the Zulu War, that the country had not been annexed.

"I had also hoped", He wrote, "that the conquest of Zululand might have been taken advantage of to relieve Natal of the serious pressure which its large native population is on that Government."⁶²

The military kingdom of the Zulus and the British Colony of Natal were separated by an unguarded stream about 100 miles in length, which was easily fordable for most of the year. The cattle-raids and other disturbances which might have been expected on such a border, and which were characteristic of the eastern frontier of the Cape, were almost totally absent. Colonists living on the border grazed their cattle, with the permission of local chiefs, on the Zulu side of the river. Intermarriage between the Zulus and the Africans of Natal was common. Many African inhabitants of the border region had kraals on both sides of the river. White

60. Nourse, pp. 18-20.

61. Memorandum by Shepstone, 30 March, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

62. Memorandum by Shepstone on the Zulu settlement, n.d., enclosure in Shepstone to Herbert, 14 October, 1879 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 4, p.41).

traders and hunters travelled freely in Zululand. The relations between the two countries were not only peaceful, but even friendly.⁶³ That it was this, and not a history of constant tension, fear and hostility, that culminated in the war of 1879, is what makes that war such a tragedy, and a crime.

63. Frere, in 1878, when he was trying to get up a war with the Zulus, complained of the prevalence in Natal of friendly feeling towards Cetshwayo and the Zulus. See, e.g., Frere to Herbert, 23 December, 1878, quoted in Martineau, p. 266; Frere to Shepstone, 3 December, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

THE TRANSVAAL-ZULULAND BORDER DISPUTE (1861-73)

Importance of the dispute - the 1854 cession - the 1861 cession - general criticism of the documents - particular criticisms of the documents - the suppressed documents - conclusion on the validity of the Transvaal claims - Boer encroachments - Zulu counter-moves - Zulu complaints to the Natal Government - correspondence between British authorities and the Transvaal - Zulu appeals for Natal intervention - Keate's abortive attempt at arbitration - Shepstone's despatch to President Burgers - Burgers' attempt at a settlement - Shepstone's opinion on the merits of the dispute.

Reference has already been made to the border dispute between the Zulus and the Transvaal. In this chapter I shall examine the origin of the dispute, try to decide which party was in the right, chronicle the series of abortive attempts to settle the dispute, and take some note of the effects which it had upon the relations between Zululand, the Transvaal, and Natal, from its beginnings to the accession of Cetshwayo in 1873.

The dispute exacerbated the relations between the Transvaal and Zululand, and thus made the Zulus anxious to cultivate the friendliest connections with Natal. It may, in fact, be considered the central point around which revolved the history of the relations between Zululand and its two white neighbours between 1861 and 1879. The merits of the two sides to the questions are therefore worth examining. While in Natal, Shepstone supposed that the Zulus were in the right; but when he became Administrator of the Transvaal, he changed his mind and became convinced that the Transvaal claim was valid. Henceforth, all his dealings with the Zulus were influenced by his firm conviction that they were in the wrong and knew they were in the wrong. The same applies to Sir Bartle Frere. However, what seemed Zulu treachery and aggression to Shepstone and Frere would wear a very different complexion if, in fact, the Zulus were in the right.

The Natal Commission of 1878 decided in favour of the Zulus. Shepstone was unconvinced, and attributed the conclusion to prejudice on the part of the Commissioners. Frere agreed, although he felt obliged to make a show of accepting the decision. Even

today, historians seem undecided on the question. Yet there is sufficient evidence¹ (much of which was not available to the 1878 Commission) to enable us to settle the question, in my opinion, once and for all. I therefore propose to attempt to do this, even though it will involve going, in some detail, into events well outside our period. My justification for this procedure is that, although the events themselves fall outside our period, their effects are of the greatest importance for the subject of this thesis.

The treaty concluded between Mpande and Cloete in October 1843 makes it clear that at that date Zulu territory extended up to the Drakensberg, north of the Tugela and Buffalo. In about 1847 Dutch farmers, crossing the Buffalo River from Natal, obtained from Mpande permission to occupy certain land on the left bank of the river, in what later became the Utrecht district. This land, it was claimed, was ceded to them by Mpande in 1854, in return for the usual 100 head of cattle.² The alleged deed of cession is not above suspicion, and it may be doubted whether Mpande would have parted with so much land for a mere 100 cattle; but the land was at this time almost unoccupied by Zulus, and it came to be accepted, and was explicitly conceded by Cetshwayo, that this was Boer territory. It was on grounds of established occupation and government, and Zulu acquiescence in this, that the Natal Commission of 1878, appointed to investigate the border dispute, awarded the Utrecht district to the Transvaal.³

The exact boundary of the district, however, was a matter for dispute. The Zulus claimed that it was the Blood river, extended to the Pongola (line C - C on map), and this the 1878 Commission accepted. The Transvaal delegates claimed that it was the line C - D. The wording of the 1854 cession is vague, but supports the latter interpretation better. We must, however, bear in mind that

1. Most of it unearthed by Dr. D.C. McGill in an unpublished thesis, A History of the Transvaal, 1853-1864, with a New Interpretation of the Transvaal-Zulu War of 1879. (1943).
 2. Report of the Natal Boundary Commission, 20 June, 1878 (C.2220, p.371)
 3. Ibid. (C.2220, p.381).

*cession
ceding
giving up*

1
★
1854

*conceded
admit
allow*

the Zulus may have had no very clear idea of the contents of the document containing the cession, and may have demurred if they had.

1861
The more important dispute between the Zulus and the Boers was over the additional land which the Boers claimed the Zulus had ceded to them in 1861. *by Cetshwayo in return for 2 fugitives*

11 On no part of the Transvaal border were greater efforts made to acquire more land than on the Zulu frontier. The farmers wished to acquire the valuable winter grazing land of the border area, and the Government wanted an independent outlet to the sea. In June 1860 a Border Commission, consisting of five local farmers, was formed. Its duties were to persuade Mpande to proclaim Cetshwayo his successor, to work for Cetshwayo's speedy accession to the throne, even while Mpande was alive, and to try to get a cession of land from the Zulus. Members of the Commission were promised a farm each in any territory they might acquire from the Zulus.⁴

The Commission took no action until March 1861, when Mthonga, Cetshwayo's brother and rival claimant to the throne, together with another brother, two indunas, and some 4,000 head of cattle, fled into the Utrecht district. Cetshwayo followed with an impi, but did not cross the Blood river. The refugees were detained by the Border Commission. Two messengers, Gungeni and Assegai (or Mkonto) arrived from Cetshwayo, The Zulu version of the story is that the messengers simply asked C.J. van Rooyen, who was well known to the Zulus, to come to Cetshwayo, so that they might settle peacefully the question of the return of the fugitives.⁵

The Boer account is contained in the Report, dated 16 March, 1861, and signed by Landdrost Smuts, of the meeting held on Jan Combrink's farm, Waaihoek, to discuss the Zulu message. (Henceforth known as Document I). According to this document, the Zulus thanked the Border Commission for having detained the fugitives, and requested C.J. van Rooyen to accompany them to the kraal of Sirayo to talk

4. McGill, pp.257-8

5. Ibid. p.265.

things over with Cetshwayo. They also explained that Cetshwayo wished to let the farmers know that the unrest in Zululand had been caused because Mpande was co-operating with the British. They went on to describe the recent meeting between Theophilus Shepstone and the Zulu chiefs, at which Cetshwayo and the indunas had refused to "unite" with Shepstone (as Mpande wished), Cetshwayo saying "Pretorius and the Boers made Umpanda king of Zululand; if Umpanda wishes to go over to the English, let him go, but we all join ourselves on the side of the Boers." Cetshwayo would help the Boers in war, when needed, and would apply to the Boers for help when he needed it. "He would do as he was bid by the people there; if the people asked him for land he would give it."⁶

After a preliminary meeting between van Rooyen and Cetshwayo, at which, according to the Boers, Cetshwayo agreed to cede land in return for the fugitives,⁷ the full Commission met Cetshwayo and his indunas at Sirayo's kraal on 28 March. According to the Boer minutes of the meeting, the indunas stated that the whole Zulu nation wished for Cetshwayo to be king, in order to put an end to discord and uncertainty. Cetshwayo and his indunas agreed to take care of Mpande and pay him respect as old king. The indunas agreed to report to the authorities any fugitives who might cross the Transvaal boundary, and not to send any armed force over it. It was stipulated that the boundary should be defined, and Cetshwayo agreed to cede a piece of land to be defined by the Commission and the two indunas Gebula and Sirayo. He wanted no payment for the land beyond a present to be decided on by the Commission. The Commission therefore decided to give him 25 cows, one bull, one horse, a bridle and a saddle. It is nowhere stated in the minutes that the land was ceded in return for the handing over of Cetshwayo's brothers; in fact the fugitives are not mentioned at all.⁸

6. Ibid. p.261.

7. Ibid. p.262.

8. Minutes of the negotiations at Sirayo's kraal, enclosure D.4 in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.63). As printed in this Blue-book, it is dated 20 March, 1861, but this must be a mis-print.

According to the Zulus, however, Cetshwayo was asked by the Boers for land in return for the fugitives, but replied that he could not cede the Boers any land, as the country belonged to his father. He agreed, however, to send Gebula and Sirayo to see what land it was the Boers wanted.⁹

On the following day, according to the Boers, Gebula and Sirayo pointed out a line running from the Buffalo to the Pongola (A - A on map). They and the members of the Boer Commission signed a deed of cession, dated 29 March, which also contained the minutes of the meeting of 28 March held at Sirayo's kraal (henceforth known as Document II).¹⁰

Gebula and Sirayo later admitted to signing a paper on this occasion, but said they did so only on the understanding that it was merely to show President Pretorius that they had been with the Commission to inspect the land at Cetshwayo's desire.¹¹

Gebula and Sirayo then returned with the Transvaal Commissioners to the farm Waaihoek, where a meeting was held on 1 April to announce to the burghers the results of the negotiations. It was decided to return the fugitives, and Gebula and Sirayo guaranteed their safety by signing the minutes of the meeting, which were also signed by the Transvaal Commission and about 40 burghers.

The fugitives were then conveyed to Sirayo's kraal under escort of three burghers. There, on 3 April, Cetshwayo and three of his brothers signed Document II, which they claimed they understood to be the minutes of the discussions of 28 March and a guarantee of the safety of the returned fugitives.¹² This was the principal document on which the Transvaal based its claim to additional territory.

9. Message (to the Natal Government) from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 5 September, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.109).

10. A translation of this document is printed in C.2242, p.63. (See footnote 8 above.)

11. Message from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 5 September, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.109).

12. McGill, p.266n.

In August 1861 a Transvaal Commission consisting of J.F. van Staden, T.J.G. Potgieter and C.J. van Staden, went to Mpande at his kraal, Nodwengu, to obtain a ratification of Cetshwayo's cession. According to this Commission, Mpande declared that Cetshwayo had no power to cede the land, but that he, Mpande, would grant the same land himself. The Commission, having forgotten to bring the deed of cession signed by Cetshwayo, drew up a fresh one, which Mpande signed. (Document III in future references).¹³

According to the Zulus, however, Mpande at all times refused to ratify any cession, or make any cession himself.

This boundary (A - A) was beaconed off in 1864. According to the Boers, two Zulu representatives, Gebula and Gunguni, pointed out where the beacons should be erected, and in every case placed the first stones themselves.¹⁴ Gebula, however, stated before the 1878 Commission that Mpande had sent him up to see what land the white people wanted, as he could not understand the Boer messenger, and that he and Gunguni had been forced to accompany an armed patrol of Boers, who had erected the beacons.¹⁵ *refuse to accept*

According to the Boers, the Zulus did not repudiate this boundary until January 1865, when Mthonga escaped from Cetshwayo once again. In that year, by Cetshwayo's orders, the beacons were thrown down, and the cession disavowed. As we shall see, however, the Zulus denied having made any cession from the start.

An attempt must now be made to ascertain the validity of the Transvaal claims. To do this, we must first examine the documents used by the Transvaal to establish its case, and then give an account of some other important documents which were kept from the knowledge of the 1878 Commission.

A. General Criticism of the Documents.

The 1878 Commission rejected the Transvaal case, mainly on the grounds of the unreliability of the documents by which it was supported.

13. Ibid., p.275.

14. Ibid., p.285.

15. Ibid., p.285n.

Quite apart from certain irregularities in the documents themselves there are other reasons which render them unfit to be considered as binding equally the Zulus and the Boers. These reasons may be summed up by saying that the one party to these written treaties was literate, while the other was not. There is thus no guarantee that the Zulus understood by the treaties what was actually written in them, and there may have been therefore, in fact, no agreement at all. This may have arisen in different ways.

1. The Zulus may have misunderstood the Boers when they interpreted the contents of the treaties, particularly as it was established by the 1878 Commission that several of the Boers who acted as interpreters were indifferent Zulu linguists.

2. The Boers may have deliberately deceived the Zulus as to the contents of the treaties.

3. No copies of the treaties were given to the Zulus; the Zulus were illiterate; their marks could easily be forged. So there is no guarantee that the treaties submitted to the 1878 Commission were in fact those 'signed' by the Zulus.

To sum up: These written treaties between the literate Boers and the illiterate Zulus, drawn up, read out, interpreted, witnessed, and preserved by an interested party, the Boers, cannot be regarded as proof of the Zulus' agreement to cede land. Such scepticism as to the integrity of the Boers may seem unjust, but a closer examination of the documents inclines one to consider that scepticism is justifiable. They present some curious features.

B. Particular Criticisms of the Documents.

Document I. This alleged message from Cetshwayo, with its protestations of friendship and offers of land, seems too good, from the Boer point of view, to be true. And in fact it is certainly an invention. It is dated 16 March, 1861, but purports to describe the meeting between Theophilus Shepstone and Mpande and Cetshwayo in Zululand, which took place only on 16 May, 1861. On this ground the 1878 Commission dismissed it as "plainly a fabrication".¹⁶
16. Report of the Natal Boundary Commission, 20 June, 1878 (C2220, p.378).

Document II. (a) The account of the negotiations between the Border Commission and Cetshwayo at Sirayo's kraal on March 28, and the cession of March 29, contains no reference to the fugitives, although this is what the negotiations were ostensibly about, and although the cession of land was later represented as the quid pro quo for their return. In this document no motive is given for Cetshwayo's agreement to cede land.

A different reason for Cetshwayo's alleged cession was given by President Pretorius in a letter to Lieut-Governor Maclean of 22 March, 1865. He stated that the land had been obtained "at a remuneration" - presumably the 25 cows, bull, saddle, etc., represented as a 'present' in Document II - and went on to explain:

"The reasons that gave rise to this agreement are simply that during the disturbances in the Zulu country between Panda and Cetywayo, the people of Cetywayo crossed the boundaries to follow up fugitive adherents of Panda, and thereby endangered the lives and property of the inhabitants of the Republic, and it was considered advisable to establish a boundary to prevent such incursions and inroads for the purpose of murder and bloodshed."

It appeared to Sir Bartle Frere that the fact that the fugitives were returned was a powerful argument in favour of the Boer case and against the Zulu case. For why did the Boers hand over the fugitives if they got nothing in return? And there is nothing implausible in Cetshwayo's making a cession of land if, in return for doing so, he gained the custody of these dangerous rivals.

"Here was a strong motive why Cetywayo should make a cession, which at other times he would have refused; there appears no doubt that he did make some cession and got possession of the Princes of the Royal House."¹⁸

But there are other reasons why the Boers might have returned the fugitives without getting any promises of land. Transvaal records show that 352 of the cattle brought with them by the fugitives were kept by the Boers "to cover expenses".¹⁹ In 1863 Cetshwayo

17. Pretorius to Maclean, 23 March, 1865, sub-enclosure 3 to Minute by Shepstone on the border dispute, 25 June, 1876, enclosure in Bulwer to Carnarvon, 29 June, 1876 (C.1961, p.22).

18. Memorandum by Frere, n.d., enclosure 8 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.43).

19. McGill, p.266a.

complained to the Natal Government that the Boers were refusing to give up the cattle that had been carried off by his brothers in 1861.²⁰

President Pretorius's letter gives a further clue. The succession dispute in Zululand had produced disturbances on the border in the past. The presence of the fugitives in Utrecht was a great temptation to Cetshwayo to send an impi into the area to re-capture them. Later in 1861 a rumour that Cetshwayo intended to seize another brother, Mkhungo, who was living at Bishopstowe, had thrown the Colony of Natal into a panic, and had caused all the available troops to be rushed to the Zulu border, although the rumour later proved to be groundless. It was the arrival of a strong impi on the other side of the Blood river that prompted the Boers to open negotiations about the return of the fugitives.

P.L. Uys, in his memorandum on the border dispute, states that

"a large Kafir Commando, of which the Captain Umzilikaza was headman, had at the same time come to the other side of the Blood River and threatened us that they had orders from Cetywayo to pursue Dingezi (one of the indunas) and if we did not give up Dingezi and the two sons of Panda and the cattle, and the people, they would come in amongst us and take them by force."²¹

The minutes of the meeting held at Waaihoek on 1 April, at which it was decided to hand back the fugitives, confirm this view. The Transvaal Commission informed the meeting that Cetshwayo was close by with a large force, and that he had asked for a return of the fugitives. Upon this, "considering that through the Kafirs having taken refuge with us our laws have already been transgressed, and that they endanger the safety of this State", it was resolved to hand them over.²²

Mthonga, his brother, and the two indunas were very unwelcome guests, and there is every reason why the Utrecht Boers would want

20. Message from Cetshwayo, 10 March, 1863 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.188).
21. "A Remembrance between Us and the Zulu Tribes, how matters went on", by P.L. Uys, 1 December, 1877, enclosure 8 in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.76).
22. Minutes of Waaihoek meeting, 1 April, 1861, sub-enclosure 5 in Confidential, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 18 January, 1878 (C.O. 879/13, African No. 150, p.98).

to get rid of them, with or without a quid pro quo.

(b) Another curious point about Document II is that it was only communicated to the central Government by Landdrost Smuts on 20 May, nearly seven weeks after Cetshwayo had signed it.²³ It is odd that the Government was not notified immediately of this valuable accession of territory. It is noteworthy that it, and the other documents, including Document I, were not made known until after Shepstone's meeting with the Zulu chiefs of 16 May, 1861, to which Document I refers. If one of the documents, Document I, which Smuts sent to the Government on this date, was a fabrication, a conclusion which seems inescapable, it lends plausibility to the view that the others were very likely to have been fabrications too. It is not irrelevant to note, as evidence concerning Smuts's honesty, that in the letter to the central Government referred to, he makes the implausible claim that Cetshwayo had promised, pending consultation with Mpande and his indunas, to cede a further tract of land extending down to the sea.

Document III Mpande's ratification of 5 August, 1861.

Both this and Document II were adduced in 1878 before the Border Commission in support of the Transvaal's claims, although they are, in their tenor, contradictory. Document III is not a ratification of Cetshwayo's alleged cession, but a repudiation of it, and a fresh deed of cession.²⁴ According to Document II, Cetshwayo's cession of land was preceded either by the Boers' undertaking to support his immediate accession to the throne, or by their actually installing him there and then as king: it is not clear which. The conditions on which the Boers would make him king in Mpande's lifetime were stated, but there is no record in Document II of his actual installation; on the other hand, Cetshwayo is described in the heading of the document as "King of the Zulu Nation". At any rate, it is clear that, if we believe Document II, the Boers agreed, at the

23. Smuts to Schoeman, 20 May, 1861, quoted in McGill, p.268.

24. Vide supra, p. 23.

time Cetshwayo ceded them land, to support him against Mpande. Mpande's cession, (Document III) on the other hand, appears to have been made in return for promises of support against Cetshwayo, for in this document, he is represented as asking the Boers to work for his cause, to assist him against the rebels who were waging war to uproot him, and to save him and his children from the "descendants of Dingaan". That these references are to Cetshwayo, is suggested by the fact that the Boer Commissioners who obtained this written cession reported that Mpande had promised verbally to grant as much territory to the white men as they wished, if they would only come and save him from the hands of Cetshwayo.²⁵

If this cession of 5 August, 1861, (Document III) is accepted as valid (as it was by the Transvaal) then, as it repudiates Document II, it is the only one on which the Transvaal claims can be based.

It is signed only by the three members of the Boer Commission, and Mpande. No other Zulus signed either as co-signatories or as witnesses. It is open to all the objections to treaties concluded between literate and illiterate parties. In addition, Mpande later denied having signed it; and he is alleged to have signed it less than two months after he had refused to confirm Cetshwayo's cession or make any cession himself when asked to do so by an earlier Commission led by President Pretorius.²⁶

C. The Suppressed Documents.

We have now considered the credibility in general of written agreements between literate and illiterate parties, and the difficulties and objections that can be raised in connection with the particular documents by which the Transvaal supported its case before the 1878 Commission. We now turn to the documents which were not tabled before the 1878 Commission, but which cast a flood of light on the events of 1861.

25. Brytenbach to Schoeman, 9 August, 1861, quoted in McGill, p.276.
26. Vide infra, pp.30-1.

One might well be astonished at the moderation of the Boers in claiming land only down to the line A - A. For they were in possession of documents signed by Mpande, and witnessed by his indunas, which gave them possession of the whole, or almost the whole, of Zululand.

The first is a document, dated 30 March, 1858, signed by three members of a Boer Commission to the Zulus and the two interpreters, on the one hand, and by Mpande and five indunas on the other. It stated that Mpande and his country belonged to the South African Republic, and that the land from the Drakensberg, along the Tugela to the sea, along the coast, and along the "Comwoema", through the Lebombo mountains was "het Eigendom van de Gouvernement van de Suyd Afrecaansche republiek."²⁷

The second is a document dated 16 December, 1864, and signed by J.F. and C.J. van Staden and P.W. Jordaan on the one hand, and Mpande and three indunas, on the other. It stated that Mpande and his people were subjects and allies of the Republic, and gave to the Republic "in vollen and vryen Eigendom", the country from the confluence of the Blood and Buffalo rivers, down the Buffalo and Tugela to the sea, and up the coast to the "Umslatus". For this land Mpande was to be paid 50 sheep and 50 cattle.²⁸

If any documents are worthy of credence, it is surely these, witnessed as they are by five and three Zulus respectively, rather than Mpande's ratification, or rather, cession of 5 August, 1861, upon which the Transvaal case, as we have seen, really rests, and which was unwitnessed by a single Zulu. The reason why these munificent cessions were not pressed by the Transvaal can only be their total implausibility. The cession of 1861, on the other hand, although the documentary evidence in its favour was no better - was, indeed, worse - seemed quite plausible to observers such as Sir Bartle Frere.

These deeds of cession were not only not pressed; their very

27. McGill, p.134.

28. Ibid., Appendix VI, pp.428-9.

existence was concealed from the 1878 Commission. No doubt it was considered that knowledge of their existence might induce scepticism as to the trustworthiness of other Boer documents.

The third suppressed document is the report of the Commission led by President Pretorius, which visited Mpande in June 1861 to secure his ratification of Cetshwayo's 'cession' of March of that year (Document II). The Commission consisted of Pretorius, A.F. du Toit, Landdrost J.C. Steyn of Potchefstroom, B.C.E. Proes, with D.F.J. Steyn as interpreter. C.J. van Rooyen also accompanied the expedition.

The Commission met Mpande on 19 June, 1861. It asked him to sign a document stating that he completely approved of and ratified the agreement made with Cetshwayo (which was detailed, including the arrangements regarding the fugitives, not mentioned in the original, Document II), but this he refused to do. Mpande and his indunas denied that Cetshwayo had ceded any land. They said that "de menschen hebben hem om grond gevraagd maar hy heeft gezegd ik heb niets to zeggen, geen regt of magt over grond....." This, they said, gave rise to an altercation ("een harde twist") between them. Mpande's indunas admitted that Cetshwayo had signed a paper, but said that he did not know what he had signed. The Commission asked Mpande to make a grant of land, but this he also refused to do.²⁹

The next day, while still at Mpande's kraal, the unsuccessful Commission was formally dismissed, but the party nevertheless decided to visit Cetshwayo. Pretorius wrote a personal report to Schoeman on the results of this meeting:

"Cetywayo denied that he had given any ground to van Rooyen and his friends, stating that he knew nothing about it. The cattle and other things he had received merely as a present. He had sent two indunas to see if there were kafirs on the ground the white men had asked for and he had only given permission that a house could be built at the Blood River Drift. When he heard later that he had given or bartered ground to the people he had immediately sent a kafir with a report to van Rooyen to tell him he knew nothing about it....."

29. Minutes, 19 June, 1861; Proes to Schoeman, 26 June, 1861, both quoted in McGill, p.270n.

This is confirmed by the minutes of this meeting.³⁰

Pretorius continued:

"This was all well known to the people of Utrecht, who have misrepresented the matter to us. Being convinced that the kafirs have proved the people to be liars to their faces, I have found it advisable not to appoint any in Utrecht, who can negotiate with them, so that when the kaffirs have business, they can bring their report to the government; this arrangement has been accepted by the people of Utrecht."³¹

President Pretorius thus recognized the spuriousness of the 1861 "cession", although no attempt was made to punish those responsible for the deception, and although he later tried to claim Zulu territory on the basis of it. Some clue to this volte-face may be found in the letter to Schoeman already quoted. In it, he warned of a concerted attack by all the native tribes on the Boers which he believed was impending.

"I have thought," he continued, "that we should keep the peace with some tribes as much as possible so that we can defeat the others and afterwards unite against the rest."

The weight of all this evidence, in my opinion, makes it impossible to doubt that no cession of land was made by the Zulus in 1861, and that, in this dispute, the Zulus were in the right, and the Transvaal in the wrong.

The line supposed to have been ceded in 1861 was beaconed off in 1864. But, no doubt as a result of the resistance put up by the Zulus, the Boers did not make any immediate attempt to establish effective and permanent occupation down to this line. In fact, right up to the Zulu war, a considerable part of the disputed territory remained occupied and ruled solely by Zulus. The highwater mark of Boer encroachment was reached in March 1876; after this the tide turned, and the Zulus took the offensive. The position at that date was as follows:

Land on the Transvaal side of line C - C was firmly in the control of the Boers, and was definitely part of the Transvaal.³²

30. Minutes, 23 June 1861, quoted in McGill, pp.270-1.

31. Pretorius to Schoeman, 14 July, 1861, quoted McGill, , p.271.

32. Report of the Natal Boundary Commission, 20 June, 1878 (C.2220, p.381).

There were occupied Boer farms down to the Old Hunting Road, which seems to have been regarded in practice as the boundary of the Utrecht district, and therefore of the Transvaal. There were also, however, in this area, Zulu kraals which recognized only Zulu sovereignty, and over which the Transvaal, by a tacit agreement, exercised no jurisdiction.³³

Boers used the land between the Old Hunting Road and the line alleged to have been granted in 1861 (A - A), for grazing purposes, but there was no permanent occupation of this area, (although farms had been marked out and registered,³⁴) and the Landdrost of Utrecht exercised no jurisdiction in it.³⁵

clans

This gradual encroachment provoked and was checked by Zulu protests, disturbances and war-scares in the border region. Several Transvaal Commissions visited Mpande in an attempt to effect a peaceful settlement, but the Zulu king refused to accept the 1861 line, and refused to order the Zulu inhabitants of the disputed territory to leave.³⁶ Indeed, it was observed that more Zulus were moving into it from other parts of Zululand.³⁷ Since the original inhabitants of the disputed territory, the Hlubi and Putili tribes, had fled into Natal in the 1840s, it had been somewhat sparsely inhabited by Zulus. This resettlement of the area by Zulus may have been solely the result of population pressure in other parts of the country, but it seems likely that it was also intended to establish effective occupation, the better to resist the Boer claims. Cetshwayo was reported in 1865 to have ordered the Zulus not to move out of the disputed territory on pain of death, to prevent the Boers from occupying it.³⁸

33. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 4 April, 1879 (C.2367, p.26), quoting figures compiled by G.M. Rudolph, Landdrost of Utrecht; Evidence of Rudolph before the 1878 Border Commission, Minutes, p.163 (S.N.6)

34. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.57).

35. Evidence of Rudolph before the 1878 Border Commission, Minutes, p.163 (S.N.6).

36. McGill, pp.293-4 & 298-9

37. Ibid., p.297.

38. Ibid., p.295n.

The Zulus did not confine their occupation to the disputed territory proper, but also erected kraals beyond the Pongola,³⁹ which was commonly regarded by whites as the boundary between Zululand and Swaziland. Whether the Zulus claimed this trans-Pongolan territory as an integral part of Zululand, or as theirs by virtue of their claimed overlordship of the Swazis, I have found it impossible to ascertain. This was also an area of Transvaal-Zulu conflict as the Transvaal claimed that the Swazis had ceded it a strip of land along the left bank of the Pongola, and this territory was also settled by Boers.

From the start, the Zulus kept the Natal Government informed of the progress of the dispute, and made many appeals for its intervention.

In August 1861, Cetshwayo briefly reported the visit paid to Zululand in June of that year by President Pretorius.⁴⁰ A more detailed message from Mpande and Cetshwayo followed in September. They stated that they were threatened with hostilities by the Boers. The events connected with the flight of Mthonga were recounted, and any cession of land was denied. The visit of the Commission under President Pretorius was described, and it was stated that the Boers had been obliged to admit that the land 'cession' which they had tried to claim was of no value. Nevertheless, reported the Zulus, they persisted in their claim for land, asking for "all the waters running into the Tugela, on our side, down to the Sea and along the Coast to St. Lucia Bay, for their ships to come out." This was refused, and the Boers left "in great anger, saying they would take that Country by force."

"Panda and Cetywayo say", continued the messengers, "they will not consent to the Boers separating them from the Natal Government, and they will resist any such attempt, they think the Boers' ships can come out, where other ships come, and they therefore wish to inform the Lt-Governor of Natal of their determination on this point and their position."⁴¹

39. Message from the Swazis, 19 March, 1866 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.29);
Message from the Swazis, 31 May, 1869, (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.81.)
40. Message from Cetshwayo, 19 August, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.96).
41. Message from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 5 September, 1861 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.109).

Queen Victoria

 This attempt by the Transvaal Government to obtain an independent outlet to the sea evidently caused some disquiet to the British Government, for we find, in June 1862, the High Commissioner, Wodehouse, warning Pretorius that St. Lucia Bay was British (by virtue of the 1843 treaty between Mpande and Cloete), and that Her Majesty's Government had objections to any further extension of the territory of the South African Government in the direction of Zululand. Wodehouse, however, accepted Pretorius's story that a cession had already been made.⁴²

 The beaconing off, in December, 1864, of the land claimed by virtue of the 1861 cession provoked a complaint by Cetshwayo to the Natal Government. By means of a letter written by John Dunn (who, although he had fought against Cetshwayo at Ndongakusuka, now lived in Zululand as his adviser, secretary and subordinate chief) Cetshwayo requested the Natal Government to ask the Boers on what grounds they had come into the country.⁴³ The High Commissioner did so,⁴⁴ and received in reply an account of the 1861 cession which omitted all reference to the return of the fugitives, and stated that the land had been obtained "at a remuneration", for the purpose of establishing a boundary which would prevent the incursions of Cetshwayo's followers pursuing refugees. The beacons, it was claimed, had been erected jointly by representatives of the Boers and Zulus "in perfect harmony of feeling and good faith", and the Zulus had no cause for alarm or complaint. The Zulu request for British interference was a breach of honour on the part of Cetshwayo.⁴⁵ Both the High Commissioner and the Lieut-Governor of Natal appear to have been convinced by this, and the Secretary of State agreed that there were no grounds for British interference.⁴⁶

*disagree
4th 2 15.*

42. McGill, pp.279-80

43. Dunn to Shepstone, 13 January, 1865, (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

44. Wodehouse to Pretorius, 5 February, 1865, quoted in McGill, p.290.

45. Vide supra, footnote 17.

46. McGill, p.291.

Nevertheless the Zulus continued to appeal to the Natal Government for intervention. They suggested the appointment of a British Resident in the border area to keep the peace,⁴⁷ or that the territory should be taken over by the British. Cetshwayo said "he felt comfortable in the neighbourhood of the English but the presence of other neighbours scorched and made him uneasy".⁴⁸

In June, 1869, a formal and very earnest message was delivered in Pietermaritzburg from Mpande, Cetshwayo "and the Zulu people." It stated that the Boers were encroaching more and more, making fresh claims every year, and attempting to levy tax on sections of the Zulus. It pointed to the friendly relations which had existed between the Zulus and the English since Shaka's time, and begged the Lieut-Governor to send a Commission to confer with both sides to the dispute and decide where the boundary should be. The Zulus undertook to accept this decision as definite and final. There had never been any boundary dispute with Natal; they knew that "when the boundary is fixed by agreement with the English, there it will remain." They repeated their request for the British to take over the disputed territory.

"They beg that the Government of Natal will take a strip of country the length and breadth of which to be agreed upon between the Zulus and the Commission sent from Natal - the strip to abut on the colony of Natal and to run to the Northward and Eastward in such a manner in a line parallel to the sea coast as to interpose in all its length between the boers and the Zulus and to be governed by the Colony of Natal and form a portion of it if thought desirable."⁴⁹

This suggestion coincided with the wishes of Shepstone, who wanted a 'safety-valve', in the shape of adjoining territory, to relieve the pressure of Natal's large African population. The coincidence might almost be suspicious, were it not for the fact that the offer was repeated many times by the Zulus.

In reply, Lieut-Governor Keate pointed out that he could not

47. Message from Mpande, 24 April, 1865 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.238).

48. Message from Cetshwayo, 25 April, 1865 (S.N.A. 1/7/4, p.235).

49. Message from Mpande, Cetshwayo and the Zulu people, 5 June, 1869 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.87).

arbitrate in the dispute without the consent of both sides and the permission of the Home Government. This consent and permission he undertook to seek, urging moderation and forbearance on the Zulus in the meantime.⁵⁰

Pretorius accepted Keate's offer of arbitration in October, 1869. The permission of the Home Government was also secured. In February, 1870, Keate asked to be furnished with all the documentary matter in the possession of the Transvaal Government relating to the dispute, but 15 months later he had still not received it. Both Keate and the Transvaal Government were pre-occupied with the arbitration on the South-Western boundary of the South African Republic. In July, 1871, however, Keate wrote again to the President, urging that the settlement of the Zulu border dispute should be delayed no longer, and repeating his request for the relevant documents. The Transvaal Government suggested January, 1872, as a suitable date for the arbitration, and promised to send the documents by the next post. But the documents never came, and the arbitration was never carried out. On 17 October, 1871, Keate decided against the Transvaal in the Diamond Fields dispute. In the same month Barkly proclaimed the line defined by Keate, and annexed Griqualand West, an action which led to years of bitterness between Britain and the Republics. Pretorius was held responsible by the Transvaal Volksraad for the loss of territory, and before the end of the year was forced to resign. A second arbitration by Keate on Transvaal territorial claims was now politically impossible, and, in any case, Keate was recalled soon afterwards. It appears that there was no formal decision to abandon the proposed arbitration; the question simply fizzled out, and seems to have been forgotten.⁵¹ When asked about

50. Reply to the Message from the Zulu Chiefs and Headmen, ? June, 1869 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.91.)

51. Minute on the history of the disputed territory, by Shepstone, 25 June, 1876, (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.274). Shepstone does not provide an explanation of why this proposed arbitration came to nothing, but when its history is collated with that of the Diamond Fields dispute, the explanation I have given becomes sufficiently obvious.

it, Musgrave, Keate's successor, wrote: "I have heard nothing of any request that I should act as Arbitrator between the Zulus and the Transvaal Republic....."⁵²

While this attempt at arbitration had been going on, the Zulus had continued to complain about the Boers and to urge the Natal Government to take action. Fresh attempts by the Boers to tax the Zulus in the disputed territory were reported in December 1869, and the Zulu requests for arbitration and a British take-over of the area were repeated.⁵³ In May, 1870, the Zulu king and his son reported that a party of Boers had been to see the former, to reproach him for having requested British arbitration, and to attempt to persuade him to disavow any wish for it. This he had refused to do. The Zulu rulers urged a speedy solution, and said that they were "very anxious that the British Government should establish itself between them and the Transvaal so that the Zulu boundary inland may be, as the Tugela is, the English Boundary."⁵⁴

The Natal Government could say little more in reply than state that it was waiting to hear the Transvaal case.⁵⁵ The Zulus became more and more impatient at the delay, and at what seemed to them the evasive replies of the Natal Government. Cetshwayo reminded the Government that it had promised the Zulus protection against Boers, and asked the "cause of so much delay in so desirable an object." He looked upon the Natal Government, he said, as "protectors of the house of Chaka", and asked "why should the promises of the Government only be smooth words without action,"⁵⁶

After the tacit abandonment of the proposed arbitration, the Boers seem to have made no serious attempt for a couple of years

52. Musgrave to Bishop Wilkinson, 21 December, 1872 (G. H. 637)

53. Message from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 13 December, 1869 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.97.)

54. Message from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 6 May, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.104.)

55. Message from Mpande and Cetshwayo, 13 December, 1869 (S.N.A. 1/6/3); Message to Mpande and Cetshwayo, 13 May, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.108).

56. Message from Mpande, Cetshwayo and the Zulu Nation, 27 December, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.138).

to enforce their claim, and there was a lull in the series of Zulu complaints to the Natal Government.

In November, 1872, however, Cetshwayo, in reporting isolated cases of disturbance on the frontier, said that he was taking no action with regard to these cases, as he was still expecting the English Government to arbitrate. He asked the Lieut-Governor to advise him how to act, and pointed out that without a settlement of the dispute, peace could not be maintained between the Dutch and the Zulus.⁵⁷

Shepstone, on behalf of the Lieut-Governor, replied that the latter had written to the President of the South African Republic on the subject, and would let Cetshwayo know as soon as an answer was received. In the meantime, he urged the maintenance of peace on the border.⁵⁸

The Natal Government's despatch to President Burgers of the Transvaal, officially from Lieut-Governor Musgrave, but actually written by Shepstone, was principally concerned with Cetshwayo's troublesome brother Mthonga, whose flight to Utrecht in 1861 was the first cause of the border dispute. As we have seen,⁵⁹ Mthonga fled again from Cetshwayo's custody in 1865, this time to Natal. He caused an uproar in Zululand by a clandestine visit to Mpande, and having resisted the attempt by the Natal Government to put him on the charge of a trusted induna remote from the Zululand border, he fled once more into the Transvaal. The Lieut-Governor's despatch informed the President of this occurrence, and pointed out its dangerous possibilities. Mthonga was intelligent, energetic, ambitious and unscrupulous, a rival and sworn enemy of Cetshwayo, the man who had put his mother to death. In the circumstances, it was not to be wondered at if living near the disputed territory,

57. Dunn to Lt.-Governor, 9 November, 1872 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.179).

58. Shepstone to Dunn, 20 November, 1872, appendix 2 to Minute on the relations of the Zulus with the Transvaal, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H. 343).

59. Vide supra, p.12.

he should do all in his power to embroil the Transvaal with the Zulus.

Alluding more particularly to the border dispute, Shepstone informed the President of the wishes which the Zulus had so repeatedly urged upon the Natal Government in regard to it, but did not make any definite suggestion for settling the dispute.

"I allude to the land question", wrote Shepstone, "not with the view of pressing upon you any suggestion on the subject, but because it forms a central point around which so much complaint has gathered."

He pointed out that the Zulus were the leading tribe in South Africa, that they exercised a decided influence over the others, and that the death of Mpande, which was believed to be imminent, might lead to disturbances.⁶⁰ As far as one can tell from Shepstone's studiously vague and non-committal phraseology, his aim was to prompt the Transvaal Government to put forward some suggestion for the settlement of the dispute. If this is so, he was unsuccessful. The President's reply was even more non-committal; it consisted of a simple acknowledgement, and a promise that the matter would receive consideration.⁶¹

In January, 1873, President Burgers made an attempt to settle the border dispute by direct negotiation with the Zulus, independently of the Natal Government. No doubt he wished to avoid any question of the disputed territory being ceded to Natal.⁶² However, he found no-one to meet him at the Zulu border on the appointed day. As he was returning, messengers overtook him with a gift of two oxen and the news that Mpande had died, and that the Zulu nation was in mourning and could therefore transact no business. In the winter, the President was told, Cetshwayo would be glad to to meet him.⁶³

60. Musgrave to Burgers, 30 October, 1872 (G.H. 637, No.11).

61. Burgers to Musgrave, 18 December, 1872, appendix 14 to Minute on the relations of the Zulus with the Transvaal, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H. 343).

62. This point was made by The Transvaal Advocate, 7 January, 1873, quoted in The Natal Witness, 21 January, 1873.

63. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 30 January, 1873, in The Natal Mercury, 13 February, 1873.

The further development of the border dispute was to wait until after Cetshwayo had been installed in the place of his deceased father.

It will be useful to consider here Shepstone's views on the merits of the border dispute.

When he became Administrator of the Transvaal, Shepstone maintained that when he had been in Natal, he had believed, with regard to the border dispute, "that what the Zulus so perseveringly represented by messages and complaints to Natal was substantially true."⁶⁴ It is interesting to note, therefore, that in this despatch to President Burgers of 30 October, 1872, he mentioned the Zulu message of 5 September, 1861 (which related the border negotiations of March of that year), and commented:

"The Government of Natal looked upon this communication as intended to explain in a sense favourable to the Zulus, a negotiation carried on by them in bad faith and with the intention of ignoring or denying the conditions agreed upon the moment the Refugees should be placed in their power."⁶⁵

decision

This is not, in fact, the way in which the Natal Government had regarded this message at the time; when he sent it to the Secretary of State, Lieut-Governor Scott, who was no doubt very much influenced by Shepstone in all matters connected with the Zulus, declared the alleged cession to be bogus, and reported that the Boers had forcibly seized part of the Zulu country.⁶⁶

On the other hand, it seems that Pretorius's explanatory letter of 23 March, 1865, convinced Lieut-Governor Maclean, at any rate, that right was on the side of the Transvaal.⁶⁷

Shepstone's various minutes and other papers on the border dispute, written when he was Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, generally avoid coming down on one side or the other. The Zulu

64. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 2 January, 1878 (C.2079, p.53).

65. Musgrave to Burgers, 30 October, 1872 (G.H. 637, No.11).

66. Scott to Newcastle, 13 September, 1861, quoted in Uys, p.66.

67. Vide supra, p.34.

case is certainly given greater prominence (because Shepstone knew more about it) but it is represented as the Zulu case and not as the truth. Nevertheless, it is likely that Shepstone, while in Natal, privately believed the Zulus to be in the right. The Zulus certainly gained this impression; and John Dunn wrote in October, 1878 (after Shepstone's conversion to the Boer case):

"I know from conversation with the Secretary for Native Affairs, that he (Sir T. Shepstone) sided with the Zulus and had no friendly feeling toward the Dutch of the Transvaal, and am as much surprised as the Zulus themselves at the tone he has taken."⁶⁸

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If Frere is to be believed, Natal officials were, as a breed, notoriously pro-Zulu and anti-Boer,⁶⁹ and Shepstone, when he was the doyen of Natal officials, no doubt shared this attitude.

This statement quoted from the despatch to President Burgers must therefore be attributed to the exigencies of diplomacy, although it might well be considered as going beyond this, and being seriously misleading.

68. Dunn to Bulwer, 21 October, 1878 (G.H. 357).

69. Frere to Herbert, 10 November, 1878, quoted in Worsfold, p.113. Frere makes the same point in many other letters.

CETSHWAYO'S CORONATION.

The death of Mpande - Zulus request Shepstone to instal Cetshwayo - Shepstone's comments on the request - Shepstone's reply - permission to proceed obtained from the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State - further messages and explanations by the Zulus - Shepstone's memorandum on the Zulus' motives - Shepstone's attempts to obtain a military escort - Pine's views - public opinion in Natal on the expedition - the expedition sets off - Shepstone's message sent from the Tugela - expedition welcomed - White Mfолоzi reached - difficulties and misunderstandings - destination reached - political discussions - Shepstone's estimation of Cetshwayo - the day of recrimination - the coronation day - the new laws and the installation - the homeward journey - cost of the mission - unfavourable accounts of the expedition - other views - Carnarvon's remarks - the significance of the 'coronation oaths'.

On November 16th, 1872, John Dunn arrived in Pietermaritzburg bearing a letter to the Lieut-Governor which he had written at the request of Cetshwayo. It was dated "Zulu Country, November 9th, 1872", and read, in part:-

"Cetywayo begs to acquaint the Governor with the serious illness of the King Panda his father, and that Panda wishes it to be made known that should he not recover, he leaves as his successor, to reign in his stead, 'Cetswayo' setting aside anything he might have said to the contrary, and he begs the English Govt. will always show the same friendly feeling and protection to his son, as it has shown to him, and he also hopes that his son will never give cause of offence to the English Government."¹

Before this, rumours of Mpande's death had come to Shepstone's ears²; and it had been reported to him that the people throughout Zululand were apparently in mourning.³ Privately, Dunn confided that Mpande had, in fact, been dead for nearly a month.⁴ It was the custom among the Zulus to conceal the death of chiefs for some time, as it was believed that the tribe was then in a peculiarly vulnerable position. Nevertheless, the news soon became public property, and was reported in The Natal Witness for November 19th.⁵

1. Dunn to Lt.-Governor, 9 November, 1872, annexure no. 10: to Minute on the Relations of the Zulus with the Government of the South African Republic, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H. 343).
2. Shepstone's diary for 1872, entry for 12 November (S.P. Case 8).
3. Rorke to Shepstone, 11 November, 1872 (S.N.A. 1/6/6, No.937).
4. Shepstone's diary for 1872, entry for 16 November (S.P. Case 8).
5. The Natal Witness, 19 November, 1872.

It was not until February 1873 that the Natal Government was officially informed that Mpande had died.

"The Nation", said the Zulu messengers reporting his death, "had suddenly found itself wandering it knows not whither; it wanders and wanders and wanders again, for its guide is no more. Although for many years the King was so ill that he could not move about, his spirit was still there, and by his words the nation was guided, and knew what to do; these have ceased and none but children are left."

The messengers brought four oxen for the Natal Government; they symbolized the head of the deceased King. The messengers had been charged to make certain requests of the Government. The first was that Somtseu "may prepare himself to go to Zululand when the winter is near, and establish what is wanting among the Zulu people, for he knows all about it, and occupies the position of father to the King's children."

The messengers continued, rather obscurely:-

"The Zulu nation wishes to be more one with the Government of Natal; it desires to be covered with the same mantle; it wishes Somtseu to go and establish this unity by the charge which he shall deliver when he arranges the family of the King, and that he shall breathe the spirit by which the Nation is to be governed."

The messengers stated that they were also commissioned to urge "what has already been urged so frequently, that the Government of Natal be extended so as to intervene between the Zulus and the territory of the Transvaal Republic".⁶

There were many questions that Shepstone wished to ask about this communication, but the messengers were empowered only to deliver the message, and not to make any further explanations.

Shepstone was strongly in favour of the Zulu request being granted. Their asking that Mpande's successor should be installed by the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs, he wrote, afforded the Natal Government

"...an opportunity of acquiring a good deal of additional influence and real power not only over the Zulus but over all other Native powers of South East Africa for the power to control the Zulus includes that of controlling all the rest."

6. Statement of Zulu messengers, 16 February, 1873, annexure to Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C. 1137, p.22).

Shepstone attached particular importance to the bringing of the 'King's head' to the Natal Government, for, he stated, it "implies vassalage on one side and supremacy on the other." Previous messages from the Zulus had also acknowledged the supremacy of the Natal Government, but Shepstone had always looked upon these sentiments, delivered in private, as being "more complimentary than real". But the open and public delivery of the four oxen symbolizing the King's head, Shepstone considered, was to be taken very much more seriously. Indeed, he claimed to have gathered from other, unspecified, sources that the older section of the Zulu nation wished for complete incorporation with Natal, and were willing to pay taxes; while even the younger section were to some extent actuated by the same desire. This desire was partly to be accounted for by the dispute with the Transvaal over land.

"Cetywayo", wrote Shepstone, "may, and probably does feel, that some change is necessary to secure the Zulu position in the presence of surrounding events and feeling the pressure of public opinion among his own people, is willing to occupy a position more subordinate to this Government than his father did and to submit himself to its guidance in his policy - domestic as well as foreign." ⁷

Events of later years seem to indicate that Shepstone was somewhat too optimistic in his interpretation of this message of February, 1873. It would have been more prudent to regard the sentiments expressed in this message too, as "more complimentary than real". There is little doubt that Cetshwayo wished for British support to ensure his unopposed succession to the throne, and that the Zulu nation wished for the protection and patronage of the British, whom they trusted, as a safeguard against the threat of Transvaal aggression; but it is unlikely that the Zulus at any time had any wish to pay taxes, or to be ruled from Pietermaritzburg.

7. Memorandum on ibid., by Shepstone, 3 March, 1873 (G.H. 357). This volume in the G.H. series is supposed to contain incoming South African correspondence for October and November, 1878. This memorandum is thus clearly in the wrong place. The explanation is evidently that at this time the Lt.-Governor asked to see certain papers in the Government House records relating to the disputed territory between Zululand and the Transvaal; they were collected into a folder and given to him; when he had finished with them, however, they were not returned to their proper places, but were simply put in the current volume.

The reply to the Zulu message of February 1873 asked for further explanations. The Zulu messengers were charged to tell Cetshwayo and his advisers that before any answer could be given to the request for Mr. Shepstone to instal Mpande's successor, the Lieut-Governor wished to know "more explicitly what the Zulu Nation wishes to be the result of his going, as regards the greater unity it desires with this Government". The Natal Government also wished for further explanations with regard to the request that it should extend itself between the Zulus and the Transvaal, for it could not entertain any proposal that might appear to prejudge the merits of the border dispute.⁸

Shortly after having received the Zulu message, Shepstone was surprised to read in The Transvaal Advocate an article which purported to give an "authentic statement" about the recent visit paid by the Transvaal President to the Swazi and Zulu border country. While he was at the Blood River, it stated,

"a deputation arrived from Ketchwayo, consisting of three of his under captains, giving information of the death of Panda, his father, and his desire to be crowned as the future King by our President, during the next winter, as it was the wish of the whole Zulu nation that he (Ketchwayo) should become King."⁹

Shepstone was probably not unduly perturbed by this report - it bore all the marks of untruth. In addition to the passage quoted above, it represented Cetshwayo as requesting the protection of the Transvaal, and as stating that he was "willing to acknowledge all treaties entered into between this State and his father" - that is, to concede the Transvaal case in the border dispute. It is on the face of it unlikely that Cetshwayo would have asked the Transvaal Government as well as the Natal Government to instal him; and an examination of the relations between the Transvaal and the Zulus both before and after this episode renders it even more unlikely. Nevertheless, Shepstone asked the messengers for an explanation of this report.¹⁰

Meanwhile permission had to be sought from higher authority

8. Message to the Zulu Nation, 5 March, 1873, annexure to Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (.1137, p.23).

9. The Transvaal Advocate, 25 February, 1873, quoted in the The Natal Witness, 11 March, 1873.

for Shepstone to undertake the installation of Cetshwayo. Lieutenant-Governor Musgrave sent transcripts of the Zulu message and of the reply thereto, together with Shepstone's Memorandum of March 3rd, with which, he said, he entirely concurred, to the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley.¹¹ To the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Barkly, he wrote that it would be necessary to adopt some definite policy before a reply could be received from the Secretary of State, and asked for his views.¹²

Barkly, in his reply, stated that he did not wish to fetter the discretion of the Natal authorities, who were nearer the scene and knew more about it. He was nevertheless in some anxiety that the death of Mpande might be followed by disorders and civil war in Zululand, and was opposed to any interference by Britain in the dynastic changes or internal politics of Zululand, unless danger to its own possessions was likely to arise from non-intervention. So assuming that if the Natal Government refused to instal Cetshwayo, it would sink in the estimation of its native subjects, and endanger the amicable relations between Natal and Zululand, then Barkly approved of Shepstone's going.

He drew attention to the Transvaal Advocate article, which Shepstone had already seen, and said that it would appear that Cetshwayo was playing a double game.

"My confidence nevertheless in Mr. Shepstone's judgement and ability is so implicit, that this apparent duplicity on the part of Cetywayo..... strikes me rather as an additional reason why it would be desirable for him to proceed to Zululand and ascertain what is really going on."¹³

The Secretary of State, whose reply came before the expedition set off, approved of Barkly's remarks, only adding a caution to the Natal Government not to make any extension of British territory (a reference to the Zulu request concerning the disputed territory) without the previous sanction of the Home Government.¹⁴

11. Musgrave to Kimberley, 10 March, 1873 (G.H. 279, No. 45).

12. Musgrave to Barkly, 10 March, 1873 (G.H. 637, No. 22).

13. Barkly to Musgrave, 25 March, 1873 (G.H. 357). Vide footnote 7.

14. Kimberley to Officer Administering the Government, 24 April, 1873 (G.H. 21, No. 320).

On May 3rd a message arrived from the Zulus, denying that the President of the South African Republic had been asked to crown Cetshwayo. All that had happened, the messengers explained, was that Cetshwayo had received a message from the President to meet and discuss the boundary question. This could not be done while the nation was in mourning, so the President had been informed of Mpande's death, and two oxen had been sent to him. These had been nothing more than acts of courtesy; the Boers had installed Mpande, so it was thought right to inform them of his death; while the two oxen were by way of apology for Cetshwayo's not meeting the President at his invitation - they did not represent the King's head.

"On the other hand", the messengers continued, "the oxen sent to the Natal Government were sent by the Zulu Nation, to carry the head of their King to the Power to which by the united will of the Zulu People it really belongs, and they have further willed that the son which is to succeed, shall belong as its son to that same power." ¹⁵

This explanation was accepted by the Natal Government.¹⁶ The Zulu messengers stated that the embassy to take Shepstone to Zululand would arrive that moon. It would be charged with further explanations which Shepstone had requested.

On June 9th the promised embassy arrived. It urged that the season was advancing, that the grass was becoming dry, and that cultivation would be delayed unless the ceremony took place soon. It also provided the requested further explanations. With regard to the greater unity with the Natal Government, which the message of February had declared to be the desire of the Zulu nation, the messengers of June did not add much. They stated that in Zulu law Shepstone occupied the rank of Shaka (he had been accorded this status in 1861) and was therefore in the place of Cetshwayo's father; he was the witness before whom Cetshwayo was proclaimed heir by Mpande in 1861; and he represented the British Government. The fact of his going to instal Cetshwayo would bring about the greater unity desired; but the details would have to be decided

15. Statement of Zulu messengers, 3 May, 1873, annexure to Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C.1137, p.24)

16. Message to the Zulu Nation, n.d., annexure to ibid. (C.1137, p.24).

by discussions between Shepstone and the head men of the Zulu nation. With regard to Natal's intervention in the Transvaal-Zulu border dispute, this too could not be discussed in detail by messengers. The Natal Government was again assured that there was no intention of allowing any other power to take any part in the installation.

* ✓ "Pande was installed by the Boers in time of war and revolution, and this always caused Zulu eyes to look in two directions. Chaka may years ago sent an embassy to the Cape,¹⁷ and thereby decided which way the Zulus should look, and they have now determined to look only as their Chief Chaka directed them."¹⁸

In a memorandum, dated 11 June, 1873, on the above message, Shepstone gave his interpretation of the motives of the Zulus in requesting him to instal Cetshwayo. There was the fact that Shepstone occupied the position of Shaka in Zululand, and was chief witness to the formal act of 1861.

The Zulus hoped that the charge delivered to Cetshwayo by Shepstone at his coronation would prevent the slaughter of those who had opposed the accession of the king, as well as producing some amelioration in the internal government of the country in the future.

The installation of Cetshwayo by an officer of the Natal Government would put an end to the succession disputes which had plunged the country for nearly twenty years. The Zulus knew that Cetshwayo had brothers living in Natal, including, many believed, Mbuyazi. If the British installed Cetshwayo it would be a guarantee that they would not permit any brother living in Natal to attempt revolution; and it would discourage any such ambitions in Cetshwayo's Natal brothers. On the other hand, wrote Shepstone:-

"Refusal to comply with this request could easily and most probably would be interpreted to mean dissatisfaction at Cetywayo's accession, and a leaning towards another, and this alone would be a fruitful source of Zulu revolutions"

17. In 1828 Shaka sent an embassy under the induna Sotobe to the British authorities at the Cape to negotiate a treaty of friendly alliance. But Shaka had recently made an attack on the Pondos which had disturbed the frontier; the Zulu envoys were regarded as spies and were not permitted to proceed beyond Algoa Bay.
18. Statement of Zulu messengers, 9 June, 1873, annexure to Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C.1137, pp.24-5).

Zululand abutted on two White states, Natal and the Transvaal Republic. There were many grounds of dispute between the Zulus and the Transvaal. The fact that Mthonga lived under the protection of the Transvaal, which made no attempt to return him to Natal, from whence he had fled, roused fears among the Zulus that the Boers intended to use him as a pawn in their designs on Zululand. It was also believed that attempts had been made by the Transvaal, or by individuals in the Transvaal, to seduce Hamu, Cetshwayo's most powerful and influential brother, from his loyalty to the rightful heir. Finally, and linked with both the above, there was the running sore of the border dispute. All these circumstances estranged the Zulus from the Transvaal Government and made them wish to retain the closest and friendliest relations with the British Government in Natal.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Shepstone, wishing his mission to Zululand to be as impressive as possible, had asked for 100 men of the 75th Regiment and two field-pieces to accompany him as an escort.²⁰ But Barkly refused permission for this. The Lieut-General, he said, had the strongest objections, on military grounds, to Her Majesty's troops proceeding into Zululand, and Barkly himself considered the proposed step unwise. It might, he wrote, to some parties in Zululand, assume the aspect of a military reconnaissance, and so excite jealousy and mistrust; or on the other hand it might lead the Zulus to expect British military support in any move against the South African Republic, the Portuguese, or other native tribes. So great a compliment paid to the Zulu King might make other chiefs feel slighted. If there were any danger to the personal safety of Shepstone or his party, the expedition should not be undertaken at all.²¹

19. Memorandum by Shepstone, 11 June, 1873, annexure to ibid. (C.1137, p. 25).

20. Shepstone to Henrique Shepstone, 4 June, 1873 (S.P. Case 29); Milles to Barkly, 4 June, 1873 (G.H. 637, No. 2). Col. Milles was the Officer Administering the Government in the interval between the departure of Musgrave and the arrival of Pine.

21. Barkly to Milles, 20 June, 1873 (G.H. 333, No. 74).

Shepstone had mentioned the possibility of a massacre of Cetshwayo's opponents on the occasion of the latter's coronation; if this happened, the Officer Commanding could hardly forbear offering protection to those who needed it, and thus risk a collision. Barkly pointed out that Shepstone had had no military escort in 1861, and yet had accomplished that mission successfully.²²

The Secretary of State, when his views were ascertained, agreed with Barkly that Her Majesty's troops should not be used.²³

Eventually Shepstone had to make do with 100 Natal Volunteers,²⁴ although this involved greater expense, and although, one would have thought, their accompanying him to Zululand was open to many of the objections that Barkly had raised to the use of regular troops.

The correspondence concerning the military escort had wasted a month; a further delay was caused by the necessity to secure the permission of the incoming Governor, Sir Benjamin Pine, for the use of the Volunteers, and for the expedition generally. Pine, who arrived in Natal on July 16th, readily gave his assent. He felt that the Natal Government could not abandon the expedition without loss of prestige, and so gave Shepstone permission to take with him the escort of Volunteers, without which he was reluctant to go. He gave him no precise instructions, which he felt might hamper rather than assist him, but informed him of his general views. They were that the purpose of the mission was not to settle any succession dispute or support any claim to the throne,

"but simply to assist at the installation of the King, who should be acknowledged by the whole Zulu Nation so far as their opinion could be ascertained. I considered that the Zulu authorities in asking this Government to send Mr. Shepstone to the installation of Ketywayo, simply asked us to recognize the lawful King of the country."

Shepstone was to make guarantees by Cetshwayo against the killing of those suspected of disaffection on the occasion a condition of his proceeding into Zululand. He was to negotiate for the free

22. Barkley to Milles, 25 June, 1873 (G.H. 333, No. 75).

23. Kimberley to Barkly, 31 July 1873, enclosure in Barkly to Pine, 9 September, 1873 (G.H. 333 No. 79).

24. Pine to Barkly, 14 August, 1873 (G.H. 637, No. 27).

passage of labourers from the north bound for Natal through Zululand. The strictest discipline was to be observed among the Volunteers.²⁵

Opinion in Natal was not unanimously in favour of the proposed expedition. The Natal Witness could not see that it would achieve anything.²⁶ It would not add to Shepstone's influence nor to the safety of the Colony. It would not influence Cetshwayo to allow labourers from the north to travel safely through his domains, which would be the only possible justification for the expedition. Shepstone's presence would not even check the "debasing orgies and disgusting cruelties which are usual on such occasions."

On the other hand, the Witness could foresee that such an expedition might have several harmful results. It would feed Cetshwayo's vanity, and make him more difficult to manage. It might make him expect military support in time of war. In particular, averred the paper, the people of the Transvaal knew that Cetshwayo's avowed object was a British guarantee of military support in the event of Boer aggression. The proposed expedition would therefore damage the relations between Natal and the Transvaal.

Another objection was that, since Mpande had, according to the Witness, nominated Mkhungo as his heir, Britain, by supporting Cetshwayo, would be intervening in the dynastic disputes of Zululand, which she should avoid doing. There was also the danger involved; the sight of the military escort might have the effect of a red rag on a bull to the unruly Zulu warriors. And there was also the expense. This the Witness estimated at £2,000 on one occasion, and at £5,000 on another. Whatever it was, it considered that the colony should not pay it.

"If England wants to ingratiate itself with the Zulu King, or to shed its benign influences over the coronation orgies, then let the Imperial chest bear the burden, but do not let the colonial coffers be robbed for such an absurd purpose."²⁷

25. Pine to Kimberley, 14 August, 1873 (G.H. 279, No. 82).

26. The Natal Witness, 17 June, 1873; 4 July, 1873; 11 July, 1873
25 July, 1873.

27. The Natal Witness, 17 June, 1873.

There was little substance to the arguments of The Natal Witness, which were inspired mainly by a prejudice against the Zulus and against the Executive of Natal, which it considered it its duty to oppose at every turn. The fears of an attack on the expedition, as well as of "orgies and cruelties", proved quite unjustified, as people with a greater knowledge of Zululand knew they would. It was too late in the day to argue that Natal should not intervene in the dynastic disputes of Zululand, as she had already done this in 1861. The Transvaal knew this, and so could hardly take offence at Shepstone's presence at the coronation. Whether his presence would positively bolster the friendly relations between the two countries or not, there could be little doubt that his refusal to attend would be regarded as an unfriendly act, and would revive suspicions that the Natal Government favoured a rival claimant to the throne. It is true that Cetshwayo tried to get Shepstone to agree to a military alliance, but the latter politely refused to give any unconditional guarantee of military support. The expedition did in fact result in a satisfactory agreement on the passage of Amatonga labourers through Zululand. As to the expense, half of it was met by the proceeds of the sale of ivory and cattle given to Shepstone by Cetshwayo; and if the expedition was likely to have good results, mere expense was a poor argument against it.

Nevertheless, the attitude towards the proposed expedition represented by The Natal Witness seems to have been fairly widespread. Shepstone himself wrote that "great difference of opinion existed in and out of the Colony as to the prudence of it."²⁸ The Witness asserted that general up-country feeling was against the expedition,²⁹ and there seems little doubt that many of the Dutch inhabitants of Natal, with their memories of the fate of Piet Retief, considered it ill-advised and dangerous.³⁰ A curious point is that

28. Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C.1137, p.7).

29. The Natal Witness, 22 July, 1873.

30. The Times of Natal, 17 September, 1873.

the Africans of Natal "objected strongly and almost universally."³¹ They seemed to have a great dread of the Zulu King, and some of them freely prophesied that none of the expedition would return.³²

However, all the newspapers in Natal, apart from the Witness, gave the proposed expedition their support;³³ and there was certainly no difficulty in obtaining Volunteers to accompany Shepstone - but this is probably to be attributed more to a love of adventure among young Natalians, than to a recognition of the wisdom of Shepstone's policy.

The expedition eventually set off on the 30th July, 1873. Those accompanying Shepstone included Major Durnford, R.E., and other army officers, Thomas Baines, the well known traveller and artist, who acted as Special Correspondent for The Natal Mercury on this occasion, G.C. Cato, Shepstone's sons, Henrique and George, and the Zulu messengers sent to fetch Shepstone.³⁴ His escort consisted of 110 officers and men of the Natal Volunteers (including the band), two field pieces, numerous waggons, and 300 Natal Africans under their several headmen.³⁵

The Tugela was reached on August 8th. As the camp was being formed, a column of smoke rose from the opposite bank of the river, followed by another about a mile away, followed by others stretching away as far to the northward as could be seen. The Zulu telegraph was at work.³⁶ Shepstone sent a message to Cetshwayo and the Zulu Councillors and Headmen, stipulating, as Pine had required him to do, that the occasion was to be unstained by one drop of blood, and

31. Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C.1137, p.7).
32. The Times of Natal, 17 September, 1873.
33. The Natal Mercury, 23 June, 1873; The Natal Colonist, 24 June, 1873; The Times of Natal, 16 July, 1873.
34. H.C. Shepstone's diary for 1871-4, entry for 30 July, 1873 (S.P. Case 27); Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C. 1137, p.8).
35. Report on the Expedition to instal Cetshwayo, by Shepstone, n.d. (C. 1137, p.7). All information on this expedition is derived, except where otherwise stated, from this source, henceforth referred to as "Shepstone's Report".
36. Letter from "Special Commissioner" Thomas Baines, n.d., in The Natal Mercury, 12 August, 1873.

adding that if anyone was condemned to death for political reasons while he was in the country, the sentence should not be carried out until the charges and evidence had been submitted to him.

"I shall expect to meet on my way a decided acceptance of these conditions or I shall hesitate to proceed. I cannot allow myself to be a witness to the spilling of blood while I am permitted only by my Government to carry out a mission of peace."³⁷

A reply, fully accepting these conditions, was received on August 15th, when the expedition was near the Church of England Mission Station, Kwamagwaza.

Shepstone also stated in his message of August 8th:-

"I shall not condescend to contradict the foolish rumours that I am bringing a rival heir to the Zulu authority, I leave these to be corrected by the Zulu messengers who travel with me. I come in good faith to carry out the wish of the Zulu people, and I must be looked upon as fully intending to keep my word."³⁸

This referred to the rumour, which was current, that Shepstone was bringing Mbuyazi, (who had in fact been drowned in the Tugela in 1856, but whom persistent rumour represented as being alive and living under the protection of the British authorities) into Zululand, with the intention of proclaiming him King in place of Cetshwayo. No-one had ever glimpsed him in Natal; it was said that he had been sent to the Cape; and Shepstone's delay in proceeding to Zululand was attributed to his waiting for Mbuyazi to be returned. These rumours caused much uneasiness among the Zulus. Cetshwayo tried to disbelieve them, but he remained suspicious. When he saw the approach of the expedition through a spyglass, its size seemed to him further cause for apprehension, and he was heard to say that there were too many wagons for peace.³⁹ According to Shepstone, "his mind was evidently not at ease until his installation had actually taken place."⁴⁰

However, the expedition was given a hearty welcome by the Zulu people as it passed on its way. The Special Correspondent of The Natal Witness wrote "... we are all struck by the friendliness of

37. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.8).

38. Ibid. (C.1137, p.8).

39. G.C. Cato to William Shepstone, 20 August, 1873 (G.C. Cato Papers, K.C.) Cato got this information from Bishop Schreuder.

40. Shepstone's Report (C1137, p.8).

of the natives, after what we had been told to expect."⁴¹

On the 10th August messengers came from the "Zulu nation" welcoming Shepstone to the country, and delivering ten oxen. (Cetshwayo had undertaken to supply the expedition with food for the duration of the journey.)

"You are the person", Shepstone was told, "to whom this son whom we now wish to be set apart was pointed out by his father while yet living, you are now his only father, and therefore the only one who can carry out his father's direction. You have entered Zululand, it is your country and everything in it is at your disposal." ⁴²

Despite this, the expedition was not without its dangers and difficulties. The original plan was that the expedition should meet Cetshwayo at his kraal near Eshowe, and that he should join the expedition there and accompany it to the Isirebe Kraal, where he would be presented to the Nation. But Shepstone's departure had been delayed, and Cetshwayo found it difficult to feed his 15,000 man escort at Eshowe. So it was decided that he should precede Shepstone to the Isirebe kraal in the valley of the White Mfolozi.

But on August 15th, two days before the expedition reached the White Mfolozi valley, a message arrived to the effect that the headmen of Zululand, under Masipula, Mpande's Prime Minister, had "in their impatience found themselves trespassing, and had saluted Cetshwayo with the royal salute."⁴³ At the same time a note from John Dunn was received, stating that a portion of the Coronation ceremony had been completed.

Shepstone found this disconcerting. He knew that Masipula represented the conservative feeling of the country, and thought it derogatory to call in the assistance of foreigners to install a Zulu king. He feared that Masipula had persuaded the Zulus to install Cetshwayo themselves and dispense with the services of the Natal Government, except as secondary and non-essential. So he sent a message to Cetshwayo, asking for an explanation, and making it clear that if the Natal Government did not have the complete and sole authority to instal Cetshwayo, the expedition would have to

41. Letter, 12 August, 1873, in The Natal Witness, 19 August, 1873.

42. Message from the Zulu nation, 10 August, 1873 (S.P. Case 22)

43. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.9)

turn back.

Before a reply could be received news came that Masipula had died.⁴⁴ The expedition was requested to wait for four days, while the obsequies were completed.

On August 17 Shepsone and his mission reached Entonjaneni, a high ridge overlooking the broad valley of the White Mfolozi, "the cradle of the Zulu power".⁴⁵ They descended into the valley, and set up camp, to wait until the period of mourning had elapsed. Their surroundings were rich in historical associations. Further on was the ancient burial place of the Zulu Chiefs, while their clan was still small and insignificant.

"It is still considered sacred", wrote Shepstone, "and preserved from all desecration. No twig or branch is ever broken from any tree growing on that ridge; no Zulu allows his walking stick to rest on its soil; the annual grass fires have for very many years been prevented from sweeping across it; snakes and lizards of various and unknown kinds and of marvellous size are said to reign there; no-one disturbs them; the spirits of the dead live in them!"⁴⁶

A few miles to the left of the camp was the site of Dingaan's kraal, where Piet Retief and his followers were massacred. The camp was flanked on the right by the Ipate, a deep gorge into which a Boer force was led by the Zulu spy, Bongoza, and ambushed. In the 1870s the name "Bongoza" was still remembered, and was used to signify treachery. Close at hand was the Isirebe kraal, where lived the aged Langazana, the last surviving wife of Senzangakona, father of Shaka, Dingane and Mpande.⁴⁷

Although this was the agreed meeting place, the expedition found no-one there to receive them (except old Langazana, who sent a message of welcome), and no-one to offer explanations or suggest any course of action. The associations of the place led naturally to some gloomy interpretations of these omissions. Among the Natal

44. According to the Rev. Robertson, of purely natural causes. Letter from Baines, 6 September, 1873, in The Natal Mercury, 23 September, 1873.

45. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.9)

46. Ibid. (C.1137, p.10).

47. She died in 1884 at the age of 90, and thus lived through the entire rise and fall of the Zulu monarchy.

Africans accompanying the expedition, the ominous name 'Bongoza' was often heard, despite Shepstone's prohibitions, and some slipped away during the night and returned to the Colony. However, there is no trace in newspaper correspondents' letters of any similar fear on the part of the white members of the expedition.

On the 18th, messengers arrived in answer to Shepstone's request for explanations, assuring him that only he, as Shaka, had power to instal Cetshwayo, and that no-one had attempted to contest that. Masipula had only told the young people escorting Cetshwayo that he and the other elders were "willing to accept this child of Panda, and to give him the Royal Salute, when we are authorized to do so by him we expect."⁴⁸ The Royal Salute had not been used by authority. This explanation was accepted, although from the account of this ceremony conducted by Masipula given by Mr. Binns (who does not, however, give his authority), it would appear that it was very much more elaborate and important than the account given to Shepstone.⁴⁹

The messengers invited the expedition to cross the Mfolozi and continue to the Royal kraal in the thorn country beyond. But Shepstone objected to this. The original meeting place had been near the Isirebe kraal, and he had not been notified of any change of plans, which he regarded as discourteous. Messengers went back and forth for several days. The replies from Cetshwayo and the Zulu chiefs were to the effect that Shaka and Dingane had been installed at Isirebe, and had both met violent deaths; so they wished Cetshwayo, like Mpande, who had died peacefully of old age, to be installed elsewhere. Humble apologies for the unintentional discourtesy, and a fine tusk of ivory, accompanied the explanation.

Shepstone agreed to continue as requested, but took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of keeping arrangements, and said it would be most unfortunate if Natal's relations with the

48. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.11).

49. Binns, pp.62-3

new ruler should start with a broken agreement silently acquiesced in by Natal, which might lead the Zulus to suppose that they could break more important agreements, or enter into them without really meaning to keep them.

In 1878 Sir Bartle Frere put another interpretation on Cetshwayo's request, which, however, like most of Frere's statements about him, seems to rest on no evidence whatever. Cetshwayo, he wrote,

"evidently exhausted every device of savage diplomacy, to draw it (the expedition) on, from the previously appointed place of meeting, to others where the escort should find itself powerless to act, and the envoy and every member of the mission should feel their own littleness, and their inability to resist the potentate, within whose power they had placed themselves."⁵⁰

It is possible that Shepstone was influenced by considerations of this sort, although there is no mention of it in his official report. John Dunn, however, mentions that some of Shepstone's escort rode across to see him, and that he assured them that there was no danger in proceeding further.⁵¹ On the other hand, Charles Barter, one of those who rode across to see Dunn, does not mention any enquiry as to the possible danger of proceeding further⁵²; if any such enquiry was in fact made, it cannot have been a very serious or anxious one.

At length, on the 25th August, the expedition crossed the White Mfolozi, and on the 26th advanced in formal procession, about half a mile long, to a point about three miles from the Royal kraal where the ceremony was to take place. They were welcomed by the leading Zulus on the following day, but Cetshwayo was delayed by a swollen leg and came only two days later. The military escort was ready to receive him and he watched the Volunteers going through their movements.

Cetshwayo and Shepstone spent the afternoon in political discussion, especially on the subject of Boer encroachment, about which

50. Memorandum on Mode of Delivering Boundary Award, by Frere, 13 November, 1878 (G.H. 357).

51. Moodie, Battles and Adventures, Vol.II, p.469.

52. Letter from Barter, 21 August, 1873, in The Times of Natal, 30 August, 1873.

the former occasionally grew very earnest, and declared that every Zulu would rather die than submit to the Transvaal's claims. He reproached the Natal Government for its lack of interest and support.

On the following day(29 August) Shepstone returned the visit, and a more formal political discussion ensued. Shepstone was accompanied by his son, Henrique, Major Durnford, and several indunas from Natal. Theoretically his business was with the Zulu Councillors who represented the Nation, but Cetshwayo took an active part in the discussion, and checked the Councillors when they became rambling and evasive.

②
X
On the question of the relations between Natal and Zululand, it was agreed that they should continue on the same footing as they had been under Mpande's reign. Cetshwayo added "only let them be more intimate and more cordial."⁵³ Cetshwayo wished for an offensive and defensive arrangement between the two countries, and said that his army was at the disposal of Natal, and that his quarrels ought to be Natal's also. Shepstone told him that "when we wanted the services of his army, we should consider it to be ours and send for it, but that we must form our own judgement as to his quarrels."⁵⁴

The laws which Shepstone was to proclaim at the installation, and which amounted to a kind of Bill of Rights, were decided upon at this meeting.

③
X
The discussion of the relations between the Zulus and the Transvaal caused the exhibition of strong and angry feelings on the part of Cetshwayo and his Councillors. They maintained that all the area of Transvaal occupation below the Drakensberg, that is, the Utrecht district and part of the Wakkerstroom district, was an encroachment on their territory. This encroachment was continuing; instances of Boer aggression and violence were related. War was inevitable unless Natal intervened. The most they would admit was that grazing rights had been given to individual Boers; but there had been no cession of sovereignty. Signatures by Mpande and other

53. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.18).

54. Ibid. (C. 1137, p.18).

Zulus to documents granting land had been obtained by false pretences; cattle handed over to the Zulus, and now represented as the purchase price of land, had originally been said to be free gifts. Cetshwayo and his Councillors repeatedly urged that the British Government should take over the disputed territory and occupy it; for if this were not done, they said, a very serious disaster must soon occur. Shepstone said that he would tell the Lieut.-Governor of their wish, but stated that he could hold out no hope of the British Government's accepting land burdened with such questions. He advised them that if a clash occurred, the Zulus would be blamed, for they had made no attempt to secure redress from the South African Republic. A full representation of the whole matter should at once be made to the Government of the Republic. Cetshwayo thanked Shepstone for his advice and said it would be followed.⁵⁵

(4) The question of missionaries and their converts was also discussed. "It is clear that Zululand is at present not a field favourable to Missionary operations, as it is unlawful for a Zulu to be a Christian", commented Shepstone in his Report.⁵⁶ A Christian Zulu, maintained Cetshwayo, was a Zulu spoiled. The Missionaries had done no actual wrong, but the tendency of their teaching was mischievous. He wished they would go, or confine themselves to secular education. Shepstone argued that the missionaries had come with the avowed object of teaching the people new beliefs and habits; they had not disguised this; they had been admitted by Cetshwayo or his father; and the Zulu rulers could not find fault when the teaching started to take effect. The Natal Government believed in the objects of the missionaries and respected them, and its convictions ought to be treated with some deference by those whom it

55. Minute on the Relations of the Zulus with the Government of the South African Republic, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H. 343). The discussions on this subject provoked such angry and bitter remarks from the Zulus that Shepstone thought it best to keep his report on it separate from his main Report, as more respectful to the Government of the Transvaal.

56. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.19).

had befriended. It was agreed that no missionary already in the country should be expelled without the assent of the Natal Government; but no agreement could be come to with regard to Zulu converts. Shepstone was not hopeful for the future of missionary endeavour in Zululand. In fact, relations between the missionaries and the Zulu authorities steadily worsened. Cetshwayo suspected them, not without reason, of disloyalty to the regime, and before the outbreak of war in 1879 they had all deemed it prudent to leave the country, although none was formally expelled.

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An agreement was reached on the passage of labourers from the north through Zululand to Natal. A system of resthouses, with stores of food, for the use of such migrant labourers was established under the charge of John Dunn.

This discussion lasted five hours, without intermission.

Shepstone's description and estimation of Cetshwayo is of interest.

"Cetywayo is a man of considerable ability, much force of character, and has a dignified manner; in all my conversations with him he was remarkably frank and straightforward, and he ranks in every respect far above any Native Chief I have ever had to do with. I do not think that his disposition is very war-like; and even if it is, his obesity will impose prudence; but he is naturally proud of the military traditions of his family, especially the policy and deeds of his uncle and predecessor, Chaka, to which he made frequent reference. His sagacity enables him, however, to see clearly the bearing of the new circumstances by which he is surrounded, and the necessity for so adjusting his policy as to suit them."⁵⁷

△
It was decided that the following day should be the 'day of recrimination', the day after, a Sunday, should be for rest, and that the installation should take place on Monday, September 1st. The day of recrimination was a day set aside for what the Zulus called 'Ukubuzana', that is, questioning each other; the object was to settle all matters connected with the last reign and secure a fair commencement for the coming one. This questioning often took a serious turn and produced fatal consequences, but to Shepstone's relief, the day passed off without violence.

On the morning of the 1st, a large marquee was pitched in the
57. Ibid. (C.1137, p.21).

central enclosure of the military kraal, Umlambongwenya, where the ceremony was to take place. At noon Shepstone and his party, all in their finest regalia, accompanied by the Volunteers and the contingent of Natal Africans, entered the kraal, with band playing, and took up their positions. Cetshwayo and Shepstone and their respective followers and counsellors, formed a group in front of the marquee, the Volunteers formed up on their right and the Natal Africans on their left. The common people, mostly young men, described three-quarters of a circle about fifty yards off.

Beneath the surface amity, there still lurked, on both sides fears of treachery. Cetshwayo could not entirely free himself of the suspicion that at the last moment Mbuyazi would suddenly be produced and presented to the people as their rightful King;⁵⁸ and the Volunteers fired no rifle salute at any stage, for the very good reason that all their rifles were fully loaded with ball cartridges.⁵⁹

As a spectacle, the ceremony proved to be a great disappointment. It had been expected that it would be "celebrated with infinite pomp and savage ceremony";⁶⁰ people had hastened to join the expedition in order not to miss the sight of all the Zulu warriors in their gorgeous war dress paying homage to their new king. But the Natal expedition had been delayed; by the time it came, shortage of food had forced the Zulu authorities to send most of their warriors home; and the number that witnessed the coronation was reduced to 8-10,000, according to Shepstone, and about 5,000 according to most other observers.⁶¹ Very few were in their war dress, and in their lack of discipline and precision, they struck Thomas Baines

58. According to Shepstone. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.8).

59. Letter from "Volunteer of 13 Years Standing", 24 September, 1873, in The Natal Witness, 3 October, 1873; Letter from Baines, 1 September, 1873, in The Natal Mercury, 16 September, 1873.

60. The Natal Mercury, 24 July, 1873.

61. Letter from Baines, 1 September, 1873, in The Natal Mercury, 16 September, 1873; letter from Barter, 2 September, 1873, in The Times of Natal, 10 September, 1873; The Natal Mercury, 9 September, 1873 (based on a report by Harry Escombe, who had returned to Durban late on the night of the 6 September, ahead of the rest of the expedition.)

as comparing very unfavourably with the Matabele.⁶² The general impression gained was that the Zulus were no longer a formidable military power.⁶³

6 Shepstone opened the proceedings by delivering, in Zulu, an address, in the form of questions, to which he required an audible assent from the brothers and councillors of Cetshwayo, who formed his audience, as the common people were too far off to hear. They agreed that he had entered Zululand at the request of the Zulu nation to instal Cetshwayo; that he was asked to come because he was the chief witness to his nomination by Mpande in 1861; that they had requested him to proclaim new laws by means of which the new King might reign over a contented people and a prosperous country, that the lives of the people were the property of the country, vested in the King on behalf of the country, and that no man had the right to take life without the previous knowledge and consent of the King; that no man should be condemned without a fair hearing, before the King, if he wished; and that the punishment of death for every crime destroyed a people.

~~4~~ This being all assented to, Shepstone, standing in the place of Cetshwayo's father, and so representing the Nation, proclaimed the new laws:-

1. "That the indiscriminate shedding of blood shall cease in the land."
2. "That no Zulu shall be condemned without open trial and the public examination of witnesses for and against, and that he shall have a right of appeal to the King."
3. "That no Zulu's life shall be taken without the previous knowledge and consent of the King, after such trial has taken place, and the right of appeal has been allowed to be exercised."
4. "That for minor crimes the loss of property, all, or a portion, shall be substituted for the punishment of death."⁶⁴

62. Letter from Baines, 1 September, 1873, in The Natal Mercury, 16 September, 1873.
63. Ibid.; The Natal Mercury, 9 September, 1873; Monthly Summary in The Natal Colonist, 23 September, 1873; The Times of Natal, 17 September, 1873.
64. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.16).

These were the so-called "coronation oaths", about which much was to be heard in later times.

The next step was the transformation of Cetshwayo from a minor and a Prince to a man and a King. This was effected by his retiring into the marquee, with Shepstone and his party, but with no Zulus except one body servant, and donning a scarlet mantle and scarlet and gold head-dress. The head-dress was based on the Zulu war head-dress, and was made by the master-tailor of the 75th Regiment.

Cetshwayo was then formally presented to the people as their new King. The Durban Artillery fired a 17 gun salute, the Volunteers saluted, and the band struck up. Shepstone's and Cetshwayo's heralds proclaimed the new laws to the people. Shepstone pointed out their new duties under the new laws to the brothers and councillors, and urged moderation, prudence and justice on Cetshwayo as a means of overcoming all difficulties.

The ceremony was now complete, and after a complimentary visit to Cetshwayo's sisters, Shepstone and his followers departed, "followed by crowds of Zulus, who were loud and extravagant in their expressions of satisfaction at what they had seen and heard."⁶⁵

On the following day Shepstone paid a farewell visit to the King, and was presented with tusks of ivory and a herd of cattle. Cetshwayo said "that nothing he could give would represent the obligations of the Zulus to the Government of Natal; they themselves now belonged to the Government, and must be accepted in payment of that debt."⁶⁶ To refuse the proffered gift would have been considered an affront, so Shepstone accepted it, but sold it, and paid the proceeds (about £2,000) into the Natal Treasury.

On the 3rd September the expedition broke camp and started on the homeward journey. The Zulu councillors came to wish them a good journey and to express the hope that the good feeling that had been established might grow.

65. Ibid. (C.1137, p.17).

66. Ibid. (C.1137, p.17).

"Our journey home through Zululand", wrote Shepstone, "was one continual exhibition of gratitude towards us by high and low of both sexes. They showed how deep had been the anxiety from which they were now relieved; old and young travelled for miles to see us and express their thanks to us, and their admiration of the new laws and of those who had devised and proclaimed them. Groups might be seen seated by the wayside patiently awaiting our passing, and this continued until we re-entered Natal."⁶⁷

The Volunteers left the expedition as they neared their homes, and the remainder reached Pietermaritzburg on the 19th September, having been away a little over seven weeks. The total cost of the mission to Zululand came to £5,140, which was borne by the Natal Government. But half of this total was realised by the sale of ivory and cattle given by Cetshwayo.⁶⁸ The Lieut.-Governor, Sir Benjamin Pine, warmly approved of Shepstone's conduct of the undertaking and considered it a success.⁶⁹ He pointed out, in a confidential despatch to Lord Carnarvon, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the Sand River Convention had been interpreted by some to mean that the Zulus were under the control of the Boers, to the exclusion of the British; "this mischief" he wrote, "has been effectually counteracted by the.....installation of the King of the Zulus by this Government."⁷⁰ Nothing had caused Shepstone to change his mind about the beneficial effects which he expected to flow from his installation of Cetshwayo. He pointed out that the Boers had gained an influence over Mpande by virtue of having installed him as King; the British, he wrote, had now gained a similar influence over Cetshwayo.⁷¹

Shepstone's official report on the expedition leaves one with the impression that it was successful, dignified, important, and impressive. But more critical or hostile accounts are available, and should be set against Shepstone's favourable one. The Natal Witness wrote:-

"A wonderful sight had been expected, but instead nothing was to be seen, except about 5,000 Kafirs, who did not honour their visitors by putting on their war dress, and appearing in all the gaudy panoply usual on great occasions, but were almost

67. Ibid. (C.1137, p.18).

68. The Times of Natal, 6 December, 1873.

69. Pine to Kimberley, 13 April, 1874 (C.1137, p.3).

70. Confidential, Pine to Carnarvon, 16 April, 1874 (G.H. 299).

71. Private Memorandum, 28 February, 1874 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

exclusively in their ordinary undress costume. The ceremony lost all its interest by being performed in a marquee, with but a few spectators. Cetywayo, it seems, objected to submit to the ceremony in public. Some who were on the Expedition, and were in a position to know, assert that the ceremony of making Cetywayo king had been completed in the presence of 60,000 warriors three weeks before, and that the coronation was submitted to at the urgent request of Mr. Dunn, and out of respect to Mr. Shepstone. When the king was crowned he exhibited himself clad in his tinsel crown and red cape, and was of course cheered by black and white alike. Mr. Shepstone had obtained the consent of Cetywayo to proclaim as law that life was to be held more sacred, and that suspected criminals were in future to be tried according to the customs of the country before punishment was inflicted. This was all Mr. Shepstone could do under the circumstances to improve the occasion in that respect, but that the law was broken with impunity next day is almost a certainty. Still it may prove the groundwork upon which some of the principal men may base a demand for reform."

The newspaper doubted whether Shepstone's arrangement for the passage of labourers through Zululand would be effective.

"The probability is that the professions of assistance now made will be as little respected as those that have been made for years. The Kafir workmen who return from Natal with money and blankets will, we fear, be just as liable to have blackmail levied on them as before. According to custom, the King made his visitor a present. Seven tusks of ivory and about 200 head of fine oxen were sent, but this Mr. Shepstone considered was less than he had a right to expect, and he returned them. The number of cattle was then increased to 350, and these were accepted as worthy the occasion. The present will fetch when sold probably £2,000, and the cost of the expedition will, it is said, reach £5,000. The lesson taught the Volunteers in campaigning, which is the sole benefit we are sure we have gained, may possibly be worth that figure."⁷²

This account is little more than a mixture of half-truths and surmises by a newspaper which was invariably hostile to the Government, and to Shepstone's policies in particular, but in its tone it represents a section of opinion in the Colony which saw the coronation, not as a diplomatic triumph, but as a ridiculous farce.

John Dunn has also written a hostile account of the coronation. He states that Cetshwayo was disappointed with what took place "which was nothing but a lecture of advice", and with the gifts Shepstone had brought him. He adds that there was a very small show of people at the ceremony, "most of them being tired of waiting so long, and having returned to their homes", and implies that the real coronation ceremony was that performed by Masipula, and that

72. The Natal Witness, 23 September, 1873.

Shepstone's act had been merely a confirmation of this, and a formal acknowledgment by the Natal Government that Cetshwayo was King.⁷³

But this account too, should be treated with caution, for, when it was written, Dunn bore a grudge against Shepstone for having opposed his appointment as one of the 13 Kinglets in Wolseley's post-war settlement of Zululand.

The Natal newspapers, other than The Natal Witness, considered that the expedition had been a success, and well worth undertaking. It was agreed that it had succeeded in dissipating the exaggerated notions that had been prevalent of the Zulus' military power - although this was certainly a mistaken conclusion. Other beneficial results, or expected results, that the newspapers mentioned, were: the greater British influence over the Zulus, Cetshwayo having, according to The Natal Mercury, virtually recognized the Queen as his suzerain; the good effect which the promulgation of the new laws should have in Zululand; the valuable training the expedition had afforded the Volunteers; and the arrangement for the passage of Amatonga and other labourers through Zululand.⁷⁴

The Colonial Office was less than luke-warm in its reaction to the expedition. Herbert minuted that "the expedition was perhaps unavoidable, if the British authority and prestige were to be maintained"; but he referred uneasily to what seemed to him the serious risk that accident or misunderstanding might have aroused an "uncontrollable movement" among the Zulus and led to the total destruction of the mission. He added, however, that Shepstone had

"conducted the Native Policy of Natal for many years with great ability and success. The state of affairs is so peculiar that when I mistrust that policy I feel great hesitation in criticising it."⁷⁵

Lord Carnarvon, who with the Tory victory of 1874 had succeeded Lord Kimberley as Colonial Secretary, was more forthright.

73. Moodie, Battles and Adventures, Vol. II, pp. 476-7.

74. The Natal Mercury, 9 September, 1873; The Times of Natal, 17 September, 1873; The Natal Colonist, 23 September, 1873.

75. Minute by Herbert, 18 June, 1874, on Confidential, Pine to Kimberley, 13 April, 1874 (C.O. 179/114, Natal 5791).

"I greatly doubt the wisdom of the expedition & still more the policy which that expedn. implies and involves. The presence of an officer of Mr. Shepstone's position on behalf of the Govt. of Natal to instal this Zulu King pledges us to a protectorate or something very like it - & looking to the fact that there have been in this country and will be very awkward relations with the S. African Republics it is not wonderful that the first request of the Zulus sh. be for an offensive and defensive alliance.

It must always be remembered that the very qualities & merits & past successes of Mr. Shepstone in native affairs tend to blind him to the danger of these future complications and make him set a horribly undue value on what he describes as British prestige. No doubt that his influence and that of such an expedition will be of a generally civilizing character but even this may be bought too dearly, and with our present experience of the difficulties wh. we have to face on the West⁷⁶ we ought to be very careful how we create future trouble for ourselves on the East."⁷⁷

Carnarvon's official reply to Pine's despatch containing Shepstone's report on the coronation, was not despatched until 7 November, after Carnarvon had seen Shepstone personally on the latter's visit to England. Shepstone's verbal explanations seem to have softened Carnarvon's opposition to the policy of the Zululand expedition, for although he was still not altogether convinced that it had been wise to undertake the mission, an account of the risk involved, he added that he placed "much confidence in his (Shepstone's) belief that it was very important not to lose this opportunity of causing his influence to be asserted and recognized, as well as that its results are likely to be of value." ⁷⁸

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A word should be added about the so-called "coronation oaths" - that is, Cetshwayo's acceptance of the fundamental laws which Shepstone proclaimed on the occasion of the coronation. The alleged breach of these promises by Cetshwayo was one of the justifications provided by Frere for his invasion of Zululand.

In his ultimatum to the Zulu King, Frere declared:-

Causes
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"These laws for the well-being of the Zulu people were the conditions required by the British Government in return for the countenance and support given by it to the new Zulu King by the presence of its representative, and by his taking part in the

76. A reference to the territorial disputes in the diamond fields of Griqualand West.

77. Minute by Carnarvon, 20 June, 1874, on Confidential, Pine to Kimberley, 13 April, 1874 (C.O. 179/114, Natal 5791).

78. Carnarvon to Pine, 7 November, 1874 (C.1137, p.27).

King's coronation; and once spoken as they were, they cannot be broken without compromising the dignity, the good faith and the honour of the British Government."⁷⁹

We cannot here go into the question of whether Cetshwayo did from the start flagrantly disregard the promises he made, as Frere was determined to believe. But it should be mentioned that neither Shepstone nor Pine were so sanguine as to expect that the proclamation of the new laws would effect an instant and sweeping reformation in the Zulu government. Pine wrote that they would probably not be strictly observed, but would be a "beacon to guide future generations into the path of higher civilization."⁸⁰

Shepstone wrote in his report:-

"....it cannot be expected that the amelioration described will immediately take effect. To have got such principles admitted and declared to be what a Zulu may plead when oppressed, was but sowing the seed which will still take many years to grow and mature."⁸¹

The more important point is Frere's assertion that Cetshwayo's assent to these laws was the condition required by the British Government for Shepstone's presence at his coronation, and that his alleged disregard of them therefore compromised that Government's dignity, good faith and honour. This is simply not true. The only condition required was that the occasion should not be marred by bloodshed; and this condition was observed. Of the coronation oaths, Shepstone wrote:-

'When I left Natal, I knew that I was expected to deliver a charge to Cetywayo on his installation, which it was supposed would influence the character of his reign. I looked upon this as something in the nature of an ordination sermon, or a Bishop's charge to candidates for confirmation, likely to influence only in so far as the consciences of those addressed might respond, and their conduct conform to the principles laid down. But, after entering Zululand, I found that the people built very great hopes upon the manner in which I should discharge this part of the duty I had undertaken in their behalf; and ultimately I discovered that I had become clothed with the power of fundamental legislation. This was a responsibility I had not contemplated; but, seeing that I could not withdraw from the position I occupied, I felt bound, representing as I did the Government of a civilized race, to take advantage of the opportunity by endeavouring to ameliorate the condition of a people living under one of the most oppressive despotisms in the world...."⁸²

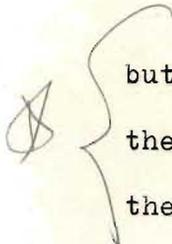
79. Message no.2 to Cetshwayo, delivered to his envoys on 11 December, 1878, enclosure no.2 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 13 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.206).

80. Pine to Kimberley, 13 April, 1874 (C.1137, p.3).

81. Shepstone's Report (C.1137, p.16).

82. This (C.1137, p.16).

It is perfectly clear from this that the coronation promises were not the conditions required by the British Government in return for its support of Cetshwayo.

 Shepstone added that the laws were warmly supported by Cetshwayo, but were unpalatable to the nobles, whose power had increased during the weak reign of Mpande, and who realised that the tendency of the new laws would be to strengthen the central government.

Frere's remarks on these coronation promises were a distortion of the truth, and it was unfortunate that his account of them was very generally accepted at the time of the Zulu War.

THE ARMS TRADE AND ITS EFFECTS

The Diamond Fields trade - John Dunn persuades Cetshwayo of the necessity of acquiring guns - the Delagoa Bay trade - attempts to stop or control this trade - visit of the H.M.S. Danae to Delagoa Bay marks the end of the trade - extent to which Zulus were armed - Natal's responsibility for the arming of the Zulus - arming of Africans raises white fears - effects of Boer defeat by Sekukuni - widespread unrest, 1877-8 - theory of an inter-tribal conspiracy against the white man - difficulty of verifying such theories.

A new factor in Soth African affairs in the 1870s was the acquisition of firearms on an extensive scale by the African tribes. The numerically inferior white race had won its dominant position in South Africa largely because of its superior arms. The acquisition of these same arms by Africans was therefore a fact of momentous importance.

For Africans, the principal source of arms was the Diamond Fields of Griqualand West. Diamonds were first discovered on the banks of the lower Vaal river in 1868, and in 1870 the richest deposit of diamonds in the world was discovered where Kimberley now stands. Fortune-hunters rushed to the scene from all parts of South Africa and overseas. But, more important for our purpose, there was an even greater influx of Africans into the area. They came from the Cape, Natal, the two republics and from even further afield, to work at the diggings. No doubt their principal motive was economic necessity;¹ but an additional reason - which seemed to contemporaries to be the only reason² - was the fact that the Government of Griqualand West, unlike the Governments of the other British colonies in South Africa, and of the two republics, placed no restriction on the sale of arms to Africans. Labourers at the Fields invariably bought a gun before returning home,³ and a roaring trade was done.

It is difficult to say how many guns passed into the hands of Africans in Griqualand West, but the fact that the number imported

1. De Kiewiet, p.155.

2. Memorandum by Sir Garnet Wolseley, 5 February, 1876, enclosure in Secret, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 29 September, 1877 (G.H. 157); Matthews, p.278; Wilmot, Zulu War, p.37.

3. Williams, p.189.

into the Cape jumped from 3,500 in 1870 to 59,000 in 1873, and that the average number imported per year for the period 1872-6 (inclusive) was 35,000, shows that the number must have been considerable.⁴

This traffic in guns was a breach of the Sand River Convention, which had provided that "all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited both by the British Government and the emigrant farmers on both sides of the Vaal."⁵ The republics protested, but to no avail. Dr. Leyds has suggested that Britain followed a deliberate policy of supplying the African tribes ringing the Transvaal with arms, as part of a plot to rob it of its independence.

"It encouraged the natives to attack the Boers. Then, if the natives got the worst of it, the British authorities could interfere on their behalf, and, on the pretext of saving them from the 'Boer aggression' could annex the Transvaal. If, on the other hand, the Boers proved unable to resist the natives, it could be said that the prestige of the whites throughout South Africa was at stake, and that on that account as well for the sake of the Boers, it had become necessary to place their country under the protection of the British. In either event a case for British annexation could be made out."⁶

It is true that Southey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Griqualand West, who adopted a stoutly non-racial line in all matters connected with firearms, wrote to the High Commissioner, "I am unable to see why we should cherish a friendly feeling with the neighbouring republics any more than with the various native tribes"⁷; but Dr. Leyds can offer no real evidence for his theory. A simpler and more plausible explanation is to be found in the following comment of the Diamond News:-

"If we stop the sale of guns we drive from the Fields the only labour by which diamond digging in this country can be profitably carried on. We get our supplies of native labour, simply because the natives can get guns here. Put an end to that and one half our diggers would soon be ruined."⁸

The republics were not alone in their protests against the trade. In February 1872, Keate, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal attempted

4. Figures from the Cape Blue Books, These do not show the number of guns exported from the Cape to Griqualand West, or any inland state.
5. Eybers, p.359.
6. Leyds, pp.159-160.
7. Southey to Barkly, 11 April, 1874, quoted in Leyds, p.159n.
8. n.d., quoted in The Natal Witness, 2 December, 1873.

to secure some restriction on the sale of arms at the Diamond Fields to African labourers from Natal,⁹ but without success. It was the acquisition by Natal Africans of arms from the Diamond Fields that led to the Langalibalele 'revolt' of 1873. Lt.-Governor Pine made another attempt to stop this source of guns,¹⁰ but was informed by Southey that while labourers would be told that their possession of guns in Natal was illegal, they could not be prevented from buying them.

"We have no law in force here", he wrote, "under which any particular class of persons may be prevented from acquiring guns. The laws which regulate the sale and purchase of Guns and Ammunition apply to all persons alike."¹¹

The Zulus also bought large stocks of arms in this period, but not from the Diamond Fields (as few Zulus went out to work as labourers). Many guns were smuggled across the Natal border,¹² but most were imported legally through Delagoa Bay.

John Dunn was the principal agent through whom the guns were imported, and it was he who first persuaded Cetshwayo of the necessity of acquiring firearms. He pointed out that all the other tribes of South Africa were doing so. Possession of guns would ensure his (Cetshwayo's) victory in the dynastic disputes of Zululand, and would check the encroachment of the Boers.¹³ It would also bring in huge profits for John Dunn.

As the Natal authorities would not allow him to carry across the Zulu border more than a very limited number of arms, Dunn turned his attention to an alternative route - Delagoa Bay.

The territory of Mozambique had belonged nominally to the Portuguese for over 300 years, but in fact their jurisdiction was confined to the trading stations on the coast, and they exercised little influence over the interior of the country. The fever-ridden

9. Keate to Barkly, 16 February, 1872 (G.H. 637).
10. Pine to Southey, 11 November, 1874 (G.H. 637).
11. Southey to Pine, 22 November, 1874 (G.H. 343).
12. Letter from Nonoti and Lower Umvoti Correspondent, n.d., in The Natal Witness, 27 June, 1873.
13. Dunn to Shepstone, 31 October, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/1/20, No.63); Dunn to Bulwer, 21 October, 1878 (G.H. 357); Moodie, Battles and Adventures, Vol.II, p.455; Statement of messengers from Zulu chiefs, 19 February, 1880, quoted in Colenso, Commentary, p.623; Vin, p.57.

nature of Delagoa Bay had, at the end of the 17th century, caused the abandonment of the Portuguese factory there. But the title to the area had not been relinquished, and later in the 18th century a fort was built to the north of the bay, where the town of Lourenço Marques now stands.¹⁴ The settlement was little more developed in our period than it had been when first founded. Merchandise was still disembarked on the backs of Africans, and was frequently spoiled by water. Delagoa Bay was the nearest port to the Transvaal, but the tsetse fly reduced trade with the interior to a minimum.

The Portuguese hold over the country was tenuous. "We do not really rule except up to the range of the ancient guns of our tumble-down ramparts" admitted the Portuguese Governor of Lourenço Marques.¹⁵ The only practical power the Governor had over a tribe was to prohibit trade with it. Even this was not completely effectual, for in 1868 the town was besieged by local tribesmen.¹⁶ Peace with the tribes around the settlement was preserved, according to the Governor, "through a miracle of equilibrium which can only be explained by their extreme ignorance of their power, or by the still great prestige of the white man."

The defences of the settlement were pitiful. One wall of the fort had fallen down, and it was swept by the sea at spring tides, a process which was gradually undermining its foundations. The cannons, ancient, honeycombed, and mounted on rotten carriages, were of more danger to the garrison than to anyone else. The garrison was inadequate and unreliable, being composed of white convicts and black slaves to the number of about a hundred.¹⁷ The Government of the territory was desperately short of money; it had to borrow money from a French trading house to pay its troops in Mozambique,

14. C.H.B.E., Vol.VIII, p.463.

15. Governor of Lourenço Marques to Governor-General of Mozambique, 24 April, 1875, printed by order of the Governor-General, translated by Consul F. Elton. (G.H. 344).

16. Confidential Report on the Transvaal (and Delagoa Bay) by G. Pomeroy-Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

17. Governor of Lourenço Marques to Governor-General of Mozambique, 24 April, 1875 (G.H. 344).

the capital of the territory, and some of the civilian officials in May 1874 had not been paid for nine months.¹⁸

In these circumstances the arms trade, which seems to have started on a large scale with the opening of a regular steam-ship service around South Africa as far as Zanzibar in early 1873,¹⁹ was a boon to the Portuguese. Arms became the chief import of Delagoa Bay. Estimates of the number of guns imported annually vary from about 10,000 before 1875,²⁰ to about 20,000 after.²¹ The revenue derived from customs dues rose in a few years from £2,000 per annum to £8,000 or more.²²

The guns were sold to Swazis, Tongas, Sekukuni's people, and probably about half of the number imported went to the Zulus. Many were imported direct from Europe, but official records show that between 1872 and 1877, inclusive, 19,600 guns were re-exported from Port Natal to Delagoa Bay.²³ This re-export was perfectly legal, although the Natal Government knew where the guns were going, and although the sale of guns to Africans in Natal and the export of guns across the Tugela were forbidden.

18. Elton to Foreign Secretary, 27 May, 1874 (G.H.344).
19. Confidential, Bulwer to Hicks-Beach, 3 April, 1879 (G.H. 299, p.157).
20. The estimate of an English merchant at Delagoa Bay, made to a correspondent of the Aborigines Protection Society. Chesson to Carnarvon, 27 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 16 August, 1877 (G.H. 27, No. 449).
21. Vice-Consul Thompson to Foreign Secretary, 22 September, 1879, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Wolseley, 8 January, 1880 (G.H. 158).
22. Confidential Report on the Transvaal (and Delagoa Bay) by G. Pomeroy-Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).
23. Guns exported from Port Natal to Delagoa Bay, 1870-1879.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Value of Guns</u>
1870	18	£32
1871	247	£312
1872	905	£1,320
1873	3,807	£4,577
1874	7,228	£7,193
1875	5,336	£4,511
1876	790	£600
1877	1,542	£1,190
1878	-	-
1879	-	-

The value of the guns shows that they were mostly of the type intended for the 'native trade'. Figures from the Natal Blue Books.

Most of the guns acquired by the Zulus were procured through the agency of John Dunn.²⁴ He operated in conjunction with Durban firms, especially Beningfield and Son, which had a branch at Delagoa Bay. The system seems to have been this:- the Zulus paid Dunn in the form of cattle, which were sent to Durban and sold by Beningfield, the money being credited to Dunn's account at the Delagoa Bay branch. Parties of Zulus, or sometimes Tonga carriers, would then collect the guns from Delagoa Bay.²⁵

Powder and shot were also imported through the Portuguese port, although the Zulus had learned the art of making gunpowder (which was of so high a quality that traders and hunters sometimes bought it instead of sending to Natal).²⁶

Although the Natal Government was ignorant of the part played in this traffic by its part-time employee, John Dunn, it was well aware that thousands of stands of arms were passing through Port Natal and Delagoa Bay into the hands of the Zulus and other African tribes, and that some were even finding their way back into Natal. But the trade was profitable to important interests in Durban, and this, no doubt, explains the desultory and half-hearted nature of the attempts which were made to stop or check it.

In February 1873 Lt.-Governor Musgrave suspended the issue of licenses for the export or import of firearms, giving as his reason the threatening aspect of affairs between the Zulus and the Transvaal.²⁷ But no similar action was taken by the Cape Government, and this ban was soon lifted.

24. Chesson to Carnarvon, 27 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 16 August, 1877 (G.H. 27, No.449); Vice-Consul Thompson to Foreign Secretary, 22 September, 1879, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Wolseley, 8 January, 1880 (G.H. 158).

25. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 14 February, 1878 (G.H. 157); Secret, Frere to Hicks-Beach, 26 October, 1878, enclosure in Secret, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 12 December, 1878 (G.H. 158); Vice-Consul Thompson to Foreign Secretary, 22 September, 1879, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Wolseley, 8 January, 1880, (G.H. 158); Statement of messengers from Zulu chiefs, 19 February, 1880, quoted in Colenso, Commentary, p. 693.

26. Chesson to Carnarvon, 27 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 16 August 1877 (G.H. 27, No.449).

27. Musgrave to Barkly, 6 February, 1873 (G.H. 637, No.19).

The Langalibalele disturbance prompted Lt.-Governor Pine to impose severe restrictions on the arms trade, including a complete prohibition on the export of guns to the interior and to Delagoa Bay.²⁸

This provoked protests from those who profited by the trade. A deputation of merchants pleaded their case before Pine,²⁹ a petition was addressed by the Durban Chamber of Commerce to the Legislative Council,³⁰ and the Natal Mercury advocated "a wise policy of relaxation", particularly "as regards guns required for reshipment".³¹

The general tenor of the objections to the restrictions imposed may be summed up in the words of the Natal Mercury:-

"The restrictions imposed upon the trade are felt to be most injuriously affecting our trade, while they fail altogether in effecting the desired end - the prevention of sale of arms to or possession by natives. Guns pour in through Cape ports, St. John's River, and Delagoa Bay, and our neighbours only benefit by the difficulties placed in the way of trade here."³²

The restrictions were therefore lifted in June 1875 by Pine's successor, Sir Garnet Wolseley. It was explicitly stated that there was to be no restriction on the export to Delagoa Bay even of arms "obviously intended for the native trade". The reason Wolseley gave for this was that the ban did nothing to restrict the Delagoa Bay arms trade, but merely diverted it away from Port Natal.³³ At the same time, however, and in response to a resolution of the Natal Firearms Board, he wrote to the Portuguese Governor-General at Mozambique, requesting him to put a stop to the indiscriminate sale of arms at Delagoa Bay, but stating that until this was done, he would continue to authorize the export of arms from Natal to the Portuguese port.³⁴ He also wrote to the Cape Government suggesting a similar course of action on its part;³⁵ the reply was that a ban

28. Minute, unsigned, n.d., giving a resume of attempts to control the arms trade (G.H.345).

29. The Natal Mercury, 6 October, 1874.

30. Ibid., 20 October, 1874.

31. Ibid., 16 January, 1875.

32. Ibid., 22 October, 1874.

33. Colonial Secretary to Secretary to the Firearms Board, 17 June, 1875, (G.H.344).

34. Draft, Wolseley to Governor-General, Mozambique, 14 July, 1875, (G.H.344).

35. Wolseley to Barkly, 14 July, 1875 (G.H. 637, No.64).

on the export of arms from Cape ports to Delagoa Bay had been in force for three or four years.³⁶ The Governor-General of Mozambique replied that he agreed with Wolseley's views and would submit them to his Government in order to get authority to impose a ban.³⁷

The British Consul in Mozambique was sceptical of the Governor-General's professed wish to check the trade, for it served as an insurance against possible attacks on the Portuguese settlement by surrounding tribes, who depended on it for their supply of arms, and who would not be so foolish as to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs; and more important, the customs dues on the imported arms were essential for the solvency of the Possession.³⁸ (This latter consideration was also a factor in the British Government's wish to stop the trade. Malcolm of the Colonial Office advocated "putting very strong pressure upon the Portuguese Government to prohibit the importation of arms through Delagoa Bay. This would impoverish them and might lead to some arrangement for our getting possession of the place".³⁹) As Consul Elton feared, nothing was done, and the trade continued to flourish. As the Portuguese took no action, the Government of Natal placed no restriction on the export of arms to Delagoa Bay. The Natal argument was still that the traffic could only be checked at Delagoa Bay, and that any unilateral action by Natal would be useless.⁴⁰ And Natal felt itself under no very pressing obligation to deny itself the profits which accrued from this trade, as long as the Cape did nothing to check the supply of arms to Griqualand West,⁴¹ and, it seems to have

36. Barkly to Bulwer, 6 September, 1875 (G.H. 333, No.102).

37. Governor-General, Mozambique, to Wolseley, 4 August, 1875, (G.H.344).

38. Confidential, Elton to Foreign Secretary, 3 December, 1875, enclosure in Elton to Bulwer, 6 December, 1875 (G.H. 345).

39. Minute by Malcolm, 7 February, 1876, quoted in Uys, p.156.

40. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 2 November, 1875 (G.H. 280, No.215); Confidential Report by Attorney-General Gallwey, 20 December, 1877, on Confidential, Shepstone to Bulwer, 15 December, 1877 (G.H. 351).

41. Memorandum by Colonial Secretary, 1 December, 1877, on Secret, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 29 September, 1877 (G.H. 157).

been believed, though this was in fact untrue,⁴² to Delagoa Bay.⁴³ Nevertheless, Wolseley's lifting of the ban on the export of arms to Delagoa Bay did not cause the trade to revive to its former proportions,⁴⁴ and after November 1877 no arms were exported from Natal to Delagoa Bay.⁴⁵

However, arms still continued to pour into Delagoa Bay from other sources, and in February 1878 Bulwer, the Lt.-Governor of Natal, received a report that a vessel with cannon for the Zulus was expected at Delagoa Bay.⁴⁶ The High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, despatched a ship, the H.M.S. Danae, to Delagoa Bay, with instructions to the Captain to "consult" with the Portuguese Governor "as to what means can be taken to prevent the entry of such munitions into the Zulu territory."⁴⁷ The result of this expedition exceeded Frere's hopes.⁴⁸ The report about the cannons proved to be groundless; the Portuguese Governor-General had already banned the arrival of the British warship; and the Governor of Delagoa Bay now agreed to ban all further import of arms.⁴⁹ The visit of the Danae marks the end of the Delagoa Bay arms trade,⁵⁰ and the Portuguese authorities refused to sell any more arms to Africans at Delagoa Bay⁵¹ or elsewhere,⁵² despite the blusters and threats of the Zulus.⁵³ Rumours of Russian shipments of arms to the Zulus gained credibility from the tension between Britain and Russia which ex-

42. According to the figures in the Cape Blue Books.

43. Report by Attorney-General, n.d., on Secret, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 12 December, 1878 (G.H.158).

44. Vide table, footnote 23.

45. Report by Controller of Arms, 16 October, 1879 (G.H.362)

46. G.H. Bennet to Bulwer, 18 February, 1878 (G.H.352). Bennet was Emigration Agent for Natal at Delagoa Bay, in charge of securing African labourers for Natal.

47. Confidential, Frere to Commodore Sullivan, 4 March, 1878, enclosure in Confidential, Frere to Bulwer, 5 March, 1878 (G.H. 352).

48. Frere to Shepstone, 12 March, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

49. Governor, Lourenco Marques, to Frere, 19 March, 1878 (G.H.352).

50. Vice-Consul Thompson to Foreign Secretary, 22 September, 1879, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Wolseley, 8 January, 1880 (G.H. 158).

51. Ibid.

52. Governor-General, Mozambique to Bulwer, 30 July, 1878 (G.H.354).

53. Bennet to Bulwer, 26 September, 1878 (G.H. 356).

isted at this period,⁵⁴ but in fact the Zulus were barred from any further acquisition of arms.

The prohibition came, however, as Bulwer remarked, "too late to prevent the arming, to a very large extent, of the Zulu nation."⁵⁵ It is not possible to do much more than guess at the number of guns possessed by the Zulus at the time of the outbreak of war. After the battle of Kambula 326 guns and the bodies of 700 Zulus were found lying near the British camp.⁵⁶ There were about 40,000 fighting men in the Zulu army;⁵⁷ if this ratio held throughout, it would give a total of 17-18,000 guns. After the war, Sir Garnet Wolseley had 5,000 guns handed in to him, which he estimated to be about half the total in Zulu hands.⁵⁸ "An Old Zulu Trader" estimated that there were 20,000 guns in Zululand, of which about 8,000 were fairly good modern rifles, and the rest inferior guns of every description.⁵⁹

Natal's hands were far from clean in the matter of supplying arms to the Zulus. Its ban on the overland export of arms to Zululand was rendered almost nugatory by the lax manner in which it was enforced.⁶⁰ The export of arms by sea to Zululand was unrestricted during most of our period; and John Dunn, through whom the Zulus acquired many, if not most, of their guns, was an agent of the Natal Government.⁶¹ Shepstone, when Administrator of the Transvaal, complained of the activities of Dunn, and of the ease with which the Zulus could obtain munitions directly or indirectly through

54. Secret, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 9 May, 1875 (G.H. 157); Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 28 September, 1878, and 1 May, 1879 (G.H. 158).

55. Bulwer to Capt. J. Child Purvis, 27 March, 1878 (G.H. 638, No.65). Purvis was the master of the Danae.

56. Col. Evelyn Wood to Deputy Adjutant-General, 3 April, 1879 (G.H. 360).

57. The Zulu Army and Zulu Headmen, p.4.

58. Wolseley to Hicks-Beach, 3 September, 1879 (C.2454, p.258).

59. Letter to the Editor, 15 August, 1878 in The Natal Witness, 22 August, 1878.

60. Confidential, F.B. Fynney to Colonial Secretary, 24 April, 1878 (C.S.O. 2552, No.29); Attorney-General to Colonial Secretary, 3 August, 1878 (C.S.O. 2553, No.51).

61. For the purpose of facilitating the transit of Tonga labourers through Zululand.

Natal,⁶² although the situation was no different to what it had been when he had been Secretary for Native Affairs in that colony.

Dunn caused some consternation by the letter he wrote to Bulwer, justifying his part in supplying the Zulus with arms. He stated that his reasons for doing so were to strengthen Cetshwayo's party in Zululand in the years before his accession, and to strengthen the country as a whole against the Boers. He stated that Lt.-Governor Keate agreed with his views, and gave him permission on several occasions to buy arms for the Zulus. But this caused an "envious feeling" in Natal, and, claimed Dunn, Michael Gallwey, the Attorney-General, "advised me to get my supplies from Delagoa Bay, and this is what first put the idea in my head...."

Dunn stated that "in arming the Zulus with guns it was under the impression that the Natal Government coincided with what I did, as I know from conversation with the Secretary for Native Affairs, that he (Sir T. Shepstone) sided with the Zulus and had no friendly feeling toward the Dutch of the Transvaal....."

"I feel confident that had I not taken the steps that I did as regards arming the Zulus with guns that the Boers would long ago have provoked a war, and that nothing but knowing that the Zulus were armed with guns kept them in check; and I also feel assured that, if it had not been from fear of Sir T. Shepstone having the Zulus to back him up, the Boers would not have let the Transvaal been annexed as easily as it was."⁶³

Gallwey naturally denied that he had advised Dunn to import arms through Delagoa Bay, though he admitted, curiously, that it was "not at all improbable that in conversation with Mr. Dunn I made enquiries as to the facilities afforded by that route....." It was absurd, he added, for Dunn to state that he thought the Natal Government coincided with him in arming the Zulus. "He can scarcely imagine", he wrote, "that when in September last he forwarded some 250 stands of arms to the Zulu king he was adopting a course coincided in by the Natal Government".⁶⁴ This was a valid

62. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 14 February, 1878 (G.H.157); Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 22 February, 1878 (G.H.157).

63. Dunn to Bulwer, 21 October, 1878 (G.H. 357).

64. Report by Attorney-General, 28 November, 1878, on Dunn to Bulwer, 21 October, 1878, printed in South And East African Arms Trade, African, No. 173, printed for the use of the Colonial Office, May 1879 (a copy of which I found in G.H. 158).

argument, for after the annexation of the Transvaal, the Zulu arms could only be used against the British; and in September, 1878 relations with the Zulus were strained. But it seems very likely that the Natal Government did not regard the arming of the Zulus in quite so serious a light in the period before the annexation, when the arms were evidently intended for use in resisting Boer encroachments into Zululand.

Certainly the changed relations with the Zulus produced a remarkable alteration in the opinions of The Natal Mercury on the subject. In 1875 it was advocating a "wise policy of relaxation" in the laws governing the arms trade; in 1878 it could not "find words sufficiently strong to denounce the wicked cupidity of the Europeans who can be so lost to all sense of right and patriotic feeling as to take part in, or to connive at, such a traffic."⁶⁵

"I have been shocked", wrote Frere, referring to Dunn's allegations, "to find how very close to the wind the predecessors of the present Government here have sailed in supporting the Zulus, against Boer aggression." But he admitted that Gallwey was able to show the untruth of much that Dunn said.⁶⁶

Dunn's allegation that Keate agreed with his views and allowed him to buy arms for the Zulus is refuted by the records of the Colonial Secretary's Office. They show that during the Governorship of Keate, only fifty guns were granted to Dunn from Natal for hunting purposes (Dunn used to organize hunts in Zululand for visiting English gentlemen), and many of his applications were turned down specifically because of the prospect of a territorial dispute with the Boers.⁶⁷

Letters from Dunn to Shepstone show that the latter disapproved of Dunn's attempts to acquire arms for the Zulus.⁶⁸ Dunn's im-

65. The Natal Mercury, 24 January, 1878. It seems to have been referring particularly to breechloaders, the acquisition of which by the Zulus it regarded as especially dangerous.

66. Frere to Herbert, 12 January, 1878, quoted in Martineau, p.238.

67. Vide footnote 64. See also Draft, Shepstone to Dunn, 19 December, 1871 (S.N.A. 1/1/21, No 109).

68. Dunn to Shepstone, 31 October, 1870, and 17 November, 1870 (S.N.A. 1/1/20, No.63).

pression that the Natal Government was pro-Zulu and anti-Boer may very well have been correct; but it did not approve of or encourage the arming of the Zulus. The main reason for the lack of any energetic attempts to prevent the Zulus acquiring arms was that the Natal Government saw no reason why it should deny its merchants the profits to be derived from the arms trade, while the Cape Government made no attempt to check the vast trade in arms to Griqualand West and elsewhere.⁶⁹ Natal was not saintly enough to live in virtuous poverty while her unscrupulous neighbours waxed fat and prospered.

We must now consider the effects of the arming of the African tribes of South Africa. It is clear that most of the guns acquired were of a decidedly inferior kind, and the events of the Zulu War proved the Zulus, at any rate, to be poor marksmen. But it was not until the event of war that the Zulus became dissatisfied with the quality of the guns with which they had been supplied,⁷⁰ and discovered that they conferred no great military advantage. Before the war proved them wrong, it seems that the Zulus, on the whole, supposed that the acquisition of the white man's weapon had added greatly to their power.

"It is highly amusing", wrote the Rev. Robertson of the Church of England mission in Zululand, "the confidence with which they speak of what the result of such a struggle (with the 'white man') will be. They say they will only require to fire off their guns once! there will be no need to load a second time, all they have to do after that will be to gather up the spoils!"⁷¹

Robertson was most probably speaking of the younger generation among the Zulus, but F.B. Fynney, a Natal official who accompanied Shepstone to the Transvaal in 1877, and returned via Zululand, gained the impression that Cetshwayo, while not contemplating aggression, fancied himself strong enough to resist any interference

69. Memorandum by Colonial Secretary, 1 December, 1877, on Secret Carnarvon to Bulwer, 29 September, 1877 (G.H. 157); Report by Attorney-General, n.d., on Secret, Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 12 December, 1878 (G.H. 158); Confidential, Bulwer to Hicks-Beach, 3 April, 1879 (G.H.299, p.157).

70. Consul O'Neill to Foreign Secretary, 5 August, 1879, enclosure in Confidential, Hicks-Beach to Wolseley, 9 October, 1879 (G.H. 349).

71. Robertson to Bulwer, 9 April, 1877 (G.H. 349).

on the part of the British Government.⁷² He appeared to think his men were better marksmen than the British.

"The fact that his warriors possess large numbers of guns", wrote Fynney, "has created in the mind of the King an unbounded confidence in his own resources, yet the majority of guns with which he has armed his people are brass-bound muskets. But with a Zulu, a gun is a gun....."⁷³

One cannot be certain precisely what effect the acquisition of arms by Africans had upon their political outlook; but there is no doubt that the knowledge that this arming had taken place provoked some alarm amongst the scattered whites of South Africa, and led to fears that the Africans, whose subjection was the result of the Europeans' superior arms, might now try to overthrow the domination of the white man.

The Natal Witness commented in 1873 that twenty years had passed since the Kafirs were taught the power of Britain to suppress rebellion.

It continued, "...since then they have seen most of the dreaded red-coats removed from the Continent, while they themselves have become more numerous, have forgotten the lessons they then learnt, have gradually come to look upon the white man with less instinctive dread, and worst of all, have acquired unbounded confidence in their own prowess by the possession of abundance of firearms and ammunition."⁷⁴

"With these arms comes the belief to the untutored mind of the savage that when armed with a gun he is equal to a white man, and this belief makes him anxious to try conclusions."⁷⁵

Even the Natal Mercury, representing the importing interests of the coast, was torn between the profits of the gun trade, and its possible dangers. It considered it quite possible that Africans were less dangerous with bad guns than with knobkerries and assegais, but added that "although the weapon itself might not be an element of enhanced danger, the sense of confidence and equality its possession would confer or create might have a mischievous tendency."⁷⁶ After the Langalibalele disturbance, which was sparked off by the

72. Report on Zululand by F.B. Fynney, 13 July, 1877 (G.H. 349).

72. Report on Zululand by F.B. Fynney, 4 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27, No. 457).

74. The Natal Witness, 3 January, 1873.

75. Ibid., 2 December, 1873.

76. The Natal Mercury, 18 July, 1872.

non-registration of guns bought at the Diamond Fields, on which Cape importers had profited, the Mercury was in no doubt about the matter.

"In the native's eye the possession of a gun means military equality with the white man. He regards the very laws that prohibit him from the acquisition of these weapons as proof that they represent the badge of difference between the races. The gun is the white man's strength, the means and the test of his superiority. Hence when the kafirs get guns they fancy themselves the equals of their white rulers and neighbours, and they are prepared, as we have seen in the case of Langalibalele's people, to assume an attitude of contumacy and defiance which must end sooner or later in rebellion and in bloodshed."⁷⁷

These fears were not confined to colonists and the editors of newspapers; they were expressed by the highest authorities in the country.

Shepstone, referring to the arms trade, wrote:-

"The feeling of antagonism that has so suddenly sprung up among the coloured tribes in South Africa to the white man, and which seems to be spreading, is, I think, a direct result of this trade: the acquisition of firearms has been to the native the acquisition of strength and confidence, hence the present state of affairs between the races."⁷⁸

Even the cautious Bulwer wrote to Sir Bartle Frere:-

"It is, I believe, beyond question the case, as pointed out in your Despatch, that the acquisition of late years of fire-arms - the weapon of the white-man - has had a considerable influence on the mind of the natives, it having given them a feeling of greater confidence as to their ability to contend with the white-man than they ever formerly possessed."⁷⁹

The head of the armed forces in South Africa, Lt.-General Cunynghame, wrote:-

"The unrepressed sale of arms throughout South Africa has brought to a head a desire not unnatural amongst the natives to regain their independence, which an opinion of their present equality with the white man has caused them to undertake."⁸⁰

Sir Bartle Frere was in no doubt about the matter.

"The idea", he wrote, "that the white races were not invincible and that a Kaffir empire like that of Chaka might yet be restored by reverting to Chaka's policy of slaughter and extermination of all enemies" was "at least as old as the first

77. Ibid., 13 November, 1873.

78. Shepstone to Hicks-Beach, 10 June, 1878, printed in South and East African Arms Trade (G.H. 158). See also Copy, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 12 March, 1877 (G.H. 348); Memorandum on the Political Position Occupied by the British Government Towards the Zulu King, by Shepstone, 18 November, 1878, enclosure in Confidential, Shepstone to Frere, 18 November, 1878 (G.H. 358).

79. Bulwer to Frere, 12 June, 1878, (G.H. 638, No.96).

80. Cunynghame to Frere, 15 March, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 23 March, 1878 (C.2100. p.87).

acquisition of guns on a great scale by Kaffirs and Zulus after the discovery of the diamond-fields, and the unwise relaxation of restrictions on the gun and powder trade."⁸¹

The first war in South Africa in which the Africans were armed on an extensive scale with guns, was that between Sekukuni and the Transvaal, in 1876. The Natal Mercury commented:-

"The results of the present campaign will therefore be keenly canvassed not only by Europeans but by natives from the Cape to the Zambezi and beyond; for it is the first time that natives have, well armed, met Europeans in battle, carrying the same weapons."⁸²

After a few minor successes, the Boers suffered a disastrous defeat, and almost all the members of the Transvaal commando deserted and returned to their homes. This, according to Shepstone, shattered white prestige in South Africa.

It "gave a shock to the whole native public opinion of South Africa and birth to hopes and aspirations that had well nigh died out; it was the first instance of the white man being opposed by natives with his own weapon, and the natives prevailed."⁸³

It is certainly true that the years 1877 and 1878 saw the most extraordinary and unprecedented series of disturbances and outbreaks in all corners of South Africa; it seemed that a wave of restlessness was running through all the tribes in the country. In August, 1877 war broke out on the eastern frontier of the Cape with Kreli, chief of the Galekas, and in December he was joined by the Gaika chief Sandile, a British subject. Cetshwayo became refractory, and the Transvaal-Zulu border dispute several times all but erupted in open war. In February 1878 Sekukuni resumed the war against the Transvaal, which was now under British rule. In April a general rebellion of many different tribes broke out in Griqualand West. There were also disturbances in East Griqualand, Pondoland, Basutoland, and in the northern Transvaal. To the harassed British authorities in South Africa it seemed that a sort

81. Frere to Hicks- Beach, 8 December, 1878, quoted in Martineau, p.252. These are not isolated and uncharacteristic utterances; I have merely selected typical statements from many that could be quoted.

82. The Natal Mercury, 12 August, 1876.

83. Shepstone to Frere, 2 July, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p. 69).

of South African Armageddon was at hand - in fact the phrase was several times used. Fears were expressed that the local conflagration would get quite out of control, and develop into a general war of races. Even the circumspect Bulwer was moved to write:-

"There are not wanting signs of the present crisis developing itself into a great contest of black and white races in Sth Africa."⁸⁴

Shepstone agreed, and wrote:-

"there are indications of the existence of a kind of common desire in the Native mind in South Africa to try and overcome the white intruders."⁸⁵

The theory that there existed among the newly-armed African tribes, if not a formal agreement, at least a general understanding to combine and, by joint action, overthrow the domination of the white man, was briefly adumbrated by Shepstone, and later rejected by Bulwer; but it was taken up, elaborated and devoutly believed in by Sir Bartle Frere. Frere had occupied a position of danger and responsibility in India during the Mutiny of 1857, and was, no doubt, as a result of this, peculiarly susceptible to theories of this kind. For him the theory of an inter-tribal conspiracy served as an explanation for every local outbreak in South Africa.

The "unrest of the native mind" in South Africa, he wrote to the Secretary of State, was "caused by the prevalent belief among the natives that the days of white supremacy were past; that the possession of firearms and other circumstances had raised the natives to a state of equality with the white man; and that the Zulu nation, as the most powerful in South Africa, was to lead the native races in shaking off the domination of the white intruder, and restoring uncontrolled native rule."⁸⁶

Frere became convinced that the nerve-centre of the revolt against white domination was to be found in Zululand, and that Cetshwayo was its leader. All other disturbances were merely the symptoms; "the real seat of the disease" was in Zululand.⁸⁷ As long as Cetshwayo was permitted to send out his secret emissaries to stir up disaffection and revolt, there could be no peace in the

84. Bulwer to Shepstone, 22 March, 1878 (S.P. Case 13).

85. Shepstone to Bulwer, 30 March, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.16).

86. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 24 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.51).

87. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 10 November, 1878, quoted in Worsfold, p.111.

country. From this it followed that the Zulu power had to be crushed.⁸⁸

In this analysis of the situation Frere was supported by most British officials in South Africa, with the notable exception of Bulwer. Shepstone, so far as one can tell from his reserved and cautious utterances, fully supported Frere's views; and, indeed, seems to have been the first to suggest that Cetshwayo was the source of all evil in South Africa. As early as December 1877, we find him writing, in unusually plain and forthright language:-

"Cetywayo is the secret hope of every petty independent chief hundreds of miles away from him who feels a desire that his colour should prevail, and it will not be until this hope is destroyed that they will make up their minds to submit to the rule of civilisation."⁸⁹

It is no easy task to assess what justification there was for these fears that exercised the minds of whites in South Africa in this period. The tribes whose beliefs and intentions were distrusted have left no written records which might have shown what those beliefs and intentions really were, and one can do little more than consider the inherent plausibility of the theories concerning them which were put forward. It seems likely that their acquisition of the white man's weapon would have led the Africans to suppose themselves much more powerful than they had been before. But it is doubtful whether it caused them to suppose themselves more powerful than the whites. The Zulus, at any rate, knew quite well that the principal power of the British lay across the sea, and that Natal was only an outpost.

In fact, since most of the guns they bought were of the sort described as "for the native trade" or "Birmingham gas-pipes", and since they were, on the whole, unskilful in using them, the Africans did not increase their military strength to anything like the extent that they and others supposed they had. Guns were of much more use to tribes (such as Sekukuni's) who lived in mountainous

88. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 10 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.182)

89. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 11 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.309).

regions and who fought by means of a sort of guerilla warfare, than to the Zulus, whose principal tactic was the massed charge.

The question of whether there was a general desire to throw off white domination, and a plan or general understanding to combine and achieve this desire, must be left to a later chapter, when we consider the events of these years in more detail.⁹⁰ All that it is necessary to point out here is that the acquisition of arms by the Africans had important effects, possibly on the actions of the Zulus and other South African tribes, and certainly upon the beliefs and policies of the British authorities in South Africa.

FROM CETSHWAYO'S CORONATION TO THE TRANSVAAL-SEKUKUNI WAR.

Natal's wish to acquire the disputed territory - Shepstone's plans for such a 'safety-valve' - Wolseley's mission - Colley makes investigations into the disputed territory - decides it not possible to acquire the territory - Wolseley's designs on Zululand - supported by sections of the press - Zulu-Transvaal hostility over Swaziland - Cetshwayo's wish to attack the Swazis - Transvaal commando sent to Swaziland - Cetshwayo's reaction - the Swazis' curious misunderstanding - the Transvaal's forward policy in Zululand - Natal discourages Transvaal aggression against the Zulus - Zulus appeal to Natal - Britain's warning and bribe to the Transvaal - the Transvaal attempt at tax-collection in the disputed territory, and the ensuing disturbances - Sekukuni adopts a hostile position - the theory that Sekukuni and Cetshwayo were acting in collusion - the Transvaal decides to subdue Sekukuni - Shepstone's fears of this causing a Zulu attack - Rudolph's mission to Zululand - Shepstone leaves for England, bearing the Zulus' formal statement of their case - Zulus' probable interpretation of his visit - the Transvaal campaign against Sekukuni ends in disaster.

The relations between Zululand and her two white neighbours in the period after Cetshwayo's coronation continued to be dominated by the Transvaal-Zulu border dispute. This dispute came to a head in 1876, and was further complicated by the rival ambitions of Cetshwayo and the Transvaal Government in regard to Swaziland.

The war with Sekukuni which broke out in May 1876, and which was one of the principal causes of the fall of the South African Republic, will be shown to be possibly not unconnected with the deteriorating relations of the Republic with its neighbours, the Zulus.

When Shepstone was in Zululand for the Coronation, Cetshwayo and his Counsellors had earnestly urged the British Government to take over the disputed territory and occupy it. Shepstone had promised no more than to inform the Lieut-Governor of the Zulu request;¹ but in fact he urged the British Government to take over the disputed territory in almost as earnest a way as did the Zulus. He considered a 'safety-valve', in the shape of adjoining territory, the only way to relieve Natal of the pressure of her African population, and so enable the necessary reforms in Native policy to be undertaken. With the years, he wrote, the possibility of acquiring such a safety-valve had "been by degrees reduced to the very smal-

1. Minute on the Relations of the Zulus with the Transvaal, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H.343).

lest dimensions"; the only remaining hope was that "the South African Republic may be inclined to abandon a claim which apparently rests on questionable grounds....."²

Lieut-Governor Pine fully supported Shepstone in this matter and, in forwarding his minutes on the subject to the Secretary of State, urged the latter to induce the Transvaal to abandon, in favour of Her Majesty's Government, at least that part of the disputed territory not actually occupied by its subjects. He advocated this step on two grounds: first, Shepstone's safety-valve argument; and, secondly, as a means of settling the border dispute, which he had little doubt, would otherwise end in war and the driving of a large mass of Zulus into Natal, which was "already inconveniently crowded with Kafirs."³ During the course of 1874 Pine continued to urge for a "door of escape"⁴ or an "outlet"⁵ for Natal's surplus population. In July of that year, alarmed at the effect of Bishop Colenso's agitations, Pine sent Shepstone to Britain to explain the actions of the Natal Government in the Langalibalele affair; he was also, wrote Pine,

"to explain to your Lordship, more fully than could be done in written communications, the grounds which render it necessary that an outlet should be afforded to the overwhelming kafir population of this Colony by the acquisition of some territory intervening between the occupied country of Cetywayo, the King of the Zulus, and the Transvaal Republic."⁶

Shepstone discussed the question with the members of the Colonial Office, and explained how he considered the scheme should be operated. The Territory should, he considered, be a dependency of Natal, and should be governed from it, but not as an integral part of it; that is, the laws of Natal should not apply automatically in it, or in other words, it should be completely beyond the control of the colonist-dominated Legislative Council. He did not

2. Private Memorandum by Shepstone, 28 February, 1874 (S.N.A. 1/6/3). He wrote first that the Transvaal claim "seems to rest on very questionable grounds".
3. Confidential, Pine to Carnarvon, 16 April, 1874 (G.H. 299).
4. Pine to Carnarvon, 24 September, 1874 (G.H. 279, No. 174).
5. Pine to Carnarvon, 26 December, 1874 (G.H. 279, No. 208).
6. Confidential, Pine to Carnarvon, 20 July, 1874 (G.H. 279).

recommend that any pressure should be put on the Africans of Natal to induce them to emigrate; they would do so of their own accord, once they knew that the outlet was there, and that they would be governed there in the manner to which they were accustomed.

"Of course much difficulty could be removed from the native mind if I could go with them; how far this may be feasible when the time comes I cannot say, but it may be possible for me to afford occasional personal supervision...."

The first step would be to attempt to induce the Transvaal Government to surrender its claims to the territory in favour of the Natal Government. He agreed with Sir Henry Barkly,⁷ that after the Diamond Fields affair, such negotiations would have a better chance of success if they were conducted by the Governor of Natal, rather than by the High Commissioner. (Indeed, any attempt by Barkly to induce the Transvaal to abandon territory that it claimed would almost certainly have been met by an immediate and automatic refusal.)

Shepstone agreed that the disputed territory was not big enough for the purpose in mind. To remedy this,

"a strip of the Zulu country running along the northern border of the colony of Natal, from the sea to the disputed territory inland, might be purchased; this portion of Zululand is but sparsely inhabited by the Zulus, and I have reason to believe that Cetywayo's policy is to withdraw himself and his people more towards Delagoa Bay, so that, to him, the value of this land will be less than it has hitherto been."

"I cannot say", he added, "I believe that the chance to make such a purchase is likely to present itself very soon", but he considered that the Natal Government should be given the discretion to purchase the land when the opportunity arose, so as to eliminate the risk of the opportunity being missed through delay caused by reference to the Home Government.

This Zululand strip Shepstone considered should be about 20 miles wide.

 "That ultimately this will also be occupied by Europeans", he added, "cannot be doubted; but if the land can be acquired, and put to the purpose I have suggested, the present tension in Natal will be relieved, and time be gained to admit of the

7. Barkly to Carnarvon, 4 August, 1874, enclosure in Herbert to Shepstone, 22 September, 1874 (G.H. 357).

introduction of a larger proportion of white Colonists."

It would, however, wrote Shepstone, be a mistake to think that the relief thus afforded would be only temporary, or that the difficulty it was proposed to abate could ever again reach its existing proportions, "because the outlet lying to the North, the abatement admits of permanent extension towards a climate unsuited to Europeans, but not so to natives...."⁸ This appears to envisage the eventual taking over of the whole of Zululand, and perhaps the country of the Amatonga further north as well, as a "Bantu Homeland" to which Natal's surplus African population could be sent. This was certainly regarded by Natal colonists for many years to come as the solution to Natal's "native problem", although no attempt was made to put any such scheme into effect when Zululand was annexed to Natal in 1897. It is hardly necessary to add that this scheme was not what Cetshwayo had in mind when he asked the Natal Government to take over the disputed territory.

On 30 March, 1875, Sir Garnet Wolseley, the hero of the Ashanti War, arrived in Natal to replace Benjamin Pine, recalled for his handling of the Langalibalele affair, and to induce the colonists to abrogate some of their political power by agreeing to a greater proportion of nominated members in the legislative Council. This he succeeded in doing by dazzling them with his "brilliant staff", befuddling them with sherry and champagne, threatening them with Imperial action if they did not co-operate, and bribing the coastal members with promises of renewed coolie immigration.

He was also instructed to effect the reforms in native policy that the Langalibalele revolt had shown to be necessary, and to spy out the lie of the land with regard to confederation.⁹

Wolseley, the "high-handed military prig", as Colenso called

8. Shepstone to Herbert, 30 November, 1874, enclosure in Carnarvon to Wolseley, 30 April, 1875 (G.H. 23, No. 60).

9. Lehman, p.240 ff.

him,¹⁰ was generally contemptuous of most people, especially colonials. He made, however, an exception in the case of Shepstone - "the ablest man in Natal"¹¹ - and it soon became apparent that he was greatly influenced by him in all matters relating to native policy.

Wolseley reported to the Secretary of State that the great disproportion of white and black in Natal and the consequent weakness of the Government, made the introduction of sweeping reforms in native administration a hazardous undertaking. He hesitated to disarm the Africans, or exact rent from those squatting on Crown Lands, for fear of a possibly violent reaction. The same applied with greater force to any attempt to reduce the power of the chiefs and replace the existing practice of separation by a vigorous policy of assimilation and civilization. Wolseley agreed with Shepstone that it would not be wise to introduce such reforms until the military force of the Colony was strengthened.

It was not only in the overwhelming preponderance of Africans within Natal that the danger lay.

✓ "Amongst the elements of danger existing here the fact of our having on our North-Eastern frontier a powerful native kingdom in which every man is a trained soldier must not be forgotten. The Zulu army, well organised after their own fashion, number between 30,000 and 40,000 warriors, well armed. I am informed that the result of the unfortunate skirmish in the Bushman's River Pass is much talked of amongst them and regarded by them as a proof that the Kafirs when armed with guns are more than a match for the whitemen of Natal."¹²

From Wolseley's views on the dangers inherent in the disproportion between black and white in Natal, one would expect him to agree with Shepstone on the necessity for a 'safety-valve'; and in fact one of the things he instructed Colonel Pomeroy Colley to do on his tour of the Transvaal during June and July, 1875, was to gather information on the disputed territory, and investigate the possibility of its being ceded to Natal.¹³

10. Colenso to Charles Bunyan, 16 January, 1876 (Colenso Papers, File 24, K.C.)

11. Memorandum by Wolseley, 5 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

12. Wolseley to Carnarvon, 14 June, 1875 (G.H. 280, No. 131).

13. Confidential, Wolseley to Carnarvon, 14 June, 1875 (G.H.299).

Colley found no disposition on the part of the Transvaal Government to withdraw from the disputed territory, which provided valuable grazing for the Boers' flocks and herds during the bleak highveld winters. In fact he found that shortly before he had entered the Transvaal, this territory had been proclaimed anew as part of the Republic. The Proclamation, which was signed by Acting-President Joubert, and dated 25 May, 1875, laid down as the boundary the line 'ceded' in 1861, together with an extra slice which was probably intended to act as a barrier between the Zulus and the Swazis.¹⁴ The Proclamation made no mention of the 1861 treaty; the purpose of the definition was stated to be "for the prevention of disagreement between the white inhabitants of the Republic and the Zulus". The Proclamation was made "with reservation of all further claims and rights of the said Republic after"; a curious provision that was considered so important that it was repeated further on in the document.¹⁵

Joubert, in his conversations with Colley, denied that any dispute existed, and stated that there had been no representations on the subject by the Zulus to the Transvaal Government. He stated that on receipt of a letter from Lieut-Governor Keate proposing arbitration, a commission, of which he had been a member, had visited Mpande, to ascertain his complaints. Mpande, he said, had denied any cause of complaint, and had declined the Transvaal proposal that the Natal Government should be asked to appoint a commission to decide the dispute, on condition that the loser paid the costs. This account, as the minutes of this particular commission¹⁶ make clear, was the direct opposite of the truth.

"I am inclined to think", reported Colley, "that the Boers are

14. See map at end of volume.
15. Proclamation, 25 May, 1875, sub-enclosure 12 in a Minute on the disputed territory by Shepstone, 29 June, 1876, enclosure in Bulwer to Carnarvon, 29 June, 1876 (C.1961, p.19).
16. Report and Minutes, 14 February, 1870, cited in McGill, pp. 302-3. McGill's reference is S.N.6 (Transvaal Archives).

at present withheld from actually occupying this tract¹⁷ rather by fear of complications with our Government than by any fear of the Zulus."

War with the Zulus was looked on in the Transvaal as inevitable sooner or later, and the frontier farmers seemed disposed to hasten it rather than to delay it. Colley gained the impression that such a war would be generally supported in the Transvaal, and would be brought on immediately were it not for fear of British intervention.

Colley reported that the Transvaal would welcome Britain's annexation of Zululand, but that it resented the existing semi-protectorate, which gave the Boers no security, but at the same time tied their hands in dealing with the Zulus.

British occupation of the disputed territory would not, reported Colley, greatly lessen the chances of a conflict between the Boers and the Zulus. They would still be in contact along the Swazi-Zulu border, outside the disputed territory proper. Disputes in this area were of constant occurrence, and this was where the real danger lay. There was, he stated, "far more chance of war arising from attacks of the Zulus on the Swazis, than from attacks directed against the Whites."

For this reason, and because he found no desire by the Transvaal to withdraw from the disputed territory, and because he did not wish to arouse suspicion or hostility on the eve of the proposed Conference of all the states and colonies in South Africa (out of which Carnarvon hoped concrete proposals for confederation would stem), Colley decided not to open negotiations for the transfer of the disputed territory to Natal.¹⁸

In Wolseley's opinion, the Proclamation incorporating the

17. By 'this tract', Colley must have meant the area between the Old Hunting Road and the 1861-4 line. When Transvaal authorities spoke of the 'disputed territory' they generally meant this area; but the Zulus disputed the Transvaal claims to the territory on the other side of the Old Hunting Road as well.
18. Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

disputed territory in the Transvaal means that the opportunity to acquire the territory for Natal had passed, and that "all hope of being able to locate our super-abundant Kafir population thereon is for ever put an end to."¹⁹

It is evident that in the period of Wolseley's administration, both his and Shepstone's thoughts turned more and more to the annexation of not merely the disputed territory, but of part, or the whole of Zululand proper. This would provide an admirable 'safety-valve', and by removing the threat implicit in the existence of a savage military kingdom on the border of Natal, would conduce to the Colony's progress, and enable the necessary reforms to be introduced into its native policy. The time seemed propitious.

"I think the present a most opportune time for making the attempt to obtain the land you covet", wrote the Rev.R. Robertson, Shepstone's chief informant in Zululand.²⁰ Shepstone assured Wolseley that a thousand men would be sufficient to cross the Tugela and depose Cetshwayo. Many Zulus hated and feared their cruel King, Wolseley told Carnarvon, and would welcome the Union Jack in the hands of Shepstone. Such a move would, by putting an end forever to the barbarous cruelties of Cetshwayo, be hailed as a blessing to humanity. Annexation, urged Wolseley, was inevitable; the time to strike was when Cetshwayo was still comparatively weak.²¹

Wolseley's arguments found support in some sections of the Natal press; as his plea for intervention in Zululand was made privately, however, the basis of this concurrence must be a matter for conjecture.

During May, 1875, the Zulu army was mustered, with the apparent intention of attacking the Swazis, but there were rumours that

19. Wolseley to Carnarvon, 14 August, 1875 (G.H. 280, No.172).

20. Robertson to Shepstone, 25 July, 1875, cited in De Kiewiet, p.46.

21. Lehman, p.220. Prof Lehman does not quote any references for his account of Wolseley's views on this question, but it is confirmed by De Kiewiet, pp. 45-7. Wolseley evidently advised Carnarvon on this point by means of private letters.

Cetshwayo intended to invade Natal, and this caused some alarm in the Colony.²² The Natal Mercury referred to this mustering of the Zulu army, and to Cetshwayo's acquisition of large numbers of fire-arms, and to his organization of his country on military lines, and commented:

"It is hoped in many quarters that before our eminent Administrator leaves South Africa something will have been done to establish more definitely the northern boundaries of British rule in South Africa..... The immediate abutment of powerfully organized nations of armed and independent kafirs upon British territory has obvious perils and inconveniences, and must be a considerable bar to peaceful purpose and to perfect security. Sir Garnet Wolseley's able administrative power and experience will probable be directed upon the solution of this difficulty."²³

"If the British Government" commented the same paper a few weeks later, "desire to exercise in their African dominions the beneficent function to which it aspires as an imperial dispenser of peace, civilization and security, it is surely called upon to remove from its borders a condition of things so fraught with disquietude and menace."²⁴

At the same time, there appeared in the press, especially The Natal Mercury, a wave of reports of cruelties and atrocities in Zululand. Cetshwayo, it was said, in spite of the undertakings he made at his coronation, was putting his subjects to death in a wholesale manner and for the most frivolous reasons. This was represented as a breach by Cetshwayo of his treaty engagements, and as grounds for British intervention. The journals that published these reports were inclined to regard them as exaggerated, and also published letter by Zululand residents, denying their truth. John Dunn wrote to The Natal Colonist, stating that there existed not the slightest foundation for them,²⁵ and Cetshwayo himself sent a message to Bishop Colenso, assuring him that the rumours of wholesale killing were untrue, and that fewer than ten people had been executed since the coronation, all for very good reasons.²⁶

22. The Natal Colonist, 15 June, 1875.

23. The Natal Mercury, 1 June, 1875.

24. Ibid., 29 June, 1875.

25. Letter from J. Dunn, 3 July, 1875, in The Natal Colonist 9 July, 1875.

26. The Natal Witness, 5 October, 1875.

No doubt Zulu justice was rough and ready by English standards, and life in Zululand cheaper than in Natal, but some of the stories of systematic butcheries - the 'scouring' of the country of the old and the invalid, for example²⁷ - were patently untrue, for if they had been true, they must, without fail, have been attested to by every observer.

Nevertheless, Sir Garnet Wolseley found it useful to believe, or assert, that a British annexation of Zululand, by ending Cetshwayo's barbarities, would be a blessing to humanity. Indeed, it was suspected that these atrocity stories had been deliberately put about by the Natal Government. The Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, writing to the London Times, and probably representing Bishop Colenso's views, stated that "the reports are supposed to have been circulated for a political purpose."²⁸ The Natal Witness considered that the rumours of Zulu atrocities and aggressive intentions were an Official attempt to excite the fears of the colonists, and make their passions "the instruments of a dangerous and ruinous aggression", which would end in Zululand's being attacked and a "new satrapy.....added to our Native Affairs' imperium in imperio." The Witness deplored these rumours of war and massacre as likely to raise the interest on railway loans.²⁹

What makes these theories appear plausible is the fact that Wolseley had taken a great deal of trouble to get newspaper support for his constitutional changes, and had succeeded in persuading all but the Witness into "something like reason."³⁰ But whether this support necessarily extended to all of Wolseley's aims and ambitions is a different matter. The Times of Natal, which had

27. Letter from 'Rusticus', 5 June, 1875, in The Natal Mercury, 15 June, 1875.

28. Letter from Mr. Chesson to The Times of 12 August, 1875, quoted in The Natal Mercury, 5 October, 1875.

29. The Natal Witness, 12 October, 1875.

30. De Kiewiet, p. 43.

not been merely persuaded, but had actually been bribed to act as the Government mouthpiece,³¹ was singularly free of Zulu atrocity stories; and this seems to suggest that this rash of such stories was not inspired by the Government.

In the event, the agitation for British intervention in Zululand came to nothing. Carnarvon shrank from attempting anything of this sort, and in August, we find Wolseley himself writing:

"Pending the Assembly of the Conference suggested by your Lordship to take into consideration the management of the natives in all the South African Provinces upon a similar system, I do not think it would be advisable to take any steps for acquiring land from the Zulu King for the purpose of locating those Kaffirs who, now residing in Natal, might prefer to live beyond the frontier of this Government. As soon as the Conference finishes its proceedings I think that steps should be taken in this matter, and I do not think that there would be any insuperable difficulty in obtaining the land required in a satisfactory manner."³²

The conference that Carnarvon proposed to hold in South Africa, to which Wolseley refers, never met; it was replaced by the London Conference of the following year (1876). The Commission with which Shepstone returned from attending this Conference, and by the authority of which he annexed the Transvaal, was so phrased that it would also have empowered him to annex Zululand, and there is some evidence that he had this intention; but Zululand proved a harder nut to crack than the Transvaal.

We must now turn to an examination of the deteriorating relations between the Zulus and the South African Republic. The two principal causes of hostility were the disputed territory, and the question of Swaziland. We shall deal with the Swaziland question first.

In 1863 the Transvaal issued a proclamation purporting to annex the whole of Swaziland.³³ From this, and from an 1869

31. Shepstone to Henrique Shepstone, 21 September, 1875 (S.P. Case 29).

32. Wolseley to Carnarvon, 14 August, 1875 (G.H. 280, No. 172).

33. Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

agreement with Portugal that the Lebombo mountains should be the boundary between their respective territories,³⁴ it is evident that the Transvaal Government regarded the Swazis as its subjects. In practice, however, the relationship was more in the nature of a protectorate. The Swazis were glad of the protection of the Boers against the Zulus, who for many years had been pushing their occupation across the Pongola, which was regarded by the Swazis as the boundary between them and the Zulus. The Boers had an interest in protecting the Swazis from the Zulus, for Swaziland provided valuable winter grazing.³⁵ The Swazi King had in fact many years earlier 'sold' land along the left bank of the Pongola to the Transvaal, in order to provide a buffer between his people and the Zulus.³⁶ Zulu encroachments into Swaziland therefore brought them into direct conflict with the Boers.

Reason for help

The Zulus also claimed the Swazis as subjects. Cetshwayo informed the Natal Government that "the Amaswazi do and always have belonged to the Zulu King, they are his subjects ever since Chaka's time."³⁷

The dispute between the Transvaal and the Zulus over Swaziland was thus partly one of land claims, and partly one of sovereignty, or at any rate, suzerainty.

In March, 1874, Lodongo^a, the Swazi King, was found dead. He had been poisoned. His uncle, Ndwandwe, who was also Prime Minister of the country, was accused of the crime, and was put to death, together with a great many of his followers. It was reported that Ndwandwe had sent to Cetshwayo, asking for a Zulu wife, and promising that her eldest son should become the Swazi King, while he acted as Regent in the meantime. He also reported that Lodongo was in failing health, and could not live long, although it was well-known

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 6 June, 1872, in The Natal Mercury, 27 June, 1872.

37. Message from Cetshwayo, 11 November, 1875 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.237).

that he was in perfect health.³⁸

Lodongo was succeeded by his brother Mbandeni, whose cause was espoused by the Boers. Many years earlier, another brother, Mbéléni, had left Swaziland and taken up his residence in Zululand, under the protection of Cetshwayo. He now aimed at supplanting Mbandeni, and apparently in pursuance of this end, made periodic raids on the kraals of Swazis and African subjects of the Transvaal. Cetshwayo claimed that he had nothing to do with these raids, and that he had merely given Mbelini refuge in his country;³⁹ but there can be little doubt that he supported his aspirations to the Swazi throne, in opposition to the Transvaal-backed Mbandeni.

In October 1874 Cetshwayo informed the Natal Government that he intended going to war with the Swazis, unless the Governor could show him that he would not be right in so doing.⁴⁰ He mentioned the killing of Ndwandwe and his followers for supposed complicity in the poisoning of Lodongo, and stated that this was done without apprizing the Zulu nation of it.

"Cetywayo and the Zulu nation feel that just cause has been given them, by such an act of disrespect, to punish the Amaswazi."⁴¹

It is likely that there was more to it than just this; Ndwandwe was probably the leader of the pro-Zulu party in Swaziland.

Lieut-Governor Pine replied that he saw no cause whatever for making war, that the late King Mpande had promised him not to attack the Swazis, that such an attack would involve the Zulus in difficulties with their white neighbours, and that the proposed expedition met with his entire disapproval.⁴²

The attack did not take place, but the project was not forgotten, for in May of the following year, Cetshwayo asked the Transvaal

38. Letter from J. Straker, New Scotland, 8 April, 1874, in De Volksstem, n.d., quoted in The Natal Mercury, 19 May, 1874.

39. Boast to Osborn, 15 May, 1877, conveying message from Cetshwayo, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 June, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 6 June, 1877 (G.H. 349).

40. John Dunn to Shepstone, 4 October, 1874 (S.N.A. 1/6/2, No.60).

41. Message from Cetshwayo, 19 October, 1874 (S.N.A. 1/6/2, No.59).

42. Message to Cetshwayo, 22 October, 1874, quoted in Matthews, p.364.

Government for permission to attack the Swazis. This was refused, but Cetshwayo announced that he intended attacking in any case.⁴³

He demonstrated that he meant what he said by mustering his impi at the Royal Kraal,⁴⁴ and the Transvaal Government decided on a counter-demonstration. A commando was called out to protect the Swazis. Before it set out, news came that the Zulu armies had dispersed. But an attack was still feared, so it was decided that the commando should proceed as planned, to prove that the Transvaal was in earnest in its promises of protection to the Swazis, and also to confirm the new King, Mbandeni, in his position, and to make known the sovereignty claimed by the Transvaal over the Swazis.⁴⁵

The commando, which consisted of about 350 men, with four mountain guns and 65 waggons, formed an imposing train of about two miles in length. In charge was Gert Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht. The destination and intentions of the commando were shrouded in mystery; even the men composing it did not know where they were going, or why,⁴⁶ and Rudolph would not tell them when they asked. This only added to the dissatisfaction and mutinous feeling which existed among the members of the commando at having been called out for so little purpose.⁴⁷

The commando reached the Swazi Great Place on 26 June, having been joined on the way by Col. Colley, then on his tour of the Transvaal. It seems that the ordinary members of the commando took no part in the proceedings that followed, during which Mbandeni was installed, or recognized, as King, and a treaty was signed, by which

43. Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H.870). This information was given to Colley by Acting-President Joubert. See also: Burgers to Colonial Office, 4 August, 1875, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 18 August, 1875 (G.H. 23, No. 116).
44. The Natal Mercury, 8 May, 1875; The Natal Witness, 11 May, 1875.
45. Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).
46. De Volksstem correspondent's report, 13 June, 1875, quoted in The Natal Mercury, 13 July, 1875.
47. Letter from a member of the commando, 3 July, 1875, in The Natal Mercury, 3 August, 1875.

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the Swazis formally became subjects of the South African Republic.

It had originally been intended that the commando should on its return from Swaziland, beat the bounds between Zululand, and Transvaal, by marching along the newly-proclaimed boundary. Fortunately for the peace of South Africa, this project was abandoned, for fear of a collision with the Zulus, and because food was low, the oxen in a poor condition, and the members of the commando becoming more and more mutinous. After leaving Swaziland, therefore, the commando dispersed.⁴⁸

The march of the Transvaal commando was not without its effect, on Cetshwayo. Having perhaps heard rumours of Wolseley's wishes to annex Zululand, or of the advocacy of some such step in some Natal newspapers, he began to suspect that the mustering of the commando was at the instigation of the Natal Government.

"Cetywayo has been informed", his messengers reported in Pietermaritzburg, "that the Boers, the Amaswazi and Amatonga are arming against him and that they have received the sanction of the Government of Natal for their so doing".

✓ He pointed out that he had refrained from attacking the Swazis at Natal's request, and explained that he had lately assembled his army, in accordance with the custom of a new Zulu King, with no intention of harming anyone, and added that he regretted

"to hear it has been thought he intended to act against the wishes of the Government of Natal and that in consequence a message hostile to the Zulus has been sent to the powers by which he is surrounded."

✓ "Cetywayo says that although the father that begot him is dead, the father that guides and takes care of him (Shepstone) is still living and he objects to be turned out of his own house without full and sufficient cause."⁴⁹

In reply, the Natal Government explained that the rumours Cetshwayo had heard were untrue, and took the opportunity of pointing out that arming and mustering in Zululand were likely to provoke similar measure in neighbouring countries.⁵⁰

48. Ibid.; Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

49. Message from Cetshwayo, 7 June, 1875 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.229).

50. Message to Cetshwayo, 14 June, 1875 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.231).

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This Transvaal commando had a curious sequel. Nearly a year later, messengers arrived in Pietermaritzburg from the Swazi King, and told Shepstone that they had been instructed to thank the Government of Natal for warning him that the Zulus intended attacking, and for using its influence to stop the raid

"and for instructing a Boer Commando to go to his Country to render him assistance in case of need, and further, for appointing Mr. Rudolph at the head of the Commando to place him as King over the Amaswazi and to make a treaty with him and his people on behalf of the Natal Government."

When Shepstone told the messenger that the Natal Government had had nothing to do with the sending of the commando, and that Mr. Rudolph was an officer of the South African Republic and had not been commissioned by Natal to do anything, they expressed the utmost amazement, and could not be convinced that they had made themselves subjects of the Transvaal. Mr. Rudolph, they declared, had clearly and explicitly stated that he was the duly commissioned emissary of the Government of Natal. Mbandeni, they said, had wondered why a second treaty was necessary, as he had always understood that one had been concluded many years before between the Natal Government and his late father, Mswazi, but on Mr. Rudolph's assurance that the Natal Government required him to sign again, he did so in all good faith. The messengers assured Shepstone that Mbandeni's loyalty was to none other than the Natal Government, to which his father and brother had belonged before him, that he had in the past declined to acknowledge himself as a subject of the Transvaal, and that the Swazi nation would refuse to accept a position into which they had been unwittingly betrayed.⁵¹ It is difficult to know what to make of this extraordinary business. Shepstone accepted the Swazi account, but held that it did not necessarily prove deliberate deception on the part of Mr. Rudolph. There may have been a genuine misunderstanding. In describing the

51. Message from Mbandeni, 18 May, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.2); Minute on the above message by Shepstone, 3 June 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.266).

the authority by which he had been sent, reported Shepstone, Mr. Rudolph appeared to have used the word 'Government'; this would have been translated as 'Hulemeni', which was also the common designation of the Governor of Natal. The fact that Mr. Rudolph had at one time been in the employ of the Natal Government probably also assisted the misunderstanding.⁵²

But it seems hardly credible that such a huge mistake could have been made. Another possible explanation of the whole affair is that the Swazis were apprehensive that the agreement made with the Transvaal might injure the special relationship which they conceived to exist between them and the Natal Government, and that this message was a clumsy attempt to explain away the visit of the Transvaal commando. Certainly, the Swazis' protestations that they held no allegiance to the Transvaal was hardly consistent with their action, shortly afterwards, in sending several thousand warriors to assist the Republic in its war against Sekukuni.

In February, 1875, President Burgers had left Pretoria for Europe to raise funds for his favourite project - a railway to Delagoa Bay, by which he hoped to advance the prosperity of the Republic, and free it from its economic dependence on the neighbouring British colonies. In his absence, Acting-President Joubert and his Executive Council seemed disposed to pursue a forward policy in their dealings with the Zulus.

We have already mentioned the boundary Proclamation of May, and the commando of June and July. In September, 1875, the Transvaal Government took steps to enforce its boundary Proclamation. It sent a message to Cetshwayo, in which, sandwiched between demands for the extradition of criminals and for assurances that there would be no further hostile movements against the Swazis, he was desired to make his subjects acquainted with the boundary Proclamation and

52. Ibid.

prohibit them from residing within the boundaries thus laid down. This message was made by the Government of the Transvaal, it was explained, "without losing sight of or relinquishing any of its further rights....." The message concluded:

"Although the Government of the South African Republic has never wished and does not now desire that serious disaffection and animosity should exist between you and them, yet it is not the less of the greatest consequence and importance for you, earnestly to weigh these matters and risks, and to satisfy them, the more so, if you on your side, also wish that peace and friendship shall be maintained between you and us."⁵³

Shepstone commented that this message (a copy of which was sent to the Natal Government) had the look of an ultimatum; nevertheless he did not think that the Republic would attempt coercion if its demands were not met. It was not in a position to resort to extremities. Both sides would be anxious to avoid actual collision, and the message would probably only have the effect of increasing irritation on the question.⁵⁴

Natal Africans returning from visits to Zululand reported an assembling of Zulu warriors at the Royal Kraal in consequence of a communication from the Boers regarding the disputed territory,⁵⁵ but this did not lead to war. Nevertheless, Cetshwayo made no attempt to comply with the Transvaal requests, and sent a "very vague and impudent answer" to the Transvaal message. Joubert wrote to the Natal Government, reporting this unsatisfactory response, and stating that Cetshwayo had collected his army and made an inroad on the boundary, causing 'defenceless Kafirs' to be killed. His letter made it clear that the Transvaal Government wished, in Shepstone's phrase, to resort to extremities.

"However much the Government may wish to keep peace with Cetywayo, it is obvious that an end must be put once for all to such atrocities, and the Government will be under the necessity of adopting strong measures, unless a very marked change should occur.

53. Message to Cetshwayo, n.d., enclosure in State Secretary, Transvaal, to Colonial Secretary, Natal, 15 September, 1875 (G.H. 344).

54. Memorandum on Ibid. by Shepstone, 13 October, 1875 (G.H. 344).

55. Administrator of Native Law, Umsinga (H.F. Fynn) to Shepstone, 30 September, 1875, and 2 October, 1875 (G.H. 344).

It is therefore the wish of this Government to enquire in what position Cetshwayo stands to Her Majesty's Government, in order that, in the event of any further complications with Cetshwayo, the amicable relations, existing between Her Majesty's Government, and that of the Republic may not, by ignorance in that respect, be disturbed."⁵⁶

In effect, the Transvaal was asking if the Natal Government had any objection to its declaring war on the Zulus.

By this time Sir Garnet Wolseley had been succeeded as Governor of Natal by Sir Henry Bulwer. Bulwer had arrived at Durban on 27 August, accompanied, according to Wolseley, by "a leggy-looking youth, not long, I should say from school, who seems the picture of weakness and dullness."⁵⁷ This was young Rider Haggard, who had come to Natal for the sake of his health, and who was later to accompany Shepstone to the Transvaal. Although Wolseley had suggested Bulwer as his successor, he was his opposite in almost every respect - slow-moving, cautious, and with a passion for justice.

Within the first few months of assuming duty at his new post, he had to deal with the possibility of war between the Transvaal and the Zulus, and had to make some reply to this despatch from Joubert. As all Governors did in matters connected with Native policy, or with the relations with tribes beyond the borders of the Colony, Bulwer relied heavily on Shepstone. Joubert had asked the Governor in what position Cetshwayo stood in relation to Her Majesty's Government, and Bulwer passed the query on to Shepstone. Shepstone reported that no treaty or formal protectorate existed between the Zulus and the British Government, but that the Zulus recognized the superior standing of the British Government. Moreover, wrote Shepstone, Cetshwayo had given him to understand that his installation by a representative of the British Government "had altered the relations of the Zulu people towards that Government to such an extent as to introduce the relationship of parent and

56. Joubert to Bulwer, 13 October, 1875 (G.H. 345).

57. Maurice & Arthur, p 87.

child, that this involved care of the child and fighting for him if necessary." This comparison Shepstone had not entirely repudiated; but he had reserved for the British Government the right to act at its own discretion, according to the circumstances.⁵⁸

Bulwer's reply to the Transvaal letter was based on a draft by Shepstone. It pointed out that the Zulus were Natal's immediate neighbours, separated only by a stream of water.

"Our intercourse with the Zulus is regulated by a sort of tacit understanding which has grown out of our relative positions and the circumstances which from time to time have arisen out of them."

This intercourse had always been frequent and intimate, and had been effectual in maintaining peace and goodwill between the Natal Government and the Zulus.

"Although therefore", Bulwer concluded, "no technical diplomatic relations exist between us, the position between the two countries is such that any hostile collision between the South African Republic and the Zulus would most seriously affect the interests of this Colony, and Her Majesty's Government could not fail to look with the greatest anxiety upon an event that would produce grave embarrassment and difficulty in this part of Her Majesty's possessions."⁵⁹

The Natal Government also received representations from the Zulus. Messengers from Cetshwayo reported on 11 November, 1875, that the Zulu King had lately received a message from the Transvaal Government, informing him that the Swazis were now Transvaal subjects, and that they had handed over all their land to the Transvaal. All Zulu subjects living in Swaziland, and all those living in the disputed territory, were to leave at once, or they would be removed by force.

This was presumably the same message as the one which the Transvaal Government informed the Natal Government it had sent to the Zulus in September, and to which it bears some resemblance.

Cetshwayo made it clear that he was determined not to yield to the Transvaal demands. The Swazis, he said, had been Zulu subjects since Shaka's time. He likewise rejected the Transvaal's

58. Report on the nature of the relations between H.M. Government and the Zulus, by Shepstone, 30 October, 1875 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.157).

59. Bulwer to Joubert, 15 November, 1875 (G.H. 637).

territorial claims. The matter was urgent, as the Transvaal Government had already ordered the Zulus occupying the land it now claimed to desist from cultivating the soil. As Cetshwayo had no intention of submitting to this dictation, great mischief would happen unless the Natal Government intervened.

"Cetywayo desired us", reported the Zulu messengers, "to urge upon the Government of Natal to interfere to save the destruction of perhaps both Countries, Zululand and the Transvaal; he requests us to state that he cannot and will not submit to be turned out of his own house, it may be that he will be vanquished, but as he is not the aggressor, death will not be so hard to meet."

In an evident attempt to encourage Natal to intervene, Cetshwayo stated that the fact that he had been installed by Shepstone was the cause of jealousy on the part of the Boers, who considered that their support and installation of Mpande entitled them to the loyalty of the Zulus. It was Shaka, however, who had determined that the Zulus should be subject to the British Government, and "the accidental interruption of Panda's falling into the hands of the Boers is not considered sufficient by the Zulu people to set aside the policy of Chaka which the Zulu nation had adopted."⁶⁰

Bulwer reported all these events to the Secretary of State, and commented:

"The differences and causes of difference are not new, but of late the Government of the Transvaal appears to have set its mind upon bringing them to a conclusion, and to be taking measures that can scarcely fail to produce a collision."⁶¹

Nevertheless, Bulwer's letter to the Transvaal Government seems to have had the desired effect, for the Boers did not push their claims, and for some months an uneasy peace prevailed on the frontier.

The Colonial Office was anxious to prevent the Boers from encroaching on Zululand. Bulwer's despatch of 26 October was referred for his comments to Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had lately returned from Natal.

60. Message from Cetshwayo, 11 November, 1875 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.237).

61. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 26 November, 1875 (G.H. 280, No. 221).

✓ "It is generally felt in South Africa", he minuted, "that Zululand must sooner or later in the natural course of events be ruled by us: come what may, we must not permit any South African or foreign power to occupy it.if we allow the Transvaal to occupy the 'Disputed Territory' it would be only the first step towards further encroachments on their part, and ere many years elapsed, we should find them with a frontier on the seaboard."⁶²

It was decided to warn the Transvaal against pursuing a forward policy in relation to the Zulus and the Swazis, and with the assistance of Wolseley, a despatch was written to the High Commissioner, Barkly, with instructions to communicate a copy to the Transvaal Government. In this dispatch it was stated that extension by the Transvaal either of territory or of influence, whether by way of a protectorate over the Swazis, or the assertion of territorial claims against the Zulus, which were made without the previous concurrence of Her Majesty's Government, could not be recognized by it. But this was not all. The Colonial Office, especially Carnarvon, were obsessed by Confederation, and were inclined to seize upon anything which might serve to advance it. The despatch continued:

✓ "As long as South Africa continues, as at present, split up into several provinces having no common bond of union between them, Her Majesty's Government cannot accept or be a party to any extension of territory by the South African Republic, more especially any appropriation of lands now ruled over by Cetywayo with which the Colony of Natal has so many direct or indirect relations. Any such action on its part tending as it undoubtedly would to produce a native war on our frontier could not but have a dangerous and disturbing effect upon the enormous native population of Natal, and might endanger the lives and property of the European Settlers not only in Natal but probably in every part of South Africa.

Should a Confederation of all or most of the Provinces of South Africa be accomplished, as I hope may be the case at no distant day, the extension of territory under the jurisdiction of any particular Province would cease to be a very serious danger, and the point of view from which Her Majesty's Government is now constrained to regard the question would obviously become changed.

Pending however, or in the absence of any such solution of existing difficulties, it is obvious that Her Majesty's Government could not properly recognize, unless effected with its express concurrence, any addition to the Republic of territory which is not already comprised within its boundaries, and which might as I have already said, seriously compli-

62. Minute by Wolseley, 21 January, 1876 (C.O. 179/118, Natal No. 13203).

cate the position of one of Her Majesty's colonies."⁶³

This despatch was nothing more or less than an attempt to bribe the Transvaal into Confederation with an offer of Zulu territory. Wolseley, commenting on his own draft, which was substantially the same as the final version, explained, with his usual brutal frankness, that

"the Boers would be sharp enough to read between the lines", while "if hereafter, the despatch has to be published, the bribe would be well smothered up in the expression of our dread of a Native war - a feeling that is always deemed in England to be sufficient excuse for any line of policy that has that object in view."⁶⁴

But the Transvaal was not to be lured into Confederation even by offers of Zulu territory, and so this shabby piece of diplomacy lacked even the merit of being successful.

Matters remained quiet in the disputed territory until March 1876. The ensuing disturbances set off a train of events which led eventually to the British annexation of the Transvaal, and the Zulu War.

The first hint the Natal Government received of the impending storm was a letter from John Dunn, dated 13 March, 1876.

"I am requested by Cetywayo", he wrote, "to state that he has received information from his people living in the North Border of the Zulu Country that a party of Dutch with a lot of Kaffirs have been distributing a lot of notes, as enclosed, amongst his subjects, and seizing 25 head of cattle and beating and otherwise illtreating his subjects and have threatened to return in six days with an armed force...."⁶⁵

The enclosed note revealed that this curious occurrence was a Boer tax collection. What had happened was this: a law had been passed in the Transvaal, imposing a tax of 2/6 a year on all adult males, black and white, in the Republic, for the purpose of road-making. At the first collection 5/- was to be exacted, for the current and the preceding year.⁶⁶ An attempt was made by the local

63. Carnarvon to Barkly, 25 January, 1876, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 31 January, 1876 (G.H. 24, No.186).

64. Minute by Wolseley, 21 January, 1876 (C.O. 179/118, Natal No. 13203).

65. Dunn to Shepstone, 13 March, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

66. Letter from a correspondent on the Zulu border, 14 March, 1876. in The Natal Witness, 24 March, 1876.

Field-Cornet to collect this tax from Zulus living in the disputed territory, on land which had been parcelled out into farms by the Transvaal Government. They refused to pay, stating that they were subjects of Cetshwayo. "What is Cetywayo but a Kaffir and a dog?" the tax-collectors are said to have retorted,⁶⁷ and they seized cattle in default of payment.

All this was reported to Cetshwayo, who instructed his subjects in the disputed territory to resist, by physical force if need be, any attempt so seize cattle at the next collection, which the Field-Cornet had stated would be on Friday, 10 March. The Zulu King also sent an armed force of several thousand men to back up his subjects' resistance.

At daybreak on the 10th, residents in the district where the Field-Cornet had announced his intention to collect tax were awakened by the sound of Zulu war cries coming through the mist. By eight o'clock, five or six hundred Zulus in full war regalia had assembled at the kraal of a Zulu, Tambose, and could be heard dancing and yelling and defying the Field Cornet to come and collect tax. The Field Cornet prudently declined the challenge. "I believe if he had shown his face", wrote a local storekeeper, "he would have been certainly killed."⁶⁸

Only after receiving assurances that no attempt would be made to collect the tax, did the Zulu impi begin to disperse. Zulu forces also assembled at other places in the disputed territory, to provide armed resistance to any attempt at taxation, and, despite Cetshwayo's instructions that they were to act solely on the defensive, and despite the indunas' attempts to enforce this order, a certain amount of damage was done by the young warriors to Boer property.

This disturbance caused great alarm amongst the frontier farmers,

67. Message from Cetshwayo, 25 March, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/6, p.246).

68. Extract from Charles Potter to his father, George Potter, 12 March, 1876 (S.N.A. 177, p.197).

who retreated into laager. Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, travelled through the night and reached the Boers assembled at Makatees Kop, in the disputed territory, on Saturday morning. He spent the day enquiring into the origin of the disturbance, and found that first reports had been very much exaggerated. He promised that the tax would remain in abeyance until he heard from Pretoria. By this time the Zulu force had retired, and Rudolph tried to persuade the Boers to leave the laagers and return to their homes, but with small success. The general feeling seemed to be that things could not simply be allowed to drift on as they had done for so many years, and that the time had come to decide once and for all whether the disputed territory belonged to the Zulus or the Boers. As a result of the suspension of the tax, an uneasy calm returned to the area; but feelings on both sides were inflamed, and the situation remained such that any little thing would be enough to set the whole border in a flame.⁶⁹

On 21 March Cetshwayo sent a message to Landdrost Rudolph, complaining of the levying of tax on his subjects, and explaining that he had sent the armed forces into the disputed territory to prevent its collection. Rudolph replied that he had stopped the collection of the tax, and asked Cetshwayo to make any complaints to him in future, rather than send in 'commandoes' to rob homesteads. He also desired the Zulu King to order his people on the border to be quiet.⁷⁰

But this was easier said than done. The ease with which they had driven the Boers off their farms emboldened the Zulus, and their insolence and acts of robbery and destruction seemed to indicate a wish to provoke a war. Cetshwayo himself appeared

69. Information on this attempted tax-collection and its results I have gleaned mainly from ibid.; and a letter from a correspondent on the Zulu border, 14 March, 1876 in The Natal Witness, 24 March, 1876.

70. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 22 March, 1876 in The Natal Mercury, 4 April, 1876; Rudolph to Dunn, 21 March, 1876, quoted in Moodie, John Dunn, Cetywayo and the Three Generals, p.137.

peaceably inclined, and claimed to be unable to control the turbulent spirits of his young warriors; but he cannot have failed to be impressed at the contrast between the effects of one short, sharp military demonstration, on the one hand, and the years of patient appealing to the Government of Natal, on the other. Now it was the turn of the Boers to submit without resistance to insult and injury. Rudolph realised that any retaliation by the Boers would mean war, so, to reduce the chances of a conflict, he reversed his earlier policy, and advised or ordered the frontier farmers, some of whom had returned to their farms, to go into laager.⁷¹

From this time on, the disputed territory remained in an almost permanently disturbed condition. Sporadic attempts were made to re-occupy farms; but at the time of the annexation of the Transvaal, many, if not most of the owners of farms in the more exposed areas were still in laager, or had trekked out of the district altogether.

Sekukuni
pedi chief

Trouble soon erupted on another part of the Transvaal border. The Chief, Sekukuni, ruled over the Bapedi, a composite tribe, principally of Basuto extraction, who lived between the Olifants and Steelpoort rivers, in the north-east Transvaal. The Transvaal Government, with scant justification and despite Sekukuni's claim to be independent, regarded these tribesmen as its subjects, although it made no attempt to exercise the functions of government over them. Sekukuni had a brother, Johannes, whom he had exiled about ten years earlier on account of his adherence to the Christian religion. Johannes and his followers now lived in a location on the Spekboom river, also within what the Transvaal claimed as its boundary. Boundary disputes and cattle-lifting led in March, 1876, the month of the Zulu border disturbances, to the nearby farmers going into laager. Threats to drive Johannes from his location caused his heathen brother Sekukuni, despite their earlier differ-

71. George Potter to Shepstone, 18 April, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/1/27, No.66); Letters from Utrecht correspondent, 12 and 17 April, 1876, in The Natal Mercury, 25 April, 1876.

ences, to come out openly in his support.⁷² From press reports, it seems that Sekukuni did little more than make a military demonstration. This, nevertheless, produced great alarm amongst the Boers and the mainly English gold-diggers in the Pilgrims Rest area. Pretoria was appealed to, but the reply was that nothing could be done in the absence of the President.⁷³ The Boers moved into laager, while the inhabitants of the gold fields built three forts (owing to a dispute on the question of where the fort should be sited), elected a Commandant, who virtually superseded the Pretoria-appointed Gold Commissioner,⁷⁴ and appealed for British intervention.⁷⁵

This was the situation which faced President Burgers at the end of April, 1876, on his return to the Transvaal from Europe. He had to deal with two powerful chiefs, Cetshwayo and Sekukuni, who, moreover, were generally considered to be acting in collusion. It was well-known that the two chiefs maintained close connections, and that Sekukuni occupied a position something akin to that of vassal towards Cetshwayo. It was widely assumed that Sekukuni's hostile demonstration against the Transvaal had been made in support of Cetshwayo, at the time when the attempted tax collection in the disputed territory had made war between the Zulus and the Boers seem very likely. Shepstone considered it probable that messengers were sent by Cetshwayo to report these disturbances to Sekukuni and other Transvaal chiefs

"in pursuance of an arrangement which is believed on very good grounds to have been in existence for some time past between Cetywayo and those Chiefs, namely, that if ever active hostilities should commence between the Zulus and the Government of the Republic, the powerful Tribes to the North and East of the Transvaal should make use of the opportunity by operating against the rear of the Boers, and so paralyse their effort against the Zulus.

This is probably the cause of the attitude assumed by Sikukuni and Johannes, as described in communications from the Transvaal, and the time that elapsed between the disturbances in the disputed territory and the show of Sikukuni's hostility in the Transvaal seems to correspond with the time the Zulu messengers would take to reach those Chiefs."⁷⁶

72. Uys, p.198.

73. Memorial from inhabitants of Lydenburg to Bulwer, 24 April, 1876 (G.H. 347).

74. Letter from Pilgrims Rest correspondent, 21 April, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 5 May, 1876.

75. Col. Vivian to Bulwer, 18 April, 1876 (G.H.346); Memorial from inhabitants of Lydenburg to Bulwer, 24 April, 1876 (G.H.347).

76. Minute on Zululand and the Transvaal Government, by Shepstone, 28 April, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7. p.239).

It is unfortunate that Shepstone did not reveal the 'very good grounds' on which he based his conviction that this arrangement existed. For in the nature of the case it is difficult to prove the existence of anything of this sort. Contemporary newspapers show that it was a widely, almost universally held belief. There seems no doubt that there was extensive communication between Cetshwayo and Sekukuni, both at this period, and later; but all the chiefs of South Africa kept in contact with one another, and this does not necessarily prove the existence of plotting. The commando sent to Swaziland in June 1875 was sent, according to President Burgers, as a result of the Transvaal Government's "hearing that Cetywayo, in conjunction with Secucune, was preparing to attack the Amaswazis....." Shepstone's prophetic comment on this was: "These two acting in concert against the Amaswazi may mean doing the same against the Republic when opportunity offers."⁷⁷ The timing of Sekukuni's demonstration is, as Shepstone, pointed out, suggestive. After the Zulu War, John Dunn, although denying the truth of the very prevalent rumour that Cetshwayo had been the leader of an inter-tribal conspiracy against the whites of South Africa, admitted that he had had an understanding with Sekukuni to act in concert against the Transvaal Boers - but added that this had been arranged only after the defeat and dispersal of the Boer commando in August, 1876.⁷⁸ However, it seems very possible that this agreement was, unknown to Dunn, of longer standing.

Mid-April had seen the height of the alarm in the Lydenburg district; in the ensuing weeks, the panic subsided. The gold-diggers were reassured by a message from Sekukuni to the effect that his quarrel was with the Dutch, and that the English had nothing to fear, provided they remained neutral.⁷⁹

77. Burgers to Colonial Office, 4 August, 1875, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 18 August, 1875 (G.H. 23, No. 116); and Shepstone's minute on this letter, 20 October, 1875.

78. Interview with Dunn by the Special Correspondent of the Cape Argus, n.d., quoted in Colenso, Commentary, p.379.

79. Letter from Pilgrims Rest correspondent, 21 and 24 April, 1876 in The Natal Witness, 5 May, 1876.

The Boers remained in laager, although no further movement was made by either Sekukuni or Johannes.

However, on 16 May, following news of an attack on a mission station (which later proved to be untrue), the Volksraad resolved that Sekukuni's 'rebellion' should be suppressed.⁸⁰ The knowledge that some of the land that Burgers had mortgaged to raise the railway loan was in Sekukuni's country, probably influenced this decision.⁸¹

The fact that, after his initial demonstration, Sekukuni took no further action, confirmed Shepstone's opinion that that demonstration had been made in support of the Zulus. Sekukuni's present inaction, wrote Shepstone, was

"evidently because later information from the Zulus told him that the actual rupture between the Republic and Cetywayo on the question of the disputed territory which was so imminent in the preceding March, had contrary to his expectation not taken place."

In view of his belief in a Cetshwayo-Sekukuni alliance, it is not surprising that Shepstone took a serious view of the Transvaal's decision to fight Sekukuni. True, he considered it likely that the Bapedi chief would temporize, and that the Republic would confine its action to a mere demonstration.

"But if the Republican forces proceed to actual hostilities, the danger is that Cetywayo may feel bound to assist a tributary chief suffering in the Zulu cause, and whose destruction he will consider as seriously weakening the position he evidently so much relies upon should actual warfare ever break out between him and the Government of the Republic."⁸²

Burgers was evidently aware of the danger, for he made an attempt to arrange for a settlement with Cetshwayo before proceeding against Sekukuni. He sent Gert Rudolph to visit Cetshwayo to convey his wish for peace, and to suggest that a meeting should be held somewhere along the Blood River in a few months, say on

80. Letter from Pilgrims Rest correspondent, 28 May, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 9 June, 1876.

81. Letter from Middleburg correspondent, 16 June, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 7 July, 1876.

82. Minute on Transvaal-Sekukuni affairs, 5 June, 1876, (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.257).

3 July, to settle the border question.⁸³

Rudolph left for Zululand on 20 May.⁸⁴ He found Cetshwayo to be "very intelligent and a shrewd diplomatist, with good reasoning power, and of a dignified deportment."⁸⁵ The King was firm in his claim to the disputed land, but assured Rudolph that he did not want war, and declared himself quite willing to meet the President to settle the dispute amicably. However, he wanted Shepstone to be present at such a meeting. He also asked for leave to attack the Swazis. Rudolph pointed out that such an attack would be regarded as a declaration of war against the Transvaal, but Cetshwayo asked him to lay the request before the Government nevertheless. Rudolph and Cetshwayo agreed that there would be no warlike demonstrations before an attempt at a settlement had been made.

On Rudolph's reporting the result of his mission to his Government, the Volksraad naturally refused to entertain the thought of giving leave to Cetshwayo to attack the Swazis, and also declared against any kind of arbitration on the border dispute, to which it considered the presence of a third party would virtually amount.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, Cetshwayo's peaceful assurances seem to have caused the Transvaal Government to consider it safe to continue with its plan to subdue its troublesome 'subject' Sekukuni. As an added precaution, a force was sent to Swaziland to protect the Swazis (who were to provide military assistance against Sekukuni) from any countermove by the Zulus, and to prevent any Zulu force from passing through to help Sekukuni.⁸⁷

83. Burgers to Cetshwayo; 26 April, 1876, quoted in Moodie, John Dunn, Cetywayo and the Three Generals, p.132.

84. The Natal Mercury, 6 June 1876.

85. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 4 June, 1876, in The Natal Mercury, 13 June, 1876.

86. Ibid.; The Natal Mercury, 15 June, 1876; Letter from Pilgrim's Rest correspondent, 12 June, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 23 June, 1876.

87. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 4 June, 1876, in The Natal Mercury, 13 June, 1876.

On 1 July, Shepstone set sail for England. He was to represent Natal at the London Confederation Conference, which Carnarvon hoped to hold in place of the South African Conference that he had suggested, and which had been stultified by the Cape's intransigence. Bulwer and Shepstone hoped that this conference might provide an opportunity for settling the Transvaal-Zulu border dispute. It was evident that Cetshwayo's patience was wearing thin, that his hopes of Natal intervention were dwindling, and that he would not need for very much longer the Natal Government's counsels of peace and forbearance. As Shepstone commented at the time of Cetshwayo's forcible resistance to the attempted tax-collection in the disputed territory, "messages from the Zulu King are becoming more frequent and more urgent, and the replies he receives seem to him to be both temporizing and evasive."⁸⁸

Shepstone had stated in reply to Cetshwayo's report of these disturbances, which was coupled with the usual plea for intervention, that he hoped to be able to settle the dispute at the conference to be held in London later that year, and had also said that if the Zulu King wished to make any further statement on the subject, it would be forwarded to the Secretary of State.⁸⁹

Cetshwayo and his indunas met and composed a lengthy statement of their case, which John Dunn wrote down and sent to Shepstone.

This statement began with a history of the Zulu nation's relationships with its two white neighbours, the English and the Boers. Shaka, it was stated, first became acquainted with the English when he saved the lives of seven Englishmen shipwrecked at the mouth of the Mfolozi. Further acquaintance led to his sending Sotobe to the Cape to form a closer alliance with the English "as he prophesied that they were a great race of people"; however, Shaka was assassinated before Sotobe's return. Shaka "had always said that the English were the only white friends the

88. Minute on affairs in the disputed territory, by Shepstone, 30 March, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.101).

89. Confidential Shepstone to Dunn, 7 April, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.101).

Zulus would have", and Dingane continued this policy.

When Mpande fled into Natal, he intended going to the English, but "not knowing the exact difference between the English and Dutch", he formed instead an alliance with the Boers. The statement pointed out that Dingane was defeated by Mpande's troops without the assistance of the Boers, and so "it was a mere form saying he was made King by the Dutch, for which the Zulu Nation had to pay heavily in cattle and children."

Shaka, the Zulus stated, claimed all the land from the sea to the Berg, by right of conquest.

"On the English defeating the Dutch in Natal, a party of Dutch came and presented Panda with a hundred head of cattle, saying, as a present, and asked for some land across the Buffalo River, under the Berg to live on, where Langalibalele's location was,⁹⁰ saying that they wished to get out of the way of the English, to which Panda gave his consent.

Cetywayo and his Indunas repudiate any further claim of land by the Dutch from the Zulu Nation."

The Boers, it was stated, tried to persuade Cetshwayo to cede them land when they returned his brothers (in 1861), but he refused to do so, saying that he was not the King. An account of the later disputes and negotiations followed, and details of the aggressive acts of the Boers were recounted.

"We as a Nation, now see that it is on account of our having formed an alliance with the English Government that the Dutch are giving us all this trouble, and trying to bring us to war with them, which we earnestly beg His Excellency will try to prevent as we wish to live at peace."

The statement ended by begging for the intervention of Natal, which was the only way in which these disputes could be settled without recourse to war.⁹¹

Bulwer considered the matter so important, and the necessity for its settlement so urgent, that he asked Shepstone to collect all the information in the Secretary for Native Affairs' Office bearing on the subject, and to draw up a full report on it. This Shepstone did, and his report, containing a history of the dispute,

90. This refers approximately to the land west of the line C - C on the map.

91. John Dunn to Shepstone, 20 April, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/6. p.250).

together with the appended documents, ran to thirty pages when printed in the Blue Books.

Forwarding this report and its accompanying documents, Bulwer put the view of the Natal Government as follows:

"The Zulu King had always, in deference very much to the wishes and advice of this Government foreborne from doing anything in respect of the question that might produce a collision, trusting rather to the good offices of this Government to arrange the difficulty by other means. But no such arrangement had ever been made; and thus the question had drifted on until the formal annexation of the disputed territory by the Government of the Republic last year, and their subsequent attempt to give a practical effect to their proclamation of annexation by levying a tax upon the Zulus resident in the territory, provoked a resistance and a feeling of resentment which threatened to precipitate a general collision at any moment.

It seemed to me, from all I could learn on the subject, that it was due not less to the good faith than to the interests of this Government that some endeavour should be made without delay to bring about a final settlement of this question. From the communications we received from the Zulu King it was evident that he was still desirous of a settlement by means of our intervention, and the probability of a conference of South African States and Colonies being held in London during the course of the year seemed to offer a convenient opportunity for a satisfactory adjustment of the question."

Hence he asked Shepstone to compile the report and collection of documents, which he enclosed in this despatch to the Secretary of State.⁹²

Bulwer later informed Cetshwayo that he had sent the Zulu statement written down by Dunn and other papers relative to the question "to England where Mr. Shepstone also has gone, in order that they may be submitted to the consideration of the Councillors of the great Queen."⁹³

It is very likely that Cetshwayo and his advisers gained the impression that the sole, or principal, reason for Shepstone's visit to England was to settle their dispute with the Transvaal; if this is true, it helps to explain their reaction to the steps taken by Shepstone on his return.

Meanwhile in the Transvaal, although Sekukuni had made no

92. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 29 June, 1876 (G.H. 280. No. 126).

93. Message to Cetshwayo, 25 July, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.9).

further movement, the Boer commando of between one and two thousand men gathered to march against the Bapedi. President Burgers led it in person; this has been compared to Archbishop Laud's leading Cromwell's Ironsides.⁹⁴ The services of about two to three thousand Swazis were also secured.

The first skirmish of the war occurred on 24 June.⁹⁵ The expedition was at first successful. Mathebi's mountain, named by Burgers "the Kafir Gibraltar", was stormed on 6 July.⁹⁶ Johannes's mountain was taken on the 14th, most of the fighting being done by the Swazis.⁹⁷ Johannes himself was slain. The gilt of this victory was somewhat tarnished by the ensuing precipitate and rowdy departure of the Swazis. It was said that they resented being left to do all the fighting while being allotted few of the plundered cattle; it is possible that they had heard that Cetshwayo intended attacking their country.⁹⁸

On 2 August Sekukuni's formidable stronghold was attacked. The lower reaches of the mountain were gained, but then the Boers fell back; to the dismay of President Burgers, they abandoned the attack, and, despite his frantic eloquence, rode away to their homes.⁹⁹ Many explanations have been put forward for this behaviour. The English language press of the time confidently ascribed it to simple cowardice. The tradition amongst the Africans of the region today is that rain began falling, and the Boers, with cries of 'ploeg-tyd', returned to plough their farms.¹⁰⁰ But it was most probably the result of the Boers' distrust and dislike of their heretic President, with his new-fangled schemes and ideas, feelings which had been growing in strength all the time he had been away in Europe.¹⁰¹

94. Walker, Lord De Villiers, p.131.

95. Letter from Lydenburg correspondent, 26 June, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 7 July, 1876.

96. Extract from De Volksstem, n.d., in The Natal Witness, 18 July, 1876.

97. Letter from Gold Fields correspondent, 17 July, 1876, in The Natal Witness, 25 July, 1876.

98. Uys, p.205.

99. Ibid.; Kotze, p.281.

100. Verbal information from a former resident of Steelpoort.

101. This is the commonly accepted explanation. For the growth of Boer disaffection towards Burgers, see The Natal Mercury, 18 April, 1876.

Burgers did what he could to save the situation. He established two forts, and formed a corps of volunteers, mostly men from the Diamond Fields, under the command of Captain von Schlickmann, a former officer in the Prussian army, who destroyed the enemy's crops and so harassed them that Sekukuni was eventually (in the following year) forced to sue for peace. But the harm had been done. Distorted and exaggerated accounts of the disaster reached Britain, and set in motion a train of events that was to lead to the extinction of Transvaal independence.¹⁰²

102. Uys, p.206 et passim; Kotze, p.282.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE TRANSVAAL - Part I.

Carnarvon's Confederation policy - the proposed conference in South Africa does not come about - Carnarvon and the Orange Free State - the London Confederation Conference - Carnarvon and the Transvaal - news of the Boer defeat reaches England - Carnarvon sends Shepstone out to South Africa - his instructions - the situation in South Africa - the Transvaal's financial difficulties - Cetshwayo's wish to attack the Swazis - rumours of Zulu intrigues with other tribes - Cetshwayo's 'formidable message' to the Natal Government - its authenticity - its effects on the relations between the Zulus and the British authorities - Shepstone's views and wishes regarding the situation - his attempts to acquire further information on the Zulus' intentions - failure of Rudolph's mission - Shepstone leaves for the Transvaal.

This period in South African history is dominated by the desire of the Imperial Government, under the direction of Lord Carnarvon, to impose a federal union upon the states and colonies of South Africa. Allusion has been made to this in previous chapters. To understand the ensuing events it will be necessary to examine Carnarvon's federation policy, and his attempts to implement it, in a little more detail.

Lord Carnarvon, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, had been responsible for the successful federation of Canada in 1867, and had a natural wish to repeat his triumph when he returned to the Colonial Office in January, 1874. Closer union was in the air, and the examples of Germany and Italy showed that this was the way to greater strength, stability and progress. There were many reasons why federation seemed especially desirable for South Africa. It would, for example, provide the easiest and most satisfactory solution to the disputes and differences between the various states and colonies, such as the boundary questions arising out of the Keate Award, and the anxiety felt by Natal at the Transvaal's ambitions to construct a railway to Delagoa Bay - differences likely to grow more numerous and more acute as the economic development of the country proceeded.

"But the most immediately urgent reason for general union", Carnarvon stated, "is the formidable character of the native question, and the importance of a uniform, wise and strong policy in dealing with it"¹

1. De Kiewiet, p.67.

Everywhere there was confusion and dispute arising from the relations between the various tribes and their white neighbours. The two main trouble-spots were Griqualand West and Natal.

Serious friction arose between the Orange Free State and Griqualand West over the supply of firearms to Africans, many of whom came from the Free State's neighbour, Basutoland, to work at the Diamond Diggings. There were angry exchanges between President Brand and High Commissioner Barkly. Natal also protested at the trade, but, envious of the profits of the Cape and Griqualand West merchants, continued to ship guns to Delagoa Bay, where they were sold to Africans of various tribes.² The Transvaal protested at the gun trade; but had no objection to its allies, the Swazis, acquiring arms.³ Clearly only federation could end this nefarious trade.

The Langalibalele incident in Natal impressed Carnarvon with the necessity for closer unity. Although the Hlubi tribe had done little more than run away, the colonists of Natal, vastly outnumbered by Africans as they were, and separated by only a stream of water from 30,000 Zulu warriors, were thrown into a panic, and resorted to hasty, ill-considered and unjust measures. Carnarvon hoped that a united European government in South Africa would discourage any thoughts of successful combination by the African tribes against the Europeans, and that the Europeans' consciousness of greater strength would preserve them from sudden panics and enable them to deal more justly and fairly with the Africans.⁴

Imperial considerations also favoured federation. It would mean, the Colonial Office hoped, that the colonists would provide their own defence, and "remove the liability under which we labour

2. Vide infra, Chapter IV

3. Confidential Report on the Transvaal, by G. Pomeroy Colley, 10 August, 1875 (G.H. 870).

4. Carnarvon, p.218.

of spending our blood and our money upon these wretched Kafir quarrels in South Africa."⁵ At the same time, by bringing the Transvaal and the Orange Free State into a self-governing dominion under the Crown, British paramountcy in South Africa, which was beginning to be threatened by other European powers' colonial ambitions, and by President Burgers' schemes for railways and foreign alliances, would be securely restored. The Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions had been regretted almost as soon as they had been signed.

"It is certainly true that the existence of these Free States may complicate our relations with the Kaffirs, and possibly be a source of danger to the security of British dominion in South Africa", wrote Labouchere to Queen Victoria in 1856. "But the latter danger", he continued, "seems very remote. They possess no portion of the sea coast, and are altogether a pastoral people, and are engaged in a constant struggle with the barbarous tribes in their neighbourhood."⁶

The discovery of mineral wealth, and the Transvaal's plan to acquire an outlet independent of British territory, made this danger seem much less remote. The confederation policy can be regarded as an attempt to put right the harm done by the Conventions. Carnarvon saw his policy as one of restoration rather than of innovation. He referred to the "reunion" of the republics to the Queen's dominions,⁷ and wrote that confederation would

"bring into union the two Dutch States, whom we ought never to have lost, and whom I believe it is still possible to restore to the Crown."⁸

It should be added that it was generally felt in South Africa that the different states would eventually be united, and that the existing disunion was artificial and undesirable. Even in the Republics was this feeling to be found, although in this case, the nature of the union envisaged was probably somewhat different to that planned by Carnarvon.

5. Lord Cadogan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Hansard, Vol.244, col. 1669, quoted in De Kiewiet, p.67.

6. Benson and Esher, Vol.III, p.201.

7. Carnarvon to Queen Victoria, 29 April, 1875, Buckle, Vol.II, p.387.

8. Carnarvon to Gen. Ponsonby, 16 July, 1875, Ibid., p.413.

In May 1875, in a despatch to the High Commissioner, Carnarvon proposed, as a first step, the holding of a conference of all the states and colonies in South Africa to discuss the matters of common interest which arose out of the disunity of the country, such as the sale of arms, the arrest and surrender of criminals, territorial questions, the position of Griqualand West, and especially the question of native policy. He suggested Barkly to preside, James Anthony Froude, the historian, to represent Britain, Molteno the Western Province of the Cape, Patterson the Eastern Province, and Southey, Griqualand West; for Natal he had "no hesitation in designating Mr. Shepstone, of whose high qualifications it would be superfluous to speak."

"As I have already said", he continued, "the more immediate benefit which I should look for would be some satisfactory understanding as to Native policy; but if, in the free exchange of communications between the representatives of the different states concerned, the all-important question of a possible union of South Africa in some form of confederation should arise, Her Majesty's Government will readily give their earnest and their favourable attention to any suggestion that may be made", and "would be prepared to contribute their best and most cordial assistance."

Carnarvon added that he wished the action of all the parties concerned to be "spontaneous and uncontrolled".

"It is a question for them to decide whether it is for their interests to enter into such a Union, and I desire to place no pressure on that decision."⁹

Carnarvon's proposals, though couched in the most conciliatory language, met with great opposition from the Cape Government. It was jealous of its newly-attained constitutional status, and felt that Carnarvon, in initiating the proposal, in deciding the number of delegates the Cape should have at the conference, and in designating the persons who should represent it, was ignoring or violating the Colony's powers of self-government. In particular, by providing for the separate representation of Eastern and Western Provinces, Carnarvon appeared to be encouraging the

9. Carnarvon to Barkly, 4 May, 1875, enclosure in Carnarvon to Wolseley, 4 May, 1875 (G.H. 23, No. 62).

the long-standing separatist ambitions of the Eastern Province.¹⁰ Molteno and his colleagues were not opposed to confederation in principle; but they saw no urgent necessity for it, and envisaged its coming about by the gradual absorption of the other states and colonies into the Cape. At that time the Cape was the most prosperous, populous, and peaceful of all the South African communities. Molteno could not see that it would gain anything by becoming suddenly involved in the racial and financial troubles of the rest of the country.¹¹

When, therefore, Carnarvon's despatch was laid before the Cape Legislature, it was accompanied by a hostile minute by the Cape Government, stating that the interests of the Cape would not be promoted by pressing forward such a conference as the Secretary of State proposed; and the Government succeeded in getting a resolution to this effect passed by the House.¹²

Reaction in other quarters was more favourable. Natal and Griqualand West favoured the conference. President Brand of the Orange Free State was well disposed, provided the Diamond Fields question was settled fairly.¹³ President Burgers, then in England, promised Carnarvon his "hearty and full cooperation", and Acting-President Joubert and the Executive Council of the South African Republic agreed to participate in the conference.¹⁴

Wolseley suggested, in view of the Cape's attitude, a conference between Natal, the Free State and the Transvaal, with a view to achieving a limited confederation which would exclude the Cape.¹⁵

Carnarvon had independently suggested that if the Cape would not participate, a conference of the other states and colonies could be held in Natal, presided over by Sir Henry Bulwer, whom he had named as Wolseley's successor.¹⁶ Nevertheless, he still hoped

10. Carnarvon to Barkly, 15 July, 1875 (G.H. 344) In this despatch Carnarvon replies to these objections.

11. De Kiewiet, pp.60-1.

12. Ibid., p.75.

13. C.H.B.E., Vol. VIII, p.359.

14. Oys, p.115 and note.

15. Confidential, Wolseley to Carnarvon, 2 July, 1875 (G.H.299).

16. Carnarvon to Barkly, 15 July, 1875 (G.H.344).

that the Cape would be won over.

"The opposition springs in a great measure from personal and local jealousies, and has been conducted with so much warmth and intemperance of language that it will, I think, produce a reaction in my favour." ¹⁷

This proved to be true. Aided by the eloquence of Froude's campaign in favour of Carnarvon's policy, the tide of public opinion turned against the Ministry, and Molteno was obliged to call a special session of Parliament to enable it to reconsider its decision. His motion complaining of Froude's 'agitation' was defeated, and the House voted in favour of a conference. ¹⁸

The way now seemed clear for the holding of the conference, but just then, a most inopportune despatch came from Lord Carnarvon, stating he had given up the project of a local conference in favour of a meeting in London. ¹⁹ Carnarvon had evidently decided that rather than risk any further obstructionism from South Africa, he would hold the conference where the Imperial Government could exercise its maximum influence.

Having failed to win support from the Cape Government, Carnarvon turned to the Orange Free State. He now recognized that Barkly's annexation of the Diamond Fields had been an act of injustice towards the Republic. The possibility arose that if Britain made restitution for the injustice, either by a boundary adjustment, or by financial compensation, she might be able to extract from the Free State, as a quid pro quo, an agreement to confederation. But when Brand arrived in England in May 1876 to discuss the question, he refused to make the Diamond Fields dispute the basis for a diplomatic deal; all he wanted was simple justice; and Carnarvon eventually agreed to pay £90,000 in compensation, without getting anything in return. Baulked by the Cape and the Free State, but with Natal and Griqualand West safely

17. Carnarvon to Gen. Ponsonby, 16 July, 1875, Buckle, Vol. II, p.413.

18. De Kiewiet, pp.80-1

19. Carnarvon to Barkly, 22 October, 1875, cited in Uys, p. 165.

under Imperial influence, Carnarvon began to direct his thoughts to the Transvaal.²⁰

The conference that met at the Colonial Office in August, 1876, was sadly incomplete. Chaired by Carnarvon, and with Sir Garnet Wolseley, on whose bold and unscrupulous advice Carnarvon was more and more relying,²¹ as vice-chairman, it represented only two of the five South African communities. Shepstone, with two unofficial delegates, attended on behalf of Natal, while Froude 'represented' Griqualand West. President Brand attended some of the meetings, but he was under instructions from the Volksraad not to take part in any discussions on confederation. Molteno, who was under similar instructions, had travelled to Britain principally to assist in the settling of the Griqualand West question; finding, on his arrival, that Carnarvon had already settled it, and added £90,000 to the debt of Griqualand West in the process, he refused to attend the conference, even as a witness. There was no representative from the Transvaal. When in England, Burgers had given Carnarvon to understand that he favoured the idea of confederation; having returned to South Africa, full of schemes for a railway to Delagoa Bay, he seems to have changed his mind.²²

On 3 August, at the opening session of the Conference, Carnarvon revealed that the Queen had decided to confer on Shepstone the rank of K.C.M.G.. Shepstone richly deserved this distinction for his long years of service, but Carnarvon also hoped that its bestowal might encourage other colonial statesmen to seek the honours that evidently flowed from co-operation with the Imperial Government.²³ During the ensuing sessions native policy and the question of the arms trade in South Africa were discussed, but by 15 August, when the Conference adjourned, the subject of confederation had not been raised.²⁴ Clearly, as far as this was

20. De Kiewiet, pp.85-9

21. Ibid., p.48.

22. Uys, p.168.

23. De Kiewiet, p.90. Wolseley advised the award on this ground.

24. Uys, pp.170-1.

concerned, the Conference had been abortive.

Nevertheless, Carnarvon did not give up hope. He had failed with the Cape and the Orange Free State. But events in the Transvaal seemed to be moving to a crisis. Possibly this might provide the opportunity he had been looking for. As early as 1874, Barkly, supported by Southey, had advocated the annexation of the Transvaal, pointing out that if it "would come under our flag again the Orange Free State must, hemmed in as it would be on all sides, sooner or later follow."²⁵ At the time, Carnarvon had rejected the idea; but the outbreak of war with Sekukuni led him to reconsider this possibility. While the Conference was still in session, he discussed the Transvaal war with Shepstone and Herbert, the permanent Under-Secretary; but they came to the conclusion that "the news was not of sufficient authenticity to warrant action."²⁶

Within the next fortnight, more encouraging despatches were received from South Africa. Barkly, in a despatch received on 11 August, described the state of affairs as "alarming", and pointed out that the Zulu King's intentions against the Transvaal and the Swazis represented an even greater danger than the Sekukuni War. The interests of Natal were deeply compromised by the events in the Transvaal, wrote Barkly; "it appears in my humble judgment, that the moment is fast approaching when Her Majesty's Government will be compelled to intervene, and take a very decided line in regard to the proceedings of the South African Republic."²⁷

Three days later a despatch came from Bulwer, the Governor of Natal, reporting the first skirmish with Sekukuni, and the danger of a simultaneous war with the Zulus. Bulwer, who was not given to exaggeration, commented:

"It is difficult to offer an opinion as to the course events may now take in the Transvaal country. The elements of disorder are so many, and of so inflammable a nature, that at any moment they may burst into a general flame.the

25. Barkly to Carnarvon, 25 July, 1874, quoted in De Kiewiet, p.26.

26. Shepstone's Diary, 5 August, 1876 (S.P. Case 9).

27. Barkly to Carnarvon, 14 July, 1876 (C.1748, p.63).

determination of the Government of the Transvaal to take strong measures against Sikukuni, and the raids made by the natives under Johannes, are every day lessening the chances of peace, and it is impossible to regard the present situation without the greatest misgiving."²⁸

Carnarvon, no doubt advised by Shepstone, considered it very possible that Burgers might get into such deep water with Sekukuni, that a strong movement would develop in the Transvaal in favour of British rule.

In the following weeks, however, the despatches from South Africa reported that the Transvaal campaign was successful, and that the Zulus were quiet. Then, on 14 September, came the news Carnarvon had been waiting for. A telegram arrived at the Colonial Office from Barkly, reporting the defeat and dispersal of the Transvaal commando at Sekukuni's mountain. It read:

"Cape Town August twentyfifth Army of President totally routed deserters pouring into Pretoria Sickukuni pursuing in force Meeting at Landdrost's office Leydenburg agreed to ask British Government to take over Transvaal Volksraad summoned fourth September."

Barkly also asked for instructions to cover the eventuality of the Transvaal's being offered to the British Crown.²⁹

Carnarvon was at his seat in the country, Highclere castle, when this telegram came, but Herbert immediately forwarded it to him.

"It will show you" he said, "that our anticipations as to President Burgers' failure and the consequent desire of the Transvaal to come under British rule are being fulfilled very rapidly."³⁰

Carnarvon reported the turn events had taken to Disraeli, stating that his hope was that Britain might acquire

28. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 13 July, 1876 (G.H. 280, No. 139).

29. Copy of telegram from Barkly (S.P. Case 14). This copy does not include Barkly's request for instructions; but from Carnarvon's reply, and from other references, it is evident that this telegram included such a request. There was no direct telegraphic link between Britain and South Africa; telegrams travelled most of the way by ship, which explains the discrepancy between the date of the telegram and date of its receipt.

30. Hardinge, p.232.

"at a stroke the whole of the Transvaal Republic, after which the Orange Free State must soon follow and the whole policy in South Africa for which we have been labouring be fully and completely justified."³¹

He telegraphed to Barkly, telling him to lose no opportunity of acquiring the Transvaal, but to avoid the appearance of undue eagerness, or the acceptance of any conditions that could be avoided.³²

Meanwhile Shepstone was also in the country, and the first news he had of the Transvaal defeat was on 16 September, when he read of it in the local papers. He immediately returned to London, where he found letters requesting him to go to the Colonial Office on the following day. The 17th and 18th were spent in conferring with Colonial Office officials, and, by telegraph, with Carnarvon. Then, supposing that he had given all the assistance he could, he returned to the country. But it was not long before he was requested to go back to the Colonial Office to see Lord Carnarvon.

On Thursday, 21 September, at 11 a.m. he met the Secretary of State.

"To my consternation" he recorded in his diary, "Lord Carnarvon tells me I must start for the Cape tomorrow. He wishes me to go out as a special Commissioner with powers to act under Sir H. Barkly if near enough to consult or without him if not upon my own responsibility."

After making hasty preparations Shepstone returned in the afternoon to take his leave of Carnarvon, who

"said it was seldom that a minister had the advantage of commissioning an officer to an important Mission in whom there were such exceptional personal grounds for reposing confidence as in my case and his. He said he hoped I should succeed and that I should have the honor of being the first Governor of the Transvaal."³³

31. *Ibid.*, p.233.

32. Telegram, Carnarvon to Barkly, n.d., enclosure in Private and Confidential, Barkly to Bulwer, 14 October, 1876 (G.H. 346).

33. Shepstone's Diary for 1876 (S.P. Case 9).

On the following evening Shepstone left London by train and boarded the Windsor at 5.30 in the morning, on Saturday, 23 September, at Dartmouth.

Shepstone had earlier advised Carnarvon that negotiations with the Transvaal would have a better chance of success if conducted by Sir Henry Bulwer.³⁴ Carnarvon knew that there was little love lost between the Republics and Sir Henry Barkly; but it would be awkward to entrust to a subordinate a task which properly belonged to the High Commissioner. Herbert had suggested sending out Wolseley³⁵; but Carnarvon decided that Shepstone, who had an unrivalled knowledge of local conditions, and great influence in South Africa, and of whose abilities he had formed the highest opinion, would himself be the best man for the job.

The task with which he was entrusted by Carnarvon was to bring the Transvaal under British rule. In Carnarvon's official correspondence this is always represented as something that would be done in response to a request for such a step from the Transvaal authorities. But what if no such request were made? It is clear that in this case Shepstone's task would be to do all he could to cause it to be made.

"The present reverses of Mr. Burgers, the panic of the population, the natural instincts of the English population in the Transvaal, are strong elements in favour of what I desire and will I doubt not with skilful handling be made greatly to contribute to the objects in view", wrote Carnarvon to Barkly, on informing him of Shepstone's mission.³⁶

Carnarvon's instructions were that any request from the Government of the Transvaal for assistance, which was not accompanied by a request for British rule, was to be rejected.³⁷ Carnarvon made it clear that he was anxious that nothing should be done to reduce

34. Hardinge, Vol. II, p.234.

35. Uys, p.178.

36. Carnarvon to Barkly, 20 September, 1876, quoted in Hardinge, Vol. II, pp. 234-5.

37. Secret, Carnarvon to Barkly, 22 September, 1876, enclosure in Secret, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 28 September, 1876 (G.H. 151). The original of this enclosed despatch was taken out to South Africa and delivered to Barkly by Shepstone.

the wholesome pressure of the Zulu menace to the Transvaal.³⁸

And what if, despite all pressures, the Transvaal authorities could not be induced to request Britain to take over the country? Did Carnarvon wish Shepstone, in this eventuality, to annex the country nevertheless? This is what, in the event, he actually did. In so doing, did he disobey Carnarvon's instructions?

No specific and definite instructions to annex the Transvaal with or without its Government's consent can be found even in private letters; and it is probable that no such instructions were issued in so many words, at least, not in writing. But from clues here and there, I am inclined to think that Carnarvon wished Shepstone to annex the Transvaal at the request of its Government, if this could be obtained, and without it, if it could not.

This is what Carnarvon wrote to Shepstone on the subject; I have underlined those portions which show that he envisaged the possibility of Shepstone's annexing the Transvaal without the consent of its Government:

"One point of course requires very great attention - and it is one of no small difficulty. On the one hand it is of consequence to secure the Transvaal - on the other it is most desirable to make the cession as far as possible the act of the Dutch part of the population. If they think or have it in their power to say that they have been coerced into union much of the good of the annexation will be lost; for they will remain a discontented element in the body politic, allying themselves with everything that is factious, troublesome and anti-English. You will of course remember that in S. Africa we have to deal not only with the Dutch in the Dutch States but outside of them - and that any real feeling of anger within is likely to communicate itself to those without, especially at the Cape. There is a limit to this consideration: for we cannot please everyone and if we attempt to provide for every possible contingency we may lose the real substance; which is perhaps now for the first time within reach. But the question is one, I am sure, of the highest importance: it is extremely desirable to have the consent of the Volksraad to a cession of the State: and it wd. be dangerous to take over the Country against³⁹ their desire except under circumstances so grave as to justify us on the ground of unquestionable general safety.⁴⁰

For Sir Garnet Wolseley, Carnarvon's confidante and adviser on South African matters, there was no question of waiting for a

38. Carnarvon to Shepstone, 4 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 14).

39. Carnarvon's underlining.

40. Carnarvon to Shepstone, 4 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 14).

request from the Transvaal Government. He advocated a "bold and energetic" policy. He warned Shepstone that even in the most favourable circumstances he must expect to find "a strong party opposed to all proposals of union with us - Burgers the leading member of it." By this "strong party" Wolseley presumably meant the Transvaal Government, and its supporters. Shepstone should therefore make use of the pro-annexation party, in the way that Caesar described in his Commentaries. His first task would be to "stimulate the party in your favour, to foster and encourage the idea of annexation to us", playing upon fears of Kaffir invasions, and using Cetshwayo "as a powerful lever to influence wavering spirits." Then, when the clamour was loud enough, he should march in British troops at the invitation of the annexation party, "for the purpose of securing life and property from Kaffir attacks", and proclaim the Transvaal an English Province.

"To obtain that invitation should be your first object, and it might be necessary to exaggerate the importance of the party upon whose invitation you acted. With a small British force encamped at Newcastle or somewhere on the frontier of Natal in the neighbourhood of the disputed Territory, and with you yourself either at Pretoria or Leydenburg (sic) I think you would soon obtain that invitation."⁴¹

One cannot, of course, assume that Carnarvon shared Wolseley's views. But Wolseley himself, in encouraging Shepstone to act "boldly", said:

"I feel convinced that you will be backed up and supported at home for if I know Lord Carnarvon at all I feel that he is not a man to forsake those who work for him."⁴²

Carnarvon evidently had some knowledge of what sort of action Wolseley was advocating.

"Sir G. Wolseley", he wrote to Shepstone, "has suggested the possible expediency of forming a camp at Newcastle - in order to watch proceedings in the Transvaal & should circumstances render it desirable (on the invitation of the Volksraad or as he puts it of a very strong party in the Dutch population) to move at once upon Pretoria and assume the reins of govt."

Carnarvon was only anxious lest the proposed Newcastle camp should irritate the Dutch, as an apparent menace to their indepen-

41. Wolseley to Shepstone, 2 and 11 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 21).

42. Wolseley to Shepstone, 11 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 21).

dence, and at the same time reassure them against the risk of Zulu hostilities.

"I think it right however," he wrote, "to let you know what has been suggested." 43

This is the clearest indication we have that Carnarvon was prepared for Shepstone to annex the Transvaal at the request of a party in it other than the Government of the country.

It should be added that Shepstone's Commission, signed at Balmoral on 5 October, 1876, did not require him to obtain the consent of the Government of any country before annexing it; it stated merely that he was not to take over the administration of any state or territory, "unless you shall be satisfied that the inhabitants thereof, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature thereof desire to become our subjects...."44 There was no definition of what constituted a "sufficient number"; so this clause, which appears at first sight to have imposed a limitation on Shepstone's discretion, in fact left him free to annex the Transvaal under almost any circumstance, and with or without the Government's consent.

Nevertheless, Carnarvon was well aware that a forcible annexation of the Transvaal would have most unfortunate political consequences, and was anxious that the move should be made, if at all possible, in response to a request from the Transvaal authorities, or at least, from a substantial portion of the Dutch population. What he had heard from South Africa led him to hope that such a request would be forthcoming.

When Shepstone arrived in Cape Town towards the end of October, 1876, he found the situation rather different to what he had been led to expect. Sekukuni had not "pursued in force"; and apart from the clamours of the mainly English Lydenburg Defence Committee,

43. Carnarvon to Shepstone, 4 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 14).

44. Shepstone's Commission, 5 October, 1876, enclosure in Beaumont to Shepstone, 17 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 14).

there seemed little inclination to appeal for British intervention. Sekukuni was being successfully contained by a band of Volunteers, mostly from the Diamond Fields, under the command of two colourful characters, Captain von Schlickmann, a cashiered Prussian officer, and "Dr." Alfred Aylward. The latter was an Irish Fenian, who, finding things too hot for him in Britain, had emigrated to Griqualand West, where, after serving a year in prison for assault, he had become, with von Schlickmann, one of the leaders of the revolt of 1875. He eventually became editor of The Natal Witness.⁴⁵ Under men such as these, the guerilla warfare against Sekukuni was not waged in any squeamish fashion. Newspapers hostile to the Transvaal, led by the Gold Fields Mercury, were full of accounts of the most terrible atrocities, stories which Barkly assiduously cut out and sent to Carnarvon.

"The grand army having been defeated", ran a typical example, "a gang of fillibusters, under that reckless adventurer, Von Schlickmann, of Diamond Fields notoriety, are committing the grossest outrages on humanity in the neighbourhood of Steelpoort. They are butchering helpless women and children, burning Kafir kraals promiscuously, and laying waste the country."⁴⁶

These reports, with their grisly details of particular atrocities, and their pleas for British intervention on grounds of common humanity, greatly helped, when published in the British Blue Books, to justify the annexation of the Transvaal. But they were of little help to Shepstone in bringing that annexation about. Atrocities could and did lead to remonstrances from British authorities, but only a real or apparent collapse of the Transvaal Government and State would enable Shepstone to assume the reins of government.

Disappointed by Sekukuni, Shepstone saw a gleam of hope in another direction. He learned for the first time of the perilous financial condition of the South African Republic. It turned out that Burgers had succeeded in getting the country hopelessly into

45. Uys, pp.331-4.

46. Letter from W.J. Phelan, editor of the Gold Fields Mercury, n.d., in The Natal Witness, 15 September, 1876.

debt. Of the £300,000 which he had hoped to raise in Europe in order to build a railway to Delagoa Bay, only £90,000 had been subscribed. With this, the proposed railway would "commence nowhere and end at an equally important spot", as was remarked in the Colonial Office. Burgers, however, had relied on the railway to provide the extra revenue with which to make the annual payments on the loan. The loan could not now be simply repaid, because Burgers had already spent it on rails and rolling stock - all this before the line had even been surveyed.

Burgers had earlier borrowed £60,000 from the Cape Commercial Bank in order to redeem the depreciated paper currency of the Republic. The unsuccessful campaign against Sekukuni cost another £23,000. The total debt of the Republic was estimated in September, 1876, at something approaching a quarter of a million pounds. The Government had no money to carry on the day to day administration of the country. Officials had not been paid for months; a visitor to Pretoria was surprised to observe the State Secretary in the Edinburgh Hotel paying for his brandy and soda in postage stamps.⁴⁷ And now money was urgently required to keep von Schlickmann and his men in the field. Burgers proposed to raise a loan of £20,000 from the Cape Commercial Bank; but the bank would advance no more money, at any rate of interest. Fresh taxation was resorted to. A war tax of £10 on every farm-owner was imposed. This roused great opposition. An extra railway tax had already been imposed; the setting aside of three million acres as security for the railway loan had already pushed up the price of land, and so the war tax was a greater burden than it would otherwise have been. The heretic President and his godless railway were condemned, and the new tax was widely ignored. It seemed impossible that the Transvaal could ever succeed in extricating itself from the financial morass into which it had fallen, as long as Burgers, whose popularity

47. "A Foreigner's Experiences During the Period of the last days of the South African Republic", by a Mr. Dick, n.d.(S.P. Case 25).

had sunk to zero, remained in charge.⁴⁸

Shepstone surveyed all this in Cape Town, and commented:

"So that it appears that what Sekukuni has forborne doing towards swamping the State is being fully made up for by the rash and inconsiderate measures of the State Government itself."

Events, he admitted, had not "moved so rapidly during the last month as I expected when I left London; but they appear to me to be moving more surely in the direction of collapse."⁴⁹

On 3 November, Shepstone arrived in Natal, where he made himself familiar with what had passed in his absence. He found that Cetshwayo had not made any attack or hostile movement in support of his supposed ally, Sekukuni, before the retreat of the Transvaal commando on 2 August. This event, however, produced some warlike excitement in Zululand,⁵⁰ and evidently led to a revival of the project to attack the Swazis. President Burgers received a report that this was intended; he had no doubt that Cetshwayo's object, in part at any rate, was to embroil the Transvaal in war.⁵¹

That Cetshwayo was anxious for war in some direction is shown by his reply to a message that Bulwer had sent him, in an attempt to keep him out of the Sekukuni-Transvaal war, in which he had in the usual manner, urged peace and forbearance upon him.⁵² The Zulu King replied that he had never taken any step without first reporting it to the Government of Natal, and that he had no wish to do anything not approved of by that Government; but he pointed out, all the same, that

"since the death of the late King Umpanda he had never washed his assegais as is the custom of his nation, and..... he asked leave now as he had done before to be allowed to assemble his Commando and wash his assegais, otherwise attack some other tribe."

48. For the financial condition of the Transvaal I have used Uys, pp. 215-9; and De Kiewiet, pp. 97-9 and p. 111.

49. Shepstone to Herbert, 23 October, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p. 1.)

50. Confidential, R.M. Umsinga, to A.S.N.A. (S.N.A. 1/3/28, No. 699), reporting the statement of a Natal African, dated 21 August, 1876, made on his return from a visit to Zululand

51. Burgers to Bulwer, 29 August, 1876 (G.E. 346).

52. Message to Cetshwayo, 25 July, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13. p. 9).

He did not state what tribe he had in mind, but the messengers gained the impression that he meant the Swazis.⁵³

Bulwer sent another message deprecating the thought of washing assegais,⁵⁴ and received a very loyal reply which showed, nevertheless, that Cetshwayo had not abandoned such ambitions.

"The English nation", he stated, "is a just and peace loving one, and I look upon the English people as my fathers. I shall not do anything outside of their Government.

I cannot understand though how I am a King, as from the time the Zulus became a nation it has been the custom - or law - to wash spears after the death of a King and I have not washed mine."⁵⁵

The Natal messengers reported that there were also messengers from Sekukuni at the royal kraal, but they were unable to find out what their message was. The Natal messengers had had to wait a considerable time before being admitted to an audience; probably a result of a difference of opinion between Cetshwayo and his counsellors over what reply should be made. That this was the case is indicated by the fact that the counsellors, including Mnyamana, the 'Prime Minister' of the country, privately thanked the Natal Government, through its messengers, for disapproving of the proposed assegai-washing, "stating that it was only the King and young men that desired it, but that they (the Headmen) wished for peace."⁵⁶

Zululand was evidently in a disturbed condition. Later in October, 1876, more disquieting news came from the southern boundary of Natal. Confidential African detectives, who had been sent by the Natal Government to East Griqualand, where Nehemiah Moshesh had rebelled against the Cape Government, reported on 15 October that rumours were circulating of a possible conflict between the white and black races in South Africa, and that communications had

53. Message from Cetshwayo, 28 August, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.13).
54. Message to Cetshwayo, 4 September, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.11).
55. Message from Cetshwayo, 9 October, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.16).
56. Report on Zululand, by the A.S.N.A. (John Shepstone, Sir Theophilus's brother), 11 October, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.330); Confidential, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 13 October, 1876 (G.H. 299, p.63), enclosing the above.

been passing between the Zulus, the Basutos and the Pondos.⁵⁷ On 30 October, the same men returned from another visit to East Griqualand, and reported that the people they had met had talked openly of a proposal that had come from Cetshwayo for a combination between the Zulus, the Basutos and other tribes against the whites generally.⁵⁸

Little importance might have been attached to these rumours, had not a most extraordinary message just then been received from Cetshwayo. Bulwer had heard from various sources that a number of young girls had been put to death in Zululand for evading an order to marry the men of certain regiments that had recently been given permission to marry. The girls had objected that the men were too old. It was said that relatives of the girls, who had assisted them to evade the order, had also been put to death. Bulwer sent a message to Cetshwayo expressing his concern at these reports, and saying:

"The Lieutenant-Governor hopes to hear from Cetywayo that these reports are incorrect, believing as he does that Cetywayo remembers and is guided by the words spoken and the counsel given to him and the Zulu Nation, by the Representatives of this Government at his (Cetywayo's) installation as King.

The Lieutenant-Governor therefore finds it difficult to believe that such acts have taken place in Zululand, or if they have taken place, that they have taken place by Cetywayo's order; and he looks forward to Cetywayo's reply in great hope of a satisfactory explanation."⁵⁹

The reply he received was something less than satisfactory. When the reply was delivered to the Natal messengers, Cetshwayo was attended only by young men, and had none of his counsellors present. Unrestrained by the old greybeards' caution and prudence, he gave vent to his exasperated feelings thus:

"Did I ever tell Mr. Shepstone I would not kill? Did he tell the white people I had made such an agreement, because if he did he has deceived them. I do kill, but I do not consider that I have done anything yet in the way of killing. Why do the white people start at nothing? I have not yet begun. I have yet to kill, it is the custom of our nation, and I shall not depart from it. Why does the Governor of Natal

57. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 20 October, 1876 (G.H. 28, No.202).

58. Confidential, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 31 October, 1876 (G.H. 299, p.65).

59. Message to Cetshwayo, 3 October, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.15).

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speak to me about my laws? Do I come to Natal and dictate to him about his laws? I shall not agree to any laws or rules from Natal and by so doing throw the large kraal which I govern into the water. My people will not listen unless they are killed, and while wishing to be friends with the English, I do not agree to give my people over to be governed by laws sent to me by them. Have I not asked the English to allow me to wash my spears, since the death of my father Umpande and they have kept playing with me all this time, treating me like a child?

Go back and tell the English that I shall now act on my own account and if they wish me to agree to their laws I will leave and become a wanderer but before I go it will be seen, I shall not go without having acted. I am not Mr. Shepstone who went back and deceived the white men, saying I had agreed to his laws.

Go back and tell the white men this, and let them hear it well, the Governor of Natal and I are equal, he is Governor of Natal, and I am Governor here."⁶⁰

Doubts have been cast on the authenticity of this message.

It is certainly in the most striking contrast to all Cetshwayo's other messages to the Natal Government. One of the Natal messengers who delivered it, Mantshonga, was a Zulu refugee of Nkhongo's party, and was naturally hostile to Cetshwayo. It is suggested that this man distorted the message Cetshwayo delivered, or even invented it altogether.⁶¹ After the war of 1879, Cetshwayo denied ever having sent such a message, and pointed to the reported absence of indunas on the supposed occasion of his having delivered it, as proof that the message had been invented by the messengers.

"It is not allowed to the Zulu King so speak alone with strangers. They are always taken first to the Indunas, and they, if they think fit, bring them on to the King, or perhaps send them on, but never without a head-ringed Innecku (Household Official), who speaks their words for them, while they sit at a distance. How could we speak face to face?"⁶²

The messengers, however, had not reported that they had seen him alone, but that he had not been attended by his indunas, which Cetshwayo implies, in the passage quoted above, was not impossible: and in view of the differences which, as we have seen, probably existed between Cetshwayo and his indunas at this time, it is not at all unlikely that he would have been disposed to by-pass the

60. Message from Cetshwayo, 2 November, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.17).

61. Colenso, Commentary, p.26.

62. Said to Bishop Colenso and his daughter when they visited Cetshwayo at the Castle in Cape Town, 1 November, 1880, quoted in Ibid., p.753.

latter altogether, whether this was in accordance with custom or not. John Shepstone, the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, heard independently from a "reliable native" that Cetshwayo's acting chief induna was indignant at Cetshwayo's receiving and replying to this message from the Natal Government without reference to any induna.⁶³

It is difficult to believe that the messenger Mantshonga could have simply invented the message, without some protests or indications of dissent from the other messenger, Bayeni, of whom there is no reason to suspect that he was hostile towards Cetshwayo. If Mantshonga had invented it, out of hatred of Cetshwayo, and in an effort to blacken him in the eyes of the Natal Government, it is unlikely that he would have represented him as saying that he wished "to be friends with the English." However, he may have contrived to exaggerate Cetshwayo's words; and he might perhaps have twisted the courteous message from Bulwer, to which this message of Cetshwayo's was a reply, into something very much more peremptory. There is little doubt that the rumours which reached Natal of the massacre of girls were exaggerated, and that the number put to death did not reach double figures, fines being inflicted in most cases. Cetshwayo no doubt considered that the rebuke he received was unjust, and felt that if he attempted to rule his savage subjects in the lenient manner in which the Natal Government evidently wished him to, it would be the ruin of all order and authority in Zululand. The fact that the rebuke was delivered by a political enemy under the protection of diplomatic immunity could only have increased his ire. He was already in an angry and resentful mood at the Natal Government's frustration of his military ambitions, and at his indunas' tame and cautious advice. When all these circumstances are borne in mind, it is not improbable that, unrestrained by his older and graver counsellors, he should have sent a message like that attributed to him.

63. Report on Zulu Affairs, by John Shepstone, 24 November, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/11, p4).

Nevertheless, this message was no more than an intemperate outburst; Cetshwayo's later statements and actions show that these violent words did not represent a considered and settled resolution on his part to go his own way and throw over the influence and guidance of the Natal Government.

It did not occur to Bulwer to doubt the authenticity of the message, and it naturally caused a considerable alteration in his attitude towards Cetshwayo. In fact this message represents something of a watershed in the history of the relations between Zululand and British authorities. Until this time, the potential danger of a savage military kingdom, with 30 or 40,000 warriors lusting to wash their spears, on the borders of a British colony and separated from it by only a narrow river, had been concealed by the apparent amenability of its King to the wishes of the Natal Government. Now the danger became more apparent; and the necessity for establishing British control over Zululand was urged with more vigour. Great use was made of this "formidable message", as it came to be called, especially by Sir Bartle Frere, and it even attained the distinction of being quoted in the House of Lords.

For Bulwer, this message lent plausibility to the rumours that had a few days before been received that Cetshwayo was plotting to unite the various tribes against the white man in South Africa. In transmitting a copy of the message to Lord Carnarvon, he commented:

"The reply of Cetywayo to the message which I sent him is an outward expression of the present temper of the King. Incited by the young of the nation, urged on by his own desire to distinguish himself and to 'wash the assegais' of his people, which has not been done since his father's death, and elated at the results of the conflict between the Government of the Transvaal and Sikukuni, he has for some time past evinced a great desire for war. It is evident, if the information that has reached us is correct, and there is no reason to doubt its correctness, that he has not only been preparing for war, but that he has been sounding the way with a view to the combination of the different races against the White men. Whether that combination has been effected, or whether it can be effected, we are not in a position yet to form an opinion; but that messages have been passing on the subject between Cetywayo and the other Native Chiefs there can be little doubt."

Bulwer mentioned that Mr. Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, had once again gone to Cetshwayo to attempt a settlement of the border dispute; "and upon his compliance or not with Cetywayo's demands it is even thought the question of peace or war with the Government of the Transvaal may depend."⁶⁴

We must return to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. He arrived at Port Natal the day after this formidable message was received. Cetshwayo's new intransigence and aggressiveness, which Shepstone considered to be the effect of the victory of his 'dog', Sekukuni, over the Transvaal, would in normal circumstances have caused him anxiety; but Shepstone now welcomed it as a useful pressure on the Boers, and a valuable supplement to the diminishing menace presented by Sekukuni, who now seemed content to remain purely on the defensive.

"The Zulus", he wrote to Herbert, "are I find not in a very docile humour, Cetywayo, as you will know before this reaches you, has sent Sir H. Bulwer an impudent message. The fact is that the Transvaal disturbance is an inflammatory spot in the S. African body politic, & has produced internal fever more or less severe in all its members; it is not possible to tell in all cases what outward form the disease may take, but in Cetywayo's I think it is likely to be that of an attack upon the Amaswazi, which will weaken both combatants, but will also involve Cetywayo with the Transvaal, & tend to bring matters to a more speedy issue. Cetywayo's message to the Lt. Gov of Natal is I think a very fortunate one, because it relieves us of an unpleasant responsibility on his behalf."⁶⁵

"I shall not be sorry", he wrote to Sir Garnet Wolseley, "if Cetywayo persists in attacking the Amaswazi, he will most probably get the worst of it except that he will take their cattle, but both will have been tapped of a good deal of dangerous gas; while the event itself will be another practical lesson to the Boers of the Transvaal."

He mentioned that von Schlickmann and Aylward were said to have

"started with 130 picked rascals to attack Sekukuni; if they get the better of him which I doubt the pressure from that quarter will cease; if they do not there is no harm in its being supplemented by that furnished by the Zulu difficulty."⁶⁶

64. Confidential, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 2 November, 1876 (G.H. 299, p.65).
65. Shepstone to Herbert, 12 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.5.)
66. Shepstone to Wolseley, 24 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.13).

In the event, von Schlickmann failed, and was himself killed. But this was small comfort to Shepstone, who had begun to place less and less reliance on the Sekukuni war as means of pressing the Transvaal into accepting British rule.

"It does not appear", he wrote to Barkly, "that his failure against the natives will make much difference in the actual experience of war in the State. The Basuto race, to which Sekukuni belongs, unlike the Zulu, do not seem inclined to take their chances of battle anywhere except in their mountain fastnesses; the consequence is that until payment of the taxes is enforced, the war produces no pressure upon the voting power of the country. All engaged in trade are suffering severely, but they are mostly Englishmen, or other foreigners, who have very little to do with the Government. It is on this account that it is undesirable at present to check any demonstration of the Zulus against the Amaswazi....."⁶⁷

Shepstone wished to ascertain more certainly what Cetshwayo's intentions towards the Boers were, and whether an attack on the Swazis was imminent or likely. He could not communicate with Cetshwayo direct without alluding to his 'impudent message' to the Natal Government, "and this is not the time to express disapproval or resentment."⁶⁸ He did not, that is, wish to do anything that might curb Cetshwayo's useful aggressiveness. He therefore, shortly after his arrival, caused John Dunn to be informed that he would like to see him, but asked him first to visit Cetshwayo and inform him of his return, simply as a matter of news. His message crossed Dunn on his way to Durban, but the latter at once returned to comply with Shepstone's request. "I shall be able", hoped Shepstone, "to ascertain from Dunn what the actual state of things is."⁶⁹

Weeks passed, however, and no news came from Dunn.

"I cant account for this", wrote Shepstone on 23 November, "& do not like to leave Natal until I can; because it is of great importance to my mission to know to what extent the Zulus difficulty will press the Transvaal Govt. & to be able to judge what effect my going to the Transvaal may have upon Cetywayo."⁷⁰

67. Shepstone to Barkly, 3 December, 1876 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).
68. Shepstone to Wolseley, 24 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.13).
69. *Ibid.*; Shepstone to Barkly, 23 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.9).
70. Shepstone to Barkly 23 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.9).

He was anxious to be able to speak with confidence in the Transvaal in the subject of Cetshwayo's intentions against that state, and so use the Zulu danger, in Wolseley's words "as a powerful lever to influence wavering spirits."

But it seems that it was not only information that he hoped to gain as a result of Dunn's mission. He wrote to Wolseley:

".....if I go to the Transvaal without ascertaining previously the real state of the Zulu mind & taking the precautions that may be necessary, Cetshwayo may suppose that I have gone to form a coalition with the Boers against him, become amiable to the Boers & so remove a very wholesome pressure."⁷¹

Shepstone could not hope to influence Cetshwayo's suppositions by remaining merely a passive recipient of information. By 'taking the precautions that may be necessary' he must have meant imparting some information to the Zulu King concerning the nature of his mission to the Transvaal; at the least, telling him that it was not directed against the Zulus; at the worst, intimating that it was directed against the Boers, and conveying this information in such a way as not to cause the Zulu King to abate his hostility towards them. This comes somewhat close to inciting the Zulus against the Boers, an accusation that Shepstone later vigorously denied.

Meanwhile, although no word came from Dunn, Shepstone received information from another quarter. In an effort to remove at least one of the difficulties and dangers that beset his troubled country, President Burgers had, as we have mentioned,⁷² once more sent Gert Rudolph to Zululand to attempt to settle the border dispute in any way he might find possible. Rudolph saw the Zulu King shortly after the latter had delivered his defiant message to Bulwer. He found him in an arrogant and high-handed mood. He insisted on his right to the whole district of Utrecht and part of the district of Wakkerstroom, and refused to contemplate any other boundary.

71. Shepstone to Wolseley, 24 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.13).

72. Vide infra, p.147.

Rudolph returned, having failed completely in his mission. He wrote to Shepstone, and told him of his failure.

"I could not get on with the great man; he thinks himself the most powerful monarch under the sun, and even the leniency and kindness of the English he puts down to fear. Without flattery I feel much safer now that you are back in Africa."⁷³

He would have felt less safe had he known that Shepstone had not the slightest intention of restraining Cetshwayo!

Shepstone also saw a Mr. Nunn, a white man who lived in Zululand under Cetshwayo's brother, Uhamu. From him he learned that there was little probability of a Zulu attack on the Swazis, but that their contempt for the Boers was very great. Information from all sources led him to estimate the Zulu position thus:

✓ "Cetywayo is more than ever determined to push his right to the disputed territory, and will not accept any modification of the boundary of it as he would have done before the Sikukuni War, the conduct of the Boers he says has shown him his strength and that he can make his own boundary where he pleases. He need not now give the territory to the British Govt. as he wished to do to get rid of the Boers; he has offered it more than once and it was not accepted; that offer is now no longer open, he will henceforth manage the affair himself; the Boers he says will give him no trouble."

Shepstone was disappointed not to have seen Dunn, but decided that he could not wait much longer.

"I was anxious to find out from him what Cetywayo thought about the Boers and the disputed territory and if his views and feelings were what I expected, and what I now believe them to be, I wished that the Boers should be made aware of them. It now appears the Mr. Rudolph is not only fully aware of this state of things but that he is describing the danger of it in the strongest terms at public meetings with the object of inducing the voters to support the election of Mr. Burgers as a political necessity to secure the unity and strength of the state intact in the presence of this serious danger; my object is therefore so far attained."⁷⁴

He therefore sent off his wagons, and planned to leave Newcastle for the Transvaal on the 21st or 22nd of December.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, it was not until after Christmas that he got away from Pietermaritzburg. Before he left he heard, at long last, from Dunn,

73. Rudolph to Shepstone, 17 November, 1876, extract quoted by Shepstone in a letter to Barkly, 23 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.9).

74. Copy, Shepstone to Barkly, 13 December, 1876 (S.P. Case 12).

75. Draft, Shepstone to Herbert, 14 December, 1876 (S.P. Case 16).

although only indirectly. He saw a note from Dunn to a friend in Natal, written on 15 December at Cetshwayo's residence, when the King was surrounded by his army, which had been summoned for the annual dance of the first fruits, which was also a military parade. It was not very clear.

"I've had a long talk with Cetywayo", he wrote, "& he has come to the conclusion that as affairs have gone on so long without the intervention of the English Govt. although requested to do so several times, he will allow matters to take their course, especially as he has heard about the move said about to be taken by the English Govt. in the Transvaal; Cetywayo is however determined to hold the boundary against the Dutch."

From this Shepstone concluded that Cetshwayo's policy would be to wait events, and that even the project to invade Swaziland was for the present given up.

"But the dance is not yet over", said Shepstone, in a manner reminiscent of the soothsayer in Julius Caesar, "& there is no certainty until it is ended how it may end." 76

There was nothing to detain him longer in Natal, and, two days after Christmas, he set off on his momentous expedition to the Transvaal.

76. Shepstone to Barkly, 23 December, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p21).

THE ANNEXATION OF THE TRANSVAAL - Part II

Shepstone reaches Newcastle - Mbelini's attacks - Shepstone reaches Pretoria - Cetshwayo orders border farmers to leave - suspicion that Shepstone had a hand in this - Shepstone's interviews with Burgers - Boers enter Pretoria - Shepstone sends for troops - the Sekukuni peace treaty - Shepstone still determined on annexation - Cetshwayo permits Boers to attack Mbelini - greater confidence on the border - Burgers opens special session of Volksraad - Boers threaten Shepstone - Sekukuni peace approved - Shepstone impresses Boers - Volksraad rejects confederation and Burgers' reforms - Shepstone's interview with the Volksraad Chairman and others - Shepstone's first interview with the Executive Council - Burgers advocates his reforms again - they are accepted - Volksraad adjourns - Shepstone's need for delay - his second interview with the Executive Council - Shepstone's reasons for wanting the troops at hand - timing of the annexation - abortive Boer attack on Mbelini - scare on the Zulu frontier - the Zulu armies muster - fear of Boers' action the reason for this muster - rumour that Shepstone had warned of impending Boer action, or summoned Zulu armies - Transvaal Government issues protest against impending annexation - Shepstone sends message to Cetshwayo - Transvaal formally annexed - the Proclamation - no resistance offered.

Shepstone left Pietermaritzburg on 27 December with an escort of 25 mounted police and personal staff which included his son Henrique; his son Offy's father-in-law, Mr. J. Henderson; Capt. Marshall Clarke; Frederick Fynney; Dr. Lyell; and the young Rider Haggard. He had written to Burgers a week before, informing him that he was coming to the Transvaal with a personal staff and a mounted escort, to institute a "special inquiry into the origin, nature and circumstances" of the Transvaal disturbances, with a view to securing "the adjustment of existing disputes and difficulties, a settlement of the questions out of which they have arisen, and the adoption of such measures as may appear best calculated to prevent their occurrence in the future."¹

Newcastle was reached on 30 December. On New Year's Day, Gert Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, came over to see Shepstone. He had not been in Newcastle two hours, however, when an urgent message came for him to return immediately, as the Zulus had made a violent attack on a kraal under Transvaal protection in the disputed territory.² It transpired that the attack was the work

1. Shepstone to Burgers, 20 December, 1876, quoted in Uys, p.242.
2. The Natal Witness, 9 January, 1877.

of Mbelini, the Swazi emigre prince who lived in the border region between the Transvaal, Zululand and Swaziland, nominally as a Zulu subject, but in reality more as an independent robber baron. He had made a most brutal attack on a group of kraals on the farm of a German, Kohrs, near the Intombe river, killing at least 30 Africans, men, women and children. A few days later he made another attack on a kraal on Meyer's mission station in the same district, but the people having had prior warning, the slaughter on this occasion was less.³

Shepstone believed, or hoped, that these attacks were indicative of Cetshwayo's hostile intentions towards the Transvaal.

"I believe", he wrote, "that Cetywayo still respects, & to some extent fears, the Govt. of Natal & that his object in permitting the raids and murders of natives committed by Umbelini on farms occupied by white subjects of the Transvaal is to provoke retaliation & so furnish himself with a justification to meet any remonstrance from the Lt-Gov of Natal."⁴

This, however, does not seem to be the correct interpretation. It is unlikely that Cetshwayo had prior knowledge of Mbelini's intention to make these attacks, or that he approved of them, for, as we shall see, he repudiated Mbelini, and gave the Boers a free hand to make an attack in retaliation on him. And the attacks do not seem to have been an anti-Transvaal demonstration, but rather the result of some private quarrel. No white burgers were harmed, and when Mr. Kohrs went to Mbelini's kraal to demand an explanation and to point out that four of his rams were among the livestock carried off from the devastated kraals, an explanation was refused, but the rams were immediately returned.⁵

3. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 12 January, 1877 (G.H. 281, No.14); De Volksstem, 13 January, 1877; letter from Wakkerstroom correspondent, 12 January, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 19 January, 1877; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 9 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 23 January, 1877.
4. Shepstone to Herbert, 26 January, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.33).
5. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 9 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 23 January, 1877. See also the letter from a Noodsberg correspondent, 19 January, 1877, in The Times of Natal, 24 January, 1877.

On 4 January, 1877, Shepstone and his party entered the Transvaal. We cannot relate in any great detail the fascinating story of how an elderly English gentleman took up his residence in the capital of a foreign republic, and, after declaring the Government to be unsatisfactory, assumed the administration of the country himself, without a blow being struck, or a shot fired. The curious double role of President Burgers, the calm immobility of Shepstone as he watched the dying Republic by its struggles sink deeper and deeper into the quicksands, and the parts played by the other actors in this strange drama, all form a subject of great interest, but also of great complexity, and one which is not of direct relevance to our subject. Our concern is principally with Shepstone's relations with the Zulus, and we must, as far as possible, confine our examination of the annexation of the Transvaal to this aspect of it.

Shepstone made a leisurely progress to Pretoria, travelling via Standerton, or Stander's Drift, as it then was, and Heidelberg. He received a warm welcome from the people, and found great dissatisfaction with the Government of President Burgers; from these two circumstances he inferred the existence of a desire for British rule - perhaps a somewhat hasty conclusion. On 22 January he entered Pretoria and received a tumultuous welcome from its mainly English population.⁶

Meanwhile events on the Zulu border were such as to conduce to the success of Shepstone's mission. On 10 January three messengers from the Zulu King appeared before Mr. Rudolph, with a list of complaints about refugees and cattle, and a suggested solution for these border difficulties.

"Ketchwayo says", the messengers are reported as saying, "the border residents living on the Pivaan give him trouble, that the Landdrost of Utrecht must push them away, especially Field-Cornet Viljoen and all people in that neighbourhood as far as the Assegai River, that they must go away, so that he may let his people live there unmolested; that he does not

6. Uys, pp. 244-52.

speak of those people living along the Blood river up to Jan Combrink, Piet Fourie, Andries Spies, Jan Van Stephanus and across to Pieter (Uijs) towards Utrecht. Those people, he says, do not trouble him. They may stop, beginning from Doornberg."

Roughly speaking, the area Cetshwayo wanted cleared of Boers was that to the east of the line C - C on the map, and as far north as the Assegai river. This verbal message was confirmed by a letter to Rudolph from John Dunn, dated 24 December, 1876, which was brought by the same messengers, and which conveyed the same request.⁷

Rudolph called a meeting on the 17th to make known Cetshwayo's message, and stated that another meeting would be held when he received an answer to his report to Pretoria.⁸ The central Government was, however, in no position to provide any assistance; and President Burgers used the non-payment of the war and railway taxes by the border farmers as a justification for leaving them to fend for themselves.⁹

This message of Cetshwayo's, and the palpable inability and disinclination of the Government to do anything about it, produced, as may be imagined, great alarm and despondency on the border; and by the end of January many farms were deserted, the Boers having gone into laager or trekked further inland, although the Zulus do not seem to have made any attempt to put their eviction order into effect by the use of force.¹⁰

"In this district and Wakkerstroom", reported the Utrecht correspondent of The Natal Mercury, "public opinion is daily becoming more in favour of federation, those who were the most anti-English two months since, are today in favour of it. The pressure put on by Cetshwayo is driving many to their wits' end....."¹¹

"The prospects of federation look blooming this side of the Vaal River," he reported a few days later. "There is a large majority in favour of any government that will ensure peace and security to life and property."¹²

7. The Natal Witness, 2 February, 1877, quoting De Volksstem, 13 January, 1877. See also, letter from Utrecht correspondent, 12 January, 1877, in The Natal Colonist, 19 January, 1877; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 12 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 30 January, 1877.
8. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 21 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 13 February, 1877.
9. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 27 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 13 February, 1877.
10. Letter from Wakkerstroom correspondent, 18 January, 1877, in De Volksstem, 27 January, 1877; The Natal Witness, 6 February, 1877, and 9 February, 1877; letters from Utrecht correspondent, 24 and 27 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 13 February, 1877.
11. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 16 January, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 30 January, 1877.

This may have been wishful thinking; but there is no doubt that these border disturbances were useful to Shepstone, and were used by him to demonstrate the necessity of British rule for the Transvaal. This being so, and in view of his remarks about the 'wholesome pressure' which the dispute with the Zulus constituted, and of the somewhat obscure mission undertaken by John Dunn on his behalf, before he left Natal, it is impossible to repress the suspicion that it was at Shepstone's encouragement that Cetshwayo's demand for the eviction of the border residents was made. This suspicion might seem to be supported by the circumstances that the eviction order was partly in the form of a letter from John Dunn; and that Dunn wrote to Shepstone, at Cetshwayo's request, informing him that this order had been made.¹³ But these facts are far from conclusive. All Cetshwayo's letters were written by Dunn, and there is no necessary connection between Shepstone's communications with Dunn in the last few months of 1876, and the latter's authorship of these two letters. There is nothing in the second letter to suggest that the order had been made at Shepstone's suggestion; and there is nothing improbable in Cetshwayo's simply informing Shepstone that he had made the order.

On 24 January Shepstone had his first interview with President Burgers, who assured him of his readiness to co-operate with him - an assurance to which Shepstone, knowing the merc-
urial and unstable personality of the President, did not attach undue importance.¹⁴

13. Dunn to Shepstone, 28 December, 1876 (Colenso Papers, File 26, K.C.) This is a copy, provided by Dunn. The original is not in the Shepstone Papers. It is dated only one day after Shepstone left Pietermaritzburg, and was therefore most probably sent to that town. Shepstone might therefore never have received it.

14. Uys. pp. 253, 254.

On the 31st Shepstone had another long interview with Burgers.

"He is in a great dilemma", reported Shepstone, "appears nervous and timid; he sees and acknowledges the condition of the country, but does not see his way to act in the direction of my mission, except that he has called a Special Session of the Volksraad to lay the state of the country before it. It is not possible to judge what view this body may take, but if Mr. Burgers will throw his influence into my side of the scale the issue may be favourable, and as far as I can judge he is that way inclined."¹⁵

Burgers agreed with Shepstone on the desperate condition of the country, and promised to put the matter fairly forcibly before the Volksraad.¹⁶

In the meantime somewhat desultory discussions on the state of the country were held, and there was a great deal of what had become popularly known, since Wolseley's mission to Natal in 1875, as the "sherry and champagne policy". There was much speculation as to the true purpose of Shepstone's presence in the Transvaal, but he remained rather vague on the subject. On 6 February several hundred Boers rode into town, drew up in front of the public offices and insisted on knowing the object of Shepstone's mission, declaring, according to Shepstone, that they didn't want "federation, confederation, or any other -ation". Burgers pacified them by saying that Shepstone had come in a friendly way to treat with the Government on Native questions, and with the object of establishing unity among the states and colonies in South Africa, but that nothing would be agreed to without the consent of the people. With this they appeared content and rode off quietly.

"Some of them", wrote Shepstone, "looked at the Union Jack flying in camp and seemed inclined to pull it down, but did not disturb us. Of course, this sort of thing will be resorted to to intimidate the Volksraad and everyone else and a counter-balancing influence will be needed."¹⁷

He therefore asked Bulwer to send the extra troops that Carnarvon had thoughtfully despatched to South Africa, and which were due in Natal within ten days, to Newcastle, on the Transvaal

15. Shepstone to Bulwer, 31 January, 1877, quoted in Uys, p.255.

16. Ibid., p.271.

17. Shepstone to Bulwer, 7 February, 1877, quoted in Uys, p.317

border as soon as possible¹⁸

On 7 February, news that Sekukuni had signed a peace treaty reached Pretoria. According to this treaty Sekukuni agreed, as a subject of the Transvaal, to submit to the laws of the country, and to pay 2,000 cattle.¹⁹ The Sekukuni War had been the original cause of Shepstone's mission to South Africa; one might suppose that its ending would cause a radical alteration in his plans. But Shepstone did not regard the terms of the peace a victory for the Transvaal. Sekukuni retained his fortress and his lands. He looted far more than 2,000 cattle in the course of the war. Shepstone was sceptical of Sekukuni's professed submission as a Transvaal subject, and indeed the Chief later repudiated the notion that he had agreed to such a condition, and refused to ratify it. The end of the Sekukuni War was not the end of the Transvaal's native troubles. What was the position of the other subject chiefs and tribes of the state? Shepstone painted this picture in a private letter to Bulwer (who had remarked that Sekukuni's submission had removed the first cause of Shepstone's being sent to the Transvaal):

"They decline to pay taxes, make war upon and murder each other, deny the authority of the State Govt. & allow Boers to occupy the farms to wh they have received titles from the Govt. of the Republic on condition only that they pay annual tribute to the native chiefs claiming jurisdiction. If the imbecility of the Govt. is such as to be obliged to bear with these things from its own subjects in what condition is it to face its foreign relations? How can it inspire respect abroad? What effect has it already produced upon the powerful Amaswazi, & the still more powerful Zulus? And what may it not, must it not yet produce? All these considerations show sure signs of fatal weakness & this weakness is inherent in the circumstances of the country & in its form of Govt.; nothing within the compass of its own means can redeem it. I conclude therefore that it would be unkind to the people of this country both white and black & that it wd be destructive of the security of H.M. Possessions in S. Africa to allow this seeming but unreal independence longer to tempt the ambition and cupidity of the native Chiefs and Tribes within & without the boundaries of the Republic. If it had not been for the good

18. Confidential, Shepstone to Bulwer, 7 February 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.47).

19. The Natal Witness, 16 February, 1877 quoting De Volksstem, 7 February, 1877.

offices of the Govt. of Natal this country would have been overrun long ago, & for these people to talk of their independence and freedom is simply to talk of enjoyments which they dont possess".²⁰

Nevertheless, events on the Zulu border were not going well for annexation. Towards the end of January Bulwer had received a very polite and respectful message from Cetshwayo, quite in the old manner, and in sharp contrast to his last defiant message.²¹ So amiable had the Zulu King become that he was even disposed to be friendly towards the Boers. Mr. Rudolph received a very pacific and conciliatory letter from him, and in reply to the Boers' complaints about Mbelini, Cetshwayo disclaimed all responsibility for his doings, and, while himself declining to punish a man who had sought his protection, he promised not to interfere in any action the Boers might take against him.²²

This peaceful demeanour of the Zulu King, and the news of the peace with Sekukuni, restored some confidence among the border farmers and dampened their former wish for a change of Government.

"Burgers and Independence for ever", reported the Utrecht correspondent of The Natal Mercury, "is now the cry of those, who a month ago were willing to accept unconditionally, annexation, and are to day as braggart and bounceable as ever, and fancy themselves capable of conquering single handed all the native tribes in South Africa."²³

This is probably somewhat exaggerated, and in any case should not have too much importance attached to it, for it does not appear that the fluctuations on the Zulu border had any very great influence on the population of the rest of the large and disunited Republic.

On 13 February, the special session of the Volksraad opened. Burgers had shown the draft of his opening speech to Shepstone.

20. Shepstone to Bulwer, 20 February, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.64.
21. Message from Cetshwayo, 25 January, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.20.)
22. A.R.M., Newcastle, to A.S.N.A., 10 February, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/29, No. 23); letter from Utrecht correspondent, 13 February, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 27 February, 1877.
23. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 20 February, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 8 March, 1877.

In this draft he described the desperate condition of the country, stating that it was impossible to carry on the Government without radical constitutional changes, and proposed reforms which would put all Executive power into the hand of the President, and extend his tenure of office from five years to seven. Knowing his own unpopularity, he had little hope of these reforms being assented to. Shepstone thought the same, and hoped that their rejection would leave the solution provided by his mission as the only alternative.

But to the surprise of Shepstone's staff, who sat perched on the window-sills which served as a public gallery in this rude Boer Senate-House, Burgers' opening speech was a very mild affair quite different from the draft he had shown Shepstone. He said nothing about the state of the country or about constitutional reforms, and did not even succeed in making clear the object for which the special session of the Volksraad had been called. However, he afterwards assured Shepstone that he intended introducing his reforms at a later date.²⁴

Meanwhile hundreds of Boers had ridden into town to keep an eye on the Raad and stop it capitulating in any way to the British

"Rumours have been current", wrote a member of Shepstone's staff, "as to the bombastic talk of certain Boers who intended to pull some members out of the Raad; pull down the Flag flying at the Commissioner's camp and, generally, to do some wild thing or other which might be considered patriotic."²⁵

Shepstone took all this seriously, and sent to Burgers, and to Paul Kruger, who had great influence with the Boers, to tell them that violence had been threatened towards his party. Burgers replied that if he found that he could not protect him he would let him know, and suggested that he should retire to Natal and return with a stronger force! Kruger, however, disavowed any intention of violence, and said he would severely punish anyone who

24. Uys, p.310.

25. Morcom's "Family Notes", quoted in Ibid., pp.312-3

made any such attempt²⁶

The first subject discussed by the Volksraad was the peace treaty with Sekukuni. Some members seemed inclined to raise objections to it, but word was sent in from the mob outside that they wished the question to be speedily settled, and that the next point to be taken up must be the question of confederation; so the peace treaty was ratified without further ado.²⁷

Barkly had sent a copy of Lord Carnarvon's Permissive Federation Act to the Transvaal, and this was next debated. Barkly, in his covering despatch, had made no mention of Shepstone's mission, and Shepstone was, officially, in the Transvaal only to make enquiries; so confederation and his mission were treated separately.

During the discussions on the Permissive Act, public opinion, in Shepstone's view, underwent "a great change in favour of my mission". The leaders of the Boers who had ridden into the capital came to see Shepstone and asked him what he wanted. Shepstone spoke their language fluently and could tell them in their own way and without the need of an interpreter that the weakness of the country and its Government constituted a danger to Her Majesty's possessions in South Africa, and that it was his duty, out of a sincere regard for the welfare of the Transvaal as well as of the other states of South Africa, to bring the country into closer union with the Queen's other possessions. The Boers admitted the force of much of what he said and thanked him for his friendly frankness.²⁸ All thoughts of violence towards him and his party were quelled by his powerful presence and icy imperturbability. It may be doubted, however, whether this could correctly be interpreted as a swing of public opinion in favour of Shepstone's mission.

26. Ibid., p.313.

27. Ibid., pp.314-5

28. Shepstone to Barkly, 16 February, 1877, quoted in Ibid., p.315.

Things did not, moreover, go so well within the Volksraad. The President made a speech, a curious combination of vehemence and ambiguity, from which it was impossible to tell whether he was in favour of confederation or not. The Raad appointed a committee of five to confer with the Government on the subject. Having done so, it made a report which rejected confederation in the form in which it had been presented in the Permissive Act; and this was confirmed by the Volksraad. The Raad, however, resolved that the Government should formally interview Shepstone as to the object of his mission. This interview was arranged for 1 March.²⁹

On 22 February, Burgers at length moved in the Volksraad the introduction of his reforms. Despite the President's eloquence, his threats and entreaties, and his awful predictions of the fate of the Republic if the reforms were not passed, the Raad was unconvinced that they would do anything towards saving the country, and was strongly disinclined to put almost dictatorial powers into the hands of the now despised Burgers. The reforms were therefore rejected.³⁰

On 26 February, three days before Shepstone's meeting with the Executive Council, the Chairman of the Volksraad, another member, and ex-President Pretorius paid him an informal visit. At this meeting Shepstone at last drew off the velvet glove and revealed the real purpose of his mission. He made it clear that he intended to annex the country. He pointed to the powerlessness of the Government, the bankruptcy of the state, the factions into which the burghers were divided, the probability that civil war would follow upon the victory of either Burgers or Kruger in the forthcoming Presidential elections, the disobedience of the black population, and the aggressive actions and intentions of the bordering tribes, especially the Zulus, as proof that the nominal independence of the Republic could no longer be maintained. His

29. Ibid., pp.341-7.

30. Ibid., pp.350-1.

leaving the Transvaal "without having accomplished the objects of my mission, would be the signal for the outbreak of anarchy among the White inhabitants, and of attack on all sides from the Natives....." If he could see any plan by which the Transvaal could become a really self-supporting and prosperous republic, he would not hesitate to tell them of it, because he considered he should be fulfilling the objects of his mission, which were to establish a strong Government capable of maintaining peace, and of fostering progress and prosperity; but he could think of no such plan.³¹

The Raad debated behind closed doors on the subject of this interview. Once again Burgers urged his reforms as the only means of saving the independence of the Republic.³²

At his interview with the President and the Executive Council on 1 March, Shepstone repeated what he had said to the Chairman of the Volksraad. It was too late to speak of reforms by which the independence of the Republic might be preserved, he said. Annexation was the only solution, and this was what was going to happen; but it was still open to the people and the Government to make the best terms. To all this President Burgers appeared to agree.³³

It is therefore surprising that when the Volksraad debated the minutes of this meeting, the President, in course of a long and illogical speech in which he denounced the people for having brought the country to its desperate condition by refusing to fight or pay taxes, should (so far as he could be understood) once more have advocated his constitutional reforms as the only means of preserving the independence of the country.³⁴ It raises the suspicion that he expected and hoped that the Raad would once more reject the reforms, and then be left with no alternative but to submit to Shepstone; or at any rate that the rejection of the re-

31. Shepstone to Barkly, 27 February, 1877, quoted in Ibid., pp.347-8.

32. Ibid., p.349.

33. Ibid., pp.352-5.

34. Ibid., pp.357-60.

forms would assist Shepstone by enabling him to represent it as a tacit vote against independence and in favour of annexation. Either way, he would help Shepstone while seemingly trying to preserve the independence of the country. If this is what he hoped, however, he miscalculated. The incredible happened; the Volksraad accepted the reforms, and placed autocratic powers in the hands of the man they distrusted and hated.³⁵ In the circumstances there could be no clearer vote against annexation and in favour of continued independence. On the same day the Raad passed a resolution empowering the Government

"to enter into negotiations with Her Britannic Majesty's Special Commissioner with the view of maintaining the independence of the State, and, further, to enter into such treaties as may be necessary to the preservation of a good understanding between the Republic and Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and the maintenance of the public safety of South Africa, and order and peace in regard to the natives." ³⁶

This having been done, the Volksraad was prorogued, the special session ended, and the members returned to their homes.

Shepstone had obtained no request for, or consent to, British rule, from the Volksraad. On the contrary, it had made an unmistakable declaration in favour of continued independence. Moreover, Burgers, by what Shepstone called his "bad generalship", had allowed the Volksraad to break up believing that the constitutional reforms it had passed would save the Republic. In this they were deceived,

"and the consequence to me is that I have to undeceive, which causes delay. I want the minds of the people to become accustomed to the idea that the change must be made so as to avoid unnecessarily shocking them...."³⁷

On 12 March Shepstone held a second meeting with the Executive Council, at which he repeated that nothing could now save the independence of the state. Burgers suggested that to avoid the appearance of compulsory annexation, they should themselves

35. Ibid., p.363.

36. Kotze, p.310.

37. Shepstone to Bulwer, 14 March, 1877, quoted in Uys, p.367.

propose annexation under certain conditions. Shepstone thought this a good idea, but Kruger objected. Eventually the Executive Council agreed to ascertain from Shepstone on what terms the State could be admitted as part of Her Majesty's dominions.³⁸ It is apparent that by this time the Executive Council, even Kruger,³⁹ could see no way of stopping Shepstone, and were prepared to bow to the inevitable.

On the day after this meeting Shepstone wrote to Barkly that he would issue his Proclamation in about ten days time;⁴⁰ but in the event he decided to wait longer. He wished to make sure that he had sufficient military force at hand. Five companies had left Pietermaritzburg on 2 March, and reached Newcastle only on the 21st. Three more companies left Pietermaritzburg on 12 March. Shepstone wrote to Barkly that he wished to have a considerable military force at hand when the Proclamation was issued, not to crush any Boer uprising, which he did not consider likely, but because a small force might tempt the "fanatical portion" of the Boers to fire upon it, and if this happened,

"nothing could prevent the Zulus and Amaswazi from falling upon the white people in the Republic and committing horrible ravages before they could be stopped.

They would assume that they were bound to defend H.M. Govt., & as their inclination would strongly suit their sense of duty they would not wait to ask if their assistance were wanted or not."

The purpose of the large force was thus, according to Shepstone, to discourage even a token resistance, and so deprive the Zulus of any excuse for an attack on the Boers.

"Of the Boers themselves," he wrote, "I have no fear, they may possibly a few of them discharge their consciences by discharging their firearms, but it will most probably be at a safe distance to both parties. The great danger will be as you will see, that which I have described concerning the Zulus."⁴¹

Shepstone knew that both Barkly and Bulwer were anxious that

38. Ibid., pp.366-7; Kotze, p.325.

39. Uys, p.366.

40. Shepstone to Barkly, 13 March, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.107).

41. Shepstone to Barkly, 20 March, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p. 117.)

the annexation should not have the appearance of a forcible seizure of power, and that Lt-General Cunynghame was opposed to the troops being used for anything like an invasion of the Transvaal; it is possible therefore that in this account of his motives for wanting a strong military force, Shepstone played down the danger of Boer resistance, and consequently exaggerated the Zulu danger.

Shepstone decided that he would take the final step in April, after the dispersal of the Nachtmal congregations of Sunday, 1 April, and before the annual trek of the Boers from the cold Highveld to the lower and warmer bushveld, which usually took place towards the end of April.

"The effect of this will be that the usual domestic arrangements of the Boers will be very much interfered with by any hostile action, should any be contemplated at the last moment, and as I think they will be very glad of the excuse, the domestic call will prevail, & no opposition will be offered.

Before we reach the final stages of the annexation drama, we must turn our attention once more to the Zulu border. It will be remembered that Cetshwayo gave the Boers a free hand in dealing with Mbelini. Rudolph arranged that the commandos from the Utrecht and Wakkerstroom districts should meet at the Intombe river on 28 February. The whole expedition, however, was a fiasco. The Germans under Kohrs, provoked by Mbelini's robbing megalies, attacked his fortified cave prematurely, on the 24th, with an inadequate force. The attack failed, and Mbelini escaped into Zululand. Rudolph ordered that he was not to be pursued, for fear of complications with the Zulu King. Nevertheless a portion of the Wakkerstroom contingent did invade Zululand, but returned unsuccessful. This invasion caused some alarm on the border, as it was feared that it would excite the wrath of Cetshwayo.⁴³ It provoked no immediate

42. Ibid.,

43. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 1 March, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 20 March, 1877; letter from Wakkerstroom correspondent, 3 March, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 13 March, 1877.

reaction, however, and a week later the alarm had subsided.⁴⁴

There was another Zulu scare, however, at the end of the month. From about 28 March there were all sorts of alarming rumours and reports about the intentions of the Zulus. The common factor in most of them was that the Zulu army was assembling and that an attack on the Transvaal was intended. Many Boers crossed over into Natal, or drove their cattle across and went into laager themselves in the Utrecht district; while others retreated further inland. It was reported that *Nachtmaal* at the church in Utrecht on 1 April was very scantily attended. The scare, however, seems to have lasted only a short time. No Zulu attack took place, and news soon came that the Zulu armies had dispersed. By the end of the first week in April the alarm seems to have subsided.⁴⁵

Nevertheless the scare was not caused merely by idle rumour. There was definitely a mustering of Zulu warriors at this time, though the exact form it took, and what its purpose was, are not entirely clear. The Rev. Robertson stated that he was at the Royal Kraal when the order was given for the strength of the nation to be called up in arms, and that it was given on 24 March.⁴⁶ Reports filtering through into the northern districts of Natal represented all the fighting men as having joined their respective regiments, except those living near the Transvaal.⁴⁷ Further

44. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 7 March, 1877, in The Natal Colonist, 16 March, 1877.

45. Letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, 5 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 17 April, 1877; letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, n.d., in The Times of Natal, 7 April, 1877; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 6 April, 1877, in The Natal Colonist, 13 April, 1877; letter dated 2 April, 1877, in The Gold Fields Mercury, 26 April, 1877, quoted in The Natal Witness, 11 May, 1877; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 7 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 24 April, 1877; Statement of Makata, border guard, 31 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M. Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 210).

46. Robertson to Bulwer, 9 April, 1877 (G.H. 349).

47. Statement of Mrilwa, 29 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 210); letter, 2 April, 1877, in the Gold Fields Mercury, 26 April, 1877, quoted in The Natal Witness, 11 May, 1877; letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, 2 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 10 April, 1877.

reports indicated a concentration of troops near the Transvaal border area.⁴⁸ A garrison was said to have been stationed at a new military kraal not far from Rorke's Drift,⁴⁹ and Natal messengers returning from the Royal Kraal reported that three Regiments had been sent up to the disputed territory.⁵⁰ The troops remained mustered for only a short time and within the first week of April they were dispersed.⁵¹

The British troops bound for the Transvaal reached Newcastle on 21 March. The Zulu muster was ordered, according to Robertson, on the 24 March. As the destination of the troops was kept secret it might seem that the Zulu muster was a response to the possible threat presented by these troops. There is, however, no direct evidence of any value to support this theory; and the Natal messengers who returned from the Royal Kraal on 9 April, 1877, reported;

"The English troops going to the Ingozane River (Newcastle) was spoken of as being known, but caused as far as we could see no uneasiness."⁵²

From what he heard, the Rev. Robertson gained the impression that the Zulus had been called out to fight the Boers. And from all accounts this was certainly the belief of the common Zulu people.⁵³ It was believed that Cetshwayo had received news of an impending attack by the Boers, or information that they intended occupying the disputed territory by force. That some such message was received is confirmed by the report of the Natal messengers

48. Statement of Makata, 31 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.210).

49. Letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, 2 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 10 April, 1877; ditto, 5 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 17 April, 1877.

50. Report of messengers sent to Cetshwayo, 10 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.26).

51. Ibid.; Statement of Maziana, 7 April, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 7 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No.234).

52. Report of messengers sent to Cetshwayo, 10 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.26).

53. Statement of Makata, 31 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.210); Statement of Maziana, 7 April, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 7 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No.234); and other reports.

sent to Cetshwayo.

"Three Zulu Regiments", they reported, "were ordered to move up to the disputed territory bordering on the Transvaal as a report had reached Cetywayo that the Boers were to attack the Zulus before they left that part of the country from which Cetywayo was driving them, this was soon found to be a false report and the force was dismissed and returned to their homes."⁵⁴

Possibly the invasion of Zululand by the Wakkerstroom commando in pursuit of Mbelini had something to do with this report. A Natal African, Jobajaba, who crossed into Zululand on 27 March to visit his brother Ngoboxana, was told by him that he had just come from the Royal Kraal, Ondine, and that the Zulus were mustered "for war with the Transvaal Dutch." He mentioned that Cetshwayo had received a report that the Dutch were likely to take occupation of the disputed territory (this will be considered in more detail shortly) and added, somewhat inconsequentially,

"That Cetwayo's present course has resulted from the Dutch pursuing Mbelini into the Zulu country."⁵⁵

The time-lag of 24 days between this invasion and the Zulu muster suggests that the one cannot have been the direct result of the other. It is quite likely, however, that the failure of the invading force to kill or capture Mbelini led to an apprehension in Zululand that a second attempt would be made.

The prevailing belief in Zululand was that this warning of the Boers' intentions had come from Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The Natal African, Jobajaba, mentioned above, was told by his brother, in explanation of the Zulu muster

"That Cetwayo had received a message from Sir Theophilus Shepstone to the effect that the Dutch were obstinate and would persist in a right to the disputed Territory.....

That Sir Theophilus Shepstone would not prevent the Dutch from occupying the disputed Territory upon their own responsibility."⁵⁶

A messenger from the Umsinga magistracy who accompanied the Natal Government messengers quoted above to Cetshwayo's kraal,

54. Report of messengers sent to Cetshwayo, 10 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.26).

55. Statement of Mrlwa, 29 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.210).

56. Ibid.

also reported that the King had received a report about the intentions of the Boers, but stated, which they did not, that it had come from Shepstone.

"The Zulus", he said, "were assembling on account of the unsettled state of the Dutch, and the King had received a communication from Tsomtseu (Sir T. Shepstone) to the effect that the Dutch might attack the Zulus and that Cetshwayo must not be the first to make an attack."⁵⁷

An African living at Rorke's Drift told the Magistrate of Umsinga that a Zulu had told him that

"all the Zulus were summoned with weapons and war shields, and he (the Zulu) had heard that it was by the call of 'Somtseu' (Sir Theophilus Shepstone) round towards the upper side of the Dutch."⁵⁸

This last is, of course, the idlest of rumours; it should be noted however, that it appears to represent Shepstone as not merely warning the Zulus of an impending Boer attack, but as summoning the Zulus to assemble, prepared for war. In this connection, it must be stated that two white residents of Zululand, Herbert Nunn and John Mullins, independently confirmed a year later that it had been the common talk of Zululand that this Zulu muster was the result of a communication from Shepstone; and they both represented the reported communication as having been not merely a warning of the Boers' intentions, but a request or order to assemble in military force.⁵⁹ But it is possible that their memory of this rumour may have been distorted by later allegations to this effect; allegations on which they were, in fact, commenting when they made these statements.

From this welter of conflicting and confused reports we may conclude that towards the end of March 1877 Cetshwayo mustered his army or part of it in apprehension of some movement from the

57. R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 14 April, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/19, No.260).

58. Statement of Mlingane, 31 March, 1877, enclosure in R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 31 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.210).

59. Letter from Nunn, 27 April, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 4 May, 1878; Letter from Mullins, 8 June, 1878, in The Times of Natal, 12 June, 1878.

Transvaal Boers; that within the first week of April the army was again dispersed; that it was believed in Zululand that the report of the Boers' alleged intentions came from Shepstone; and that there may have been a belief in Zululand that the suggestion, request or order to muster came from Shepstone himself.

It should be added that Cetshwayo would not have been at all averse to fighting the Boers if Shepstone had asked him to. He mentioned confidentially to one of the Natal Government messengers who returned to Pietermaritzburg on 9 April, and who was well known to him

"that his spies informed him that the Boers had fired bullets over Sontseu's wagon at the Great Place of the Boers, and that he Cetywayo would be glad if the Governor here would let him know if there was to be any fighting with the Boers, as he should like to join the English."⁶⁰

We must now return to the Great Place of the Boers, and witness the final stage of the Annexation.

Carnarvon had impressed on Shepstone the great desirability of securing the consent of the Transvaal Government to the annexation of the country. Every week now brought another letter from Bulwer in Natal urging the same thing.⁶¹ But Shepstone knew by early April that no consent would be forthcoming from the Government, although he thought, rightly, that it, and the people, would acquiesce without a struggle; and with this he was now prepared to be content. He wrote to Bulwer that he had a sufficient expression of public opinion on his side by way of Memorials and the like.

"I have not however got, & shall not be able to get any declaration I am afraid from the Government. Burgers has got alarmed at the last moment, and proposes all sorts of impossible and chimerical schemes for the sake of gaining time, which means dangerous agitation. I intend to have today a definite understanding with him, & insist upon his declaring either for or against. Fortunately I believe myself to be strong enough in public opinion to be able to act without him and still to encounter no active resistance...."⁶²

60. Report of messengers sent to Cetshwayo, 10 April, 1877(S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.26).

61. Uys, pp.373-6.

62. Shepstone to Bulwer, 4 April, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.142).

The result of their discussion was that Burgers insisted that he must issue a Protest against the annexation;⁶³ but at the same time he agreed to call upon the people to submit quietly, pending an answer to the Protest. By that time, he said, (according to Shepstone) all desire of opposition would have died out. The Protest, Shepstone explained to Herbert, was "merely to save appearances."⁶⁴

On 8 April Shepstone sent word to the troops in Newcastle to move to the border.⁶⁵ On 9 April he formally notified the Transvaal Government of his intention to annex the country.⁶⁶ The Executive Council drew up a Protest, in which it was stated that as the Government was not in a position to maintain the independence of the state by means of the sword against the superior power of Britain, a Commission, consisting of Kruger and Jorissen, would be sent to Britain, and, if this appeal failed, to other friendly powers.⁶⁷

On 10 April Shepstone and Burgers had another meeting to arrange about the annexation. Shepstone showed Burgers his draft Proclamation; Burgers proposed a few alterations, which Shepstone accepted. Burgers showed Shepstone his Protest; the latter had no changes to suggest.⁶⁸

Meanwhile Shepstone received a letter from Bulwer informing him of the mustering of the Zulus. ("Of course all that is said about your having sent word to Cetshwayo etc. etc. goes for nothing" he wrote.)⁶⁹ On 11 April, therefore, Shepstone wrote to the Acting Resident Magistrate of Newcastle, asking him to send a messenger to Cetshwayo

"informing him, as from me, that rumours have reached this

63. Uys, p.382.

64. Shepstone to Herbert, 11 April, 1877, quoted in Ibid., pp.386-7.

65. Confidential, Shepstone to O.C. Troops, Newcastle, 8 April, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 8 April, 1877 (G.H. 349).

66. Shepstone to Burgers, 9 April, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.)

67. Resolution of the Executive Council, quoted in Leyds, pp.224-5.

68. Shepstone to Herbert, 11 April, 1877, quoted in Uys, pp.386-7.

69. Bulwer to Shepstone, 4 April, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

of some hostile intention on his part towards Boers or people living in the Transvaal, that if this be true, I must require him to forthwith give up all such intention, as the country of the Transvaal will at once be placed under the sovereignty of Her Majesty the Queen of England, and all disputes must be settled by word of mouth; if he has assembled any armies for the purpose of making any aggressive movement, they must be at once disbanded. I shall as soon as I can spare him from this send down my eldest son to see what is the matter and explain to all concerned the true position of affairs and the altered circumstances of the country."⁷⁰

On 12 April the final step was taken. Melmoth Osborn, accompanied by other members of Shepstone's staff proceeded to the Church Square; from the stoep of the Government Offices Osborn read the Proclamation declaring the Transvaal British territory. This document painted the condition of the country in the gloomiest colours, pointing to its financial straits, to the deep divisions amongst its people, the supposed likelihood of civil war, the weakness and ineffectiveness of the Government, and the danger from the native tribes. By far the greatest emphasis was placed on this native danger. Territory, it stated, had been abandoned to the natives in the north; the same process was now being repeated in the south (that is, on the Zulu border). The weakness of the Government encouraged attack from neighbouring tribes, from which the country had only been saved by the influence of the Natal Government. (It is clear that this also refers to the Zulus.) The Sekukuni war revealed to the native tribes the weakness of the Transvaal, shook the prestige of the white man in South Africa, and placed every European community in peril, but particularly the Transvaal itself. Her Majesty's Government could not, both for humanitarian and prudential reasons, contemplate with indifference the ravaging of an adjoining friendly state by warlike savage tribes. There was no possibility of the Transvaal's being able to raise itself up from its existing depressed and afflicted state to a condition in which it would cease to be a danger to other white

70. Shepstone to Boast, 11 April, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 June, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 6 June, 1877 (G.H. 349).

communities of South Africa. For these reasons it was essential that the Transvaal should come under British rule.⁷¹

All this was greeted with hearty cheers.

"The majority of the audience were Englishmen so the cheers were natural", admitted Shepstone, "but there were a few Boers also who, of course, could scarcely be expected to be joyful....."⁷²

A member of the Executive Council then read President (or ex-President) Burgers' Protest, and his accompanying Proclamation, in which he commanded the people to refrain from violence, which might jeopardise the success of Kruger's and Jorissen's overseas mission. This was received with a "respectful silence".⁷³ The flag was not raised until the troops had arrived, for fear of causing needless irritation.

And thus, in this quiet and almost perfunctory way, the South African Republic was extinguished. There was no resistance whatever. The troops marched to Pretoria unopposed; Boers gathered along the route to watch them go by, and to listen to the band. Even before they arrived, Shepstone had assumed all the functions of government, and was being obeyed.

71. Proclamation by Shepstone, 12 April, 1877, enclosure 2 in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 17 April, 1877 (C.1776, p.157).

72. Shepstone to Bulwer, 12 April, 1877, quoted in Uys, p.391.

73. Ibid.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE TRANSVAAL - Part III.

The Transvaalers' attitude towards the annexation - Cetshwayo's reply to Shepstone's message - the extent to which the Transvaal was in danger of Zulu attack - Shepstone's views on this - the allegation that Shepstone threatened the Boers with the Zulus - allegation shown to be unfounded - the allegation that Shepstone summoned the Zulu army against the Transvaal - its publication in The Natal Colonist and Macmillan's Magazine - examination of this allegation - list of messages that definitely passed between Shepstone and Cetshwayo - Cetshwayo's various statements made after the Zulu war - a tentative theory that would reconcile these statements with the known facts - other possibilities shown to be less plausible - conclusion; the allegation most probably without foundation.

Shepstone's three months in the Transvaal - "the most anxious and wearing that I ever spent"¹ - had been crowned with complete success. Yet the manner in which that success had been accomplished laid up a store of trouble for the future. He had annexed the country in the face of protests by the President and Executive Council, and against the expressed wish of the Volksraad. He had made no real attempt to ascertain the wishes of the burghers. Nevertheless he could write to Herbert "I believe that there are not a hundred men in the country who would wish the act of annexation to be reversed."² All evidences to the contrary were explained away. The population was divided into two sections, the "intelligent portion" and the "fanatics" - the views of the latter were of no account. The protests and the mission overseas were merely matters of form. Most people wanted British rule, but were afraid to say so. These are the themes one finds running through his despatches and private letters, especially those to annoyingly scrupulous Bulwer.

How far he succeeded in convincing himself by such arguments it is difficult to say. But one can understand how the total lack of resistance, the great respect which was always shown to him

1. Shepstone to Bulwer, 18 April, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.164).
2. Shepstone to Herbert, 16 May, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.184).

personally by the Boers, and the politeness and apparent agreement with which they listened to his persuasive account of the desperate condition of the country, should have led him to believe that British rule, though something the Boers could not bring themselves to request, was something that they recognised as the only hope for the country.

Nor would this assessment be completely wide of the mark. There seems to have been little or no resentment against Shepstone personally. It was widely felt that what he had done, he had done out of no hostile motive, but out of a sincere conviction that it was for the good of the country.³

We may leave this subject by quoting the views of De Volksstem. This paper was by no means pro-British, and later became the spear-head of the independence struggle. What follows seems to be a very fair account of the attitude of the white inhabitants of the of the Transvaal towards Shepstone's annexation of their country.

"We will endeavour to describe, as accurately as we have been able to ascertain, the present feeling in this country. There is a part of the community - principally Englishmen and foreigners - who gladly hail the change. There is another section, who believe that it is the policy of Great Britain, or rather of the present English Ministry, to bring the whole of South Africa under British rule, and therefore refrain from active opposition to the present change, because it would be of no avail in the long run. A third section is heartily tired of a weak Government and does not care what Government comes in, provided it be a strong one, and this section gains additional numbers to its ranks from those who have been wavering between various opinions. A large number, while admitting the imperative necessity of a reform, consider that that reform ought to have come from the people themselves, and object to the annexation, because sufficient time had not been allowed us to execute the reforms which the Legislature carried, and the people, as far as they had an opportunity, assented to. The vast majority however accept the situation under a sort of silent protest, hoping that the Government's protest and the deputation to Europe may effect something in favour of their wishes."⁴

We turn now from the Boers to the Zulus. In May, Shepstone received Cetshwayo's reply to the message sent to him on 11 April. It was conveyed from Cetshwayo's kraal to Newcastle by Kabana, the

3. See e.g., Dr. Jorissen: Transvaalsche Herinneringe, (Amsterdam, 1897), p.27, quoted in Kotze, p.379.

4. De Volksstem, n.d., quoted in The Natal Mercury, 22 May, 1877.

messenger whom the Magistrate of Newcastle had sent down with Shepstone's message; and from Newcastle to Pretoria by a letter from the Magistrate dated 15 May, 1877.

"I thank my Father Somtseu for his message", Cetshwayo is thus reported to have said. " I am glad that he has sent it because the Dutch have tired me out, and I intended soon to fight with them once, only once and to drive them over the Vaal. Kabana, you see my 'Impis' (armies) are gathered. It was to fight the Dutch I called them together. Now I will send them back to their homes.

It is well that two men ('Amadoda Amabili') should be made Izinla (fools)? In the reign of my father Umpanda, the Boers were constantly moving their boundary further into my country. Since his death the same thing has been done. I had therefore determined to end it once for all."

He mentioned his having given permission to the Boers to kill Mbelini, and their bungling their attempt to do so, and said "Had they sought him from me again, I would have killed them."

Shepstone wrote to Carnarvon that he attached "considerable importance" to this message,

"because it shows clearly the pinnacle of peril which the Republic, and South Africa generally, had reached at the moment when the annexation took place; it also fully justifies the description of the dangerous condition of the country which my Proclamation and address to the people of the 12th April set forth."⁵

We must attempt to come to some conclusion about the real extent to which the Transvaal was in danger of attack from the Zulus. Some remarks about Cetshwayo's reported message are called for. First, it is difficult to understand why he should have said "you see my Impis are gathered", when, by all other accounts, they had by this time already been dispersed. Possibly he was referring to the men he was reported to have kept back when the others were disbanded, to repair or alter the Royal Kraal.⁶ But then it would not be true to say that these men were gathered "to fight the Dutch". All the evidence except this message goes to show that

5. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 June, 1877 (enclosing Boast to Osborn, 15 May, 1877), enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 6 June, 1877 (G.H. 349).

6. Letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, n.d., in The Natal Mercury, 24 April, 1877; letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, 13 April, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 24 April, 1877.

the Zulu army had been dispersed some days before the Transvaal was annexed.⁷ If this is true, then it was not the annexation of the Transvaal that caused Cetshwayo to stay his hand against the Boers.

The second point to be made about this message is that it seems to be a somewhat free rendering of what Cetshwayo actually said. Mr. Boast, the Magistrate of Newcastle, in a despatch to the Natal Government, represents Kabana as reporting Cetshwayo thus:

"You see Kabana my armies ('Impi') are collected. I called them together to fight the Dutch if they again complained to me of the acts of Umbelini....or sought him from me. They will now return to their homes."⁸

In the version quoted earlier, Cetshwayo is represented as intending to fight the Boers for no immediate reason, but simply to provide a summary solution to the border question. Here, an attack on the Boers is contingent upon their taking some action first. "Sought him from me" probably means sought by physical force - that is, made another armed incursion into Zululand. This explanation of the Zulu muster accords better with the other explanations which we have already mentioned.⁹ For this reason the second version of Cetshwayo's message has a claim to be considered the more accurate. Hence we should treat Shepstone's claim, based upon the first and apparently less accurate version of Cetshwayo's message, that the Transvaal had reached a "pinnacle of peril", with some scepticism. The claim that the Transvaal was saved, by its annexation, from an imminent Zulu attack, is based only on a message of doubtful accuracy, and is contradicted by other and better evidence. For these reasons I conclude that it is probably not true.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that there was no danger of war between the Transvaal and Zululand. The disputes over the boundary and over the Swazis had embittered the relations of the two countries

7. Vide supra, nr. 167-171.

8. A.R.M., Newcastle, to A.S.N.A., 23 May, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/29, No. 358.)

9. Vide supra, pp. 168-9.

for many years, and the tension arising from them was increasing, not diminishing. As we have seen, Cetshwayo was becoming more and more impatient over the border dispute, less and less amenable to influence from Natal, and more inclined to disregard the Natal Government's pacific counsels and act on his own. That such a course of action would have led eventually to war with the Transvaal cannot be doubted.

Similarly his ambition to attack the Swazis seems to have been becoming more urgent and pressing. Even in his reply to the message Shepstone sent him on the eve of the annexation he said, on hearing that Shepstone's son, Henrique, would be sent down to him:

"I shall wish to ask for his permission to fight with the Amaswazi for their wrong-doing. They (the people of Umswazi) fight together and kill one another. This is wrong and I want to chastise them for it."¹⁰.

We have suggested that this message may be inaccurate, but this part seems to be substantially true, for Cetshwayo did in fact ask Mr. Fynney, who went to Zululand in place of Henrique Shepstone, for permission to make "one small swoop". It is needless to point out that an attack on Swaziland, which was regarded by the South African Republic as part of its territory, would have been treated by that state as an act of war.

It must however be said that Shepstone exaggerated the danger the Transvaal was in. In his Annexation Proclamation and in his informal Address to the Burghers issued on the same day, but even more so in two despatches to Lord Carnarvon dated 6 and 12 March respectively, he represented the South African Republic as being in imminent danger not merely of attack by the Zulus, but of being overrun, conquered and annihilated by the Zulus in conjunction with other tribes that surrounded the country.¹¹ The Sekukuni war,

10. Boast to Osborn, 15 May, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 June, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 6 June, 1877, (G.H. 349).

11. Copy, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 6 March, 1877; Copy, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 12 March, 1877 (G.H. 348).

he stated,

"sent the thrilling intelligence through all the immense masses of natives between the Zambesi on the north and Cape Colony on the south that the relative positions of the white and the black man had become seriously changed; and had prompted the thought that the supremacy of barbarism was no longer hopeless provided only that the effort be well planned and simultaneously executed."

Cetshwayo's regiments, he wrote, were "continually clamouring to be allowed to emulate their predecessors who overran and conquered for Cetywayo's uncle Chaka the whole of the territory now forming the Transvaal Republic". For many years the Government of Natal had been the only obstacle to a Zulu attack on the Transvaal, "which judged by the light afforded by the Sikukuni war, would, if made, most assuredly have annihilated the state."

These opinions seem to go somewhat further than the evidence warrants. While it is very likely that the retreat of the Boer commando at Sekukuni's mountain impressed Cetshwayo and other chiefs with the apparent weakness of the Boers, there is no real evidence that the tribes ringing the Transvaal were planning to make a concerted attack on it. In fact, there is little to suggest that Cetshwayo had any ambition to conquer the Transvaal. It is definite that he wished to attack the Swazis; but as regards the Transvaal proper, his ambitions seem to have been confined to a wish to drive the Boers out of the disputed territory, and regain possession of it. Even in the message reported by Kabana he is represented only as having intended to drive the Dutch "over the Vaal".¹² It is true that he later told Mr. Fynney that if the Boers had touched his 'father' Shepstone, he "should have poured my people over the land, and....the whole land would have burned with fire."¹³ But this does not mean that he would have done so in the normal course of events- that is, if Shepstone had not

12. Vide supra, p.177.

13. Report by Fynney, on his visit to Zululand, 4 July, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 24 July, 1877, enclosure Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27, No.457).

gone up to the Transvaal to attempt to bring it under British rule. In any case this remark should not have more importance attached to it than properly belongs to an exaggerated expression of devotion and loyalty, made in reply to a message which questioned Cetshwayo's continued loyalty to the British Government.

It may well be doubted, too, whether, if the Zulus had attacked the Transvaal, they would have had it all their own way. 450 Boers had defeated 10 to 12,000 Zulus at the battle of Blood river. It is quite possible that something like this would have been repeated. The Sekukuni war was misleading. Sekukuni fought entirely on the defensive. What the Boers failed to do was to dislodge him from a very formidable fortress. From this nothing can be inferred about what they might have done had the Zulus invaded their country. It should be noted that when, after the annexation, war broke out again with Sekukuni, it took the British almost two years before they captured his fortress.

Shepstone's proclamations and public despatches cannot be accepted uncritically as representing what he really thought. The Annexation Proclamation naturally represented the condition of the country in the gloomiest light; and one is entitled to suspect that his despatches to Lord Carnarvon were penned with a view to their publication in the Blue Books, where they would serve to justify the annexation in the eyes of the British public and Parliament. So these documents are little help to us in trying to decide how seriously Shepstone really considered the Transvaal to be in danger of attack and annihilation by the Zulus and other tribes. His private letters should be more useful. One might perhaps expect them to refer cynically to the dangers he had conjured up in his official writings, treating them as a mere bogey to frighten the Boers into giving up their independence. But this is not the case. There is no real inconsistency between his private letters and his public despatches in regard to the native dangers facing the Transvaal. We have already quoted part of his letter

to Bulwer of 20 February.¹⁴ To Barkly he wrote on 23 February:

".....even if anything like universal opposition were shown (by the Boers) it wd. be impossible for H.M. Govt. to allow this State to drift into the anarchy that is inevitable if it retains its nominal independence, & to become an easy prey to its half million so called native subjects, to say nothing of the powerful tribes by which the Transvaal is surrounded."¹⁵

On 7 March he wrote to Barkly:

"I am satisfied that if I were now to abandon my mission, and leave the country as it is, that in six months it would be overrun and annihilated as a state, & that we shd soon have a war of races in S. Africa."¹⁶

"If I were to leave the country" he wrote to Frere nine days before he issued his Annexation Proclamation, "civil war would at once take place & the natives would consider it sunshine in which they should make hay in the Transvaal..."¹⁷

Referring to the despatch in which he forwarded Cetshwayo's message via Kabana, he wrote to Frere:

"You will see from one of the despatches which I today forward to Lord Carnarvon how accurate my description of the danger was, in sofar at least as the Zulu King was concerned; and if he had moved I believe all the natives in South Africa would have strongly sympathized, and I have no doubt would eventually have moved too."¹⁸

Writing to Carnarvon on 23 July, he stated that Cetshwayo had long been anxious to 'wash his assegais', and that formerly the Swazis were the favourite objects of this experiment,

"but since the result of their encounter with Sikukuni, the Boers have been promoted to the preference, because it is believed that they could be more easily dealt with than the Amaswazi, while the glory of washing his weapons in white blood would be greater."

In this ambition, Shepstone continued, the Zulu King had been balked by the annexation of the Transvaal.¹⁹

Perhaps we should not uncritically assume that these private letters, either, represent Shepstone's real beliefs. Bulwer, Barkly, Frere and Carnarvon were all anxious that Shepstone should

14. *Vide supra*, pp. 158-9.

15. Shepstone to Barkly, 23 February, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.76).

16. Shepstone to Barkly, 7 March, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, letter-book 2, p.102).

17. Shepstone to Frere, 3 April, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.138).

18. Shepstone to Frere, 6 June, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.206).

19. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 23 July, 1877 (S.P. Case 7

annex the Transvaal with the consent of its Government. This he had failed to do. It is not to be wondered at that he should try, even in his private letters, to smother up his failure with exaggerated accounts of the perils facing the Transvaal, perils which could be represented as demanding its summary annexation. It may be unfair to impute conscious dishonesty to him. Being only human, he would feel a strong need to justify his action, not only to the public, the press and Parliament, and to his close political colleagues, but to himself too. When one takes everything into account, it seems that Shepstone, during his months in the Transvaal, succeeded in convincing himself that the country was in the danger that he represented it to be in his public and private letters - a representation that seems, and seemed to most contemporary observers in South Africa too, to be somewhat exaggerated - and that by annexing it he would be saving it from great peril.

Nevertheless Shepstone cannot be represented, even in his own eyes, as the disinterested saviour of the Transvaal from the Zulus and other tribes. His letters written in Natal in the last months of 1876²⁰ make it quite clear that he welcomed the Zulu menace to the Transvaal as a means of facilitating its annexation. Shepstone may have believed that his annexation of the Transvaal saved it from the Zulus; but this was not his motive in annexing it.

We turn now to two allegations concerning Shepstone's use of the Zulus in bringing the Transvaal under British rule. The first is that he unscrupulously threatened to loose the Zulus on the Transvaal if the Boers would not co-operate with him. The second is that he actually encouraged or summoned the Zulus to assume a threatening posture towards the Transvaal in order to coerce the Boers into submission.

20. Vide supra, pp. 147-8.

When Sir Bartle Frere interviewed the Boer leaders at their camp near Pretoria in April 1879, ex-President Pretorius, the chairman of the Boer Committee, complained that Shepstone, in an attempt to induce the Boer Government to consent to annexation, had threatened the Transvaal with an attack by Cetshwayo and his Zulus. This allegation was also contained in a Memorial to the Queen handed in to Frere at this meeting. This Memorial stated that Shepstone had annexed the Transvaal without resistance from the burghers "by cunning, deception and threats".

"After he had entered the country" it continued, "with the solemn assurance that he came as a representative of Your Majesty like a friend to friends to remove grievances, and acts of friendship had been heaped upon him in that sacred capacity, he shortly afterwards, in the Executive Council, threatened the country and people with those savages with whom Your Majesty's brave troops now carry on a sanguinary war in Zululand."²¹

In support of this allegation, Frere was handed a document, of which the following form the relevant portions.

"Brief extract from the Minutes kept of the conversation of his Excellency, Sir Theophilus Shepstone in the Executive Council, February, 1877, containing literally the words of Sir Theophilus Shepstone:

1. Cetewayo rules in part of this country. (He expatiates on Cetewayo). We have restrained him, and he will do nothing as long as I am here; but has the state the power to keep that man in check if I withdraw my hand from him?

The Members of the Executive Council are prepared to confirm by oath the literal accuracy of these words.

Besides them there are other influential burghers who are ready to take a similar oath."²²

Frere caused this allegation to be investigated; the result of the investigation satisfied him that the allegation was unfounded. Statements were obtained from two members of the Executive Council, denying that Shepstone had uttered such a threat. On the other hand no rebutting statements were obtained by Pretorius and his Committee from the members of the Executive Council, or any "other influential burghers" who were, it was said, "prepared

21. Memorial to the Queen, 16 April, 1879, in The Natal Witness, 3 May, 1879.

22. Translation in C.2367, p.100, quoted in Kotze, pp.361-2.

to confirm by oath the literal accuracy" of the words ascribed to Shepstone. In fact, no meeting between Shepstone and the Executive Council took place in February; the only two such meetings were on 1 and 12 of March. Pretorius was not a member of the Executive Council, and attended neither of them. The official minutes of these meetings do not contain the words stated in the Boer document of 1879 to be "literally the words of Sir Theophilus Shepstone." The nearest approach to them is what he is officially recorded as having said at the meeting of 1 March.

"Look at the actual facts. Cetshwayo now virtually rules over land belonging to this state. He is hostile to the people here and says they killed Dingaan. The British Government is keeping him back from attacking you. Are you able to overcome him?"²³

This seems to be a resume of what Shepstone said, rather than his exact words. Nevertheless, no objections were raised to it at the time on the score of inaccuracy, and we must assume that it is a true representation of what Shepstone said. It will be seen that it does not contain the explicit threat to withdraw his hand from Cetshwayo that Pretorius represented Shepstone as making. A threat, however, might seem to be implicit in the last two sentences. If the British Government intended to continue keeping Cetshwayo back from attacking the Transvaal, why was it necessary to ask the Transvaal Executive Council if they were able to overcome him? In fact, however, the context of these remarks makes it clear that Shepstone did not mean to imply that the British Government might refrain from keeping Cetshwayo back. He had maintained that the Transvaal State did not possess the inherent strength to fulfil its duty of protection towards its subjects. Kruger replied that he thought a sufficient police force would as a rule be enough to maintain order, for it would only be necessary to call out the burghers against a powerful tribe such as the Zulus. To this, Shepstone made the reply quoted above.²⁴ In this context

23. Kotze, p. 374.

24. Ibid.

it seems clear that what he was implying was that despite appearances the Transvaal was not able to defend itself, was not really an independent state, because it was only the British Government that preserved it from a Zulu invasion. He had put forward the same argument in a private letter to Bulwer eight days earlier.²⁵

It is not likely that Shepstone, a master of diplomatic vagueness, would have so bluntly threatened the Boers with an attack by the Zulus. But it is quite possible that he succeeded, without saying anything that could be held against him, in implanting in the minds of the Boers the thought that violence or obstruction on their part might cause in him a disinclination to continue exerting a restraining influence over the Zulu King. This might have led some of them, two years later, to recollect that Shepstone had explicitly threatened them with the Zulus; but this, as we have seen, is not the case.

A more serious allegation is that the Zulu danger was of Shepstone's own manufacture. This suggestion first appeared in print in a newspaper, The Natal Colonist, of 26 December, 1877. It was mentioned in passing in the paper's summary of the events of 1877. Dealing with the annexation of the Transvaal, it stated:

"Meanwhile the Zulus had been kept on the leash threatening the Republic in the rear. Communications had passed between Sir Theophilus and the Zulu King, and the latter, at 'the call of Sontseu' was officially reported to have summoned all his men, equipped for war, so as to threaten them from the other side."²⁶

This was stated to be "wholly and absolutely without foundation" by Henrique, now Secretary for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, in a letter written at the desire of his father to The Natal Mercury (the Colonist having suspended publication).²⁷ In reply to this the editor of the Colonist wrote from London²⁸ stating that his

25. Vide supra, pp. 158-9.

26. The Natal Colonist, 26 December, 1877.

27. The Natal Mercury, 14 January, 1878.

28. The Natal Mercury, 16 April, 1878.

authority for the offending statement was a report from the Resident Magistrate of the Umsinga division, printed in the Blue Book C. 1776 on p.150. This contained a statement of a Natal African, which we have already quoted,²⁹ to the effect that a Zulu had told him that he had heard that the Zulu muster was "by the call of Somtseuround towards the upper side of the Dutch". This was flimsy evidence indeed, and if it proved anything, proved only that such a rumour existed in Zululand.

Here the question would probably have been allowed to drop, had it not been revived in an article which appeared in Macmillan's Magazine, entitled "A Visit to King Ketshwayo", and which was written by Magera Magwaza, who ran Bishop Colenso's printing press at Bishopstowe. Extracts from this article were printed in the Natal newspapers in April 1878, and caused a considerable stir. Most of the article is an account of Magera's trip to Zululand, and it designed to show that the stories of bloodshed and tyranny were not true. Then, towards the end of the article he writes:

"Now let me give some account of the peaceful state of Zululand. Well, in Zululand there is no war; there is no mustering of people for evil work; there is no calling together of an impi. A little while ago Somtseu, son of Sonzica, sent a message to Ketshwayo to say that he was going to set the Boers to rights, and Ketshwayo must collect an armed force to assist him, in case anything should happen from the Boers fighting with him. So Ketshwayo mustered the whole tribe of the aba Qulusi, which lies to the north, and said that they were to stay assembled at Somtseu's word, and to attend to Somtseu's word, and in case the Boers should fight with him, then the aba Qulusi were to render help, and go at once to assist Somtseu. Ketshwayo did all that, wishing to obey the commands of the Queen, though he did not want to do it, since no occasion had yet arisen for his fighting with the Boers, as they had not attacked him; but, from what I saw at Maizekanye, he is well prepared with ammunition, etc., in case anyone should attack him. Well, so the aba Qulusi stayed on in full force until Kaitshana came, sent by Somtseu, to say that all was right, there was no fighting among the Boers, and then the aba Qulusi dispersed to their homes."³⁰

This article, Frere was informed in 1880, was "one of the principal documents upon which had been founded the charge against Sir Theophilus Shepstone...."

29. Vide supra, p.170.

30. Macmillan's Magazine, Vol.XXXVII (London, 1878), p.421.

"It is difficult to overestimate" he added, "the mischief which has been done by the ideas put into the head of the Boers in the Transvaal, that Sir Theophilus Shepstone had meditated bringing the Zulus upon them."³¹

It is clear, therefore, that this article merits close attention.

A preliminary point must first be made. It will be assumed that the "Kaitshana" mentioned towards the end of the extract quoted from Magera's article, is Kabana, the Newcastle Magistrate's induna. But it is not. It is, according to the Rev. Robertson,³² the Zulu name for Mr. Fynney, who did not visit Cetshwayo until June. This is an important point to which we will later return.

Magera did not get his account of Shepstone's alleged message from Cetshwayo himself, nor from anyone on his Zululand trip, but from four Zulu messengers who entered Natal in December 1877 on other business, and who visited Bishopstowe on their way. He stated, however, that he had heard the report before this.³³ Nevertheless, as a result of hostile criticisms in the newspapers, he asked his brother to pay a visit to Zululand and make further investigations. His brother reported on his return that he had had an interview with Sirayo, an important chief in Zululand, and that the latter had stated that a white man with two horses had come to his kraal, saying that he was tired, and had asked him (Sirayo) to convey a message from Sontseu to the King. The message was that he was going to annex the Boers "and the King must stay under arms so that, in case the Boers should refuse to be annexed and rise against him, the Zulu King might come and help him." Sirayo accordingly sent a message to the King, and the Abaqulusi were called out. They were out a long time "until a word came from Sontseu that the Boers had agreed to be annexed, and then they were dispersed."

Magera's brother also reported that he had interviewed Cetshwayo on the same subject, and that the latter had confirmed what

31. Frere to Kimberley, 4 September, 1880 (C.2740, p.49).

32. Letter from Robertson, 22 April, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 20 May, 1878.

33. Letter from Magera Magwaza, 31 May, 1878, in The Times of Natal, 3 June, 1878.

Sirayo had said (although he does not represent Cetshwayo as specifying that the messenger who came to Sirayo's kraal was a white man.)³⁴

This reported statement of Cetshwayo is not altogether consistent with statements he made on the subject while in captivity, after the war of 1879. But before we proceed to an examination of these, it will be as well to clear the air by listing the communications that undoubtedly passed between Shepstone and Cetshwayo, their dates and their contents.

1. In the first week or so of November 1876 Shepstone caused John Dunn to be informed that he wished him to inform Cetshwayo of his (Shepstone's) return "as a matter of news". We have no record of what he actually wished Dunn to say. It is possible that he wished him to say something concerning his mission to the Transvaal.³⁵ This was not strictly speaking a message to Cetshwayo, and so there is no reply.

2. On 11 April, 1877, the day before he issued his annexation Proclamation, Shepstone wrote to the Magistrate at Newcastle, asking him to send a messenger to Cetshwayo to tell him that the Transvaal was to be placed under British rule, and that any aggressive intentions towards the Boers must be abandoned, and any armies assembled for this purpose disbanded.³⁶ The Magistrate sent on his induna, Kabana. It would be a reasonable guess that he delivered this message to Cetshwayo about a fortnight after 11 April.

2(a) Cetshwayo's reply to this message was conveyed to Newcastle by Kabana and from there by a letter dated 15 May, 1877. Cetshwayo was reported to have said he had gathered his army intending to fight the Boers, but that he would now disperse it. As we have seen, there is some doubt as to the complete accuracy of this reported message.³⁷

34. Report of Magema's brother, 25 May, 1878 (Colenso Papers, File 26, K.C.)

35. Vide supra, p.148.

3. On 16 May Frederick Fynney left Pretoria on a mission to Zululand. Shepstone, in the message delivered by Kabana, had promised to send his eldest son to Zululand to provide a full explanation of the true position of affairs and the altered state of the country. Henrique contracted fever, however, so Fynney was sent instead. He saw Cetshwayo at Ulundi on 12 June. He informed him officially of the annexation of the Transvaal, said that any disputes with the Boers would now have to be settled by peaceful discussions with the British, and warned him not to molest the persons or property of the British subjects on the border.³⁸

3(a). In reply, Cetshwayo expressed his pleasure at the annexation, hoped that there would now be peace, and told Fynney that he had heard that the Boers intended to harm Shepstone, and that if they had he would have attacked the Boers.³⁹ This reply reached Shepstone by means of Fynney's report, dated 4 July, 1877.

4. Fynney, on reaching Zululand, found that two messengers, Sintwangu and another, had been sent by Cetshwayo to Shepstone. Shepstone, on his return towards the end of July from a tour of the south-western districts of the Transvaal found them waiting for him at Pretoria. They brought a message of congratulation and compliment and thanks for the message conveyed by Kabana.⁴⁰ They had also been sent to gather information on the late events in the Transvaal, and the existing situation.⁴¹

4(b). Shepstone explained the history of the annexation of the Transvaal and the reasons for it to Sintangu and his companion, and pointed out that all its inhabitants, black and white, were now British subjects. The Zulu messengers left for Zululand on 7 August.⁴²

When Sir Bartle Frere heard of Magema's article in Macmillan's

38. Vide infra, p.218.

39. Vide infra, pp.218-9.

40. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 31 July, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 1 August, 1877 (G.H. 350).

41. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 7 August, 1877 (Letter-book 6, No.42, T.A.)

42. Ibid.

Magazine he asked Capt. Poole, one of the officers in whose charge Cetshwayo was then living, to make enquiries about it. Capt. Poole referred him to an article he had written, which had appeared in Macmillan's of February 1880, and which was based on conversations with Cetshwayo. The relevant portion reads:

"When Mr.(sic) Theophilus Shepstone went to the Transvaal he sent word to Cetywayo to say he was going to try and settle the affairs there. Cetywayo knew that the Boers were at war with Secocoeni, but did not know much about their affairs except that they were continually having rows with the border Zulus, he sent two messengers to offer his alliance with the English in case there should be a war. Mr. Shepstone sent back to say he did not require any help, that the Transvaal had been annexed by the British Government, and that all was quiet."

Capt. Poole also questioned Cetshwayo again about the matter.

He reported that Cetshwayo stated that

"when Mr. Shepstone went up to the Transvaal on the annexation business, he sent a message to inform him of his movements, that he was going up to the Transvaal to put matters right there. He did this, Cetywayo says, in the ordinary way, out of courtesy to an ally. The message included the usual complimentary allusions to their being allies, and Cetywayo sent a message to Mr. Shepstone to offer his assistance should he require it, and said he would, if Mr. Shepstone liked, call up his army. The messenger followed Mr. Shepstone and caught him up in the Transvaal. Mr. Shepstone sent back to say he required no help, and added that the Transvaal was now British territory and everything was quiet. Cetywayo most distinctly denies that he called out the Aba Zulusi (sic)".⁴³

This account of the content of Shepstone's alleged message to Cetshwayo bears some marks of official muffling. Accounts which Cetshwayo later gave to Bishop Colenso and to Sir Hercules Robinson are more circumstantial, and more damaging to Shepstone.

At an interview with Bishop Colenso and his daughter on 1 November, 1880, Cetshwayo said that Shepstone had sent him a message as he went up to the Transvaal.

"The message was that he was going up to talk (settle matters) with the Boers; he had only a few men with him, and he did not know how the affair would end; he wishes therefore to let his son (Cetshwayo) know, that he might be on the watch and see what would happen."⁴⁴

43. Frere to Kimberley, 4 September, 1880 (C.2740, p.49). "Aba Zulusi" is obviously a misprint for "AbaZulusi".

44. Colenso, Commentary, p.754.

In a statement on the origin and progress of the Zulu War, dated 11 April, 1881, and addressed to the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, Cetshwayo represents this message from Shepstone thus:

"I am now passing on, and am about to arrange matters with the Boers. Tell my child (Cetshwayo) that I do not know how matters will turn out, as the Boers seem about to be troublesome. I will let him know the result when I have talked with the Boers."⁴⁵

Cetshwayo stated that Shepstone sent this message when he had reached, or had just passed, Newcastle, on his way up to the Transvaal. And the message was conveyed to Cetshwayo by Kabana.⁴⁶ Cetshwayo was positive that Shepstone had sent him only one message via Kabana, that this was it, and that Shepstone had sent it while en route to the Transvaal.⁴⁷ Cetshwayo told Colenso that no force was called out in consequence of Shepstone's message, but that the indunas were instructed to be on the look-out.⁴⁸ In his statement to Robinson, he said that he had already heard that the Boers intended shooting Shepstone and fighting with his men; on receipt of his message, therefore,

"I immediately sent to my aba Qulusi kraals and told them to be on the alert, because, in case the Boers did what they said they would do, I wished the men of that place to go at once and support Somtseu."⁴⁹

To Robinson he stated that, hearing nothing further from Shepstone, he sent Sintwangu and Makatelele to Pretoria to ask him what had happened. According to this statement, Shepstone replied that he was still negotiating with the Boers and did not know what the outcome would be.⁵⁰ In neither the statement made to Robinson nor that made to Colenso is there any mention of Shepstone's informing Cetshwayo that the Transvaal had been annexed and that everything was peaceful.

45. Ibid., p.840.

46. Ibid., pp. 754 & 840.

47. Ibid., p.755.

48. Ibid., p.755.

49. Ibid., p.840.

50. Ibid., p.840.

When Cetshwayo told Colenso that no force was called out in consequence of Shepstone's message, the interpreter with the Zulu King, a Mr. Longcast, who was living in Zululand at the time of the annexation (he was the Rev. Robertson's wagon-driver) stated that a force was called out at about that time, because he had seen it. Longcast had earlier in the year mentioned the calling out of this force to Capt. Poole, and had stated that roughly speaking it had consisted of the whole Zulu army except the men from the districts bordering on the Transvaal.⁵¹ Cetshwayo agreed that this force had been called out. He said:

"There came a report from the border, that the Boers had broken in with a force into Zululand, and were killing people and driving off cattle. The news reached me at night, and the call to arms was sent out at once in the night."

Messengers were sent to the border to enquire, and returned and stated that the report was not true. They returned on the sixth day after the alarm, and the force was then dispersed.

"But this night-alarm was a mere scare" said Cetshwayo; "it had nothing to do with Somtseu's message."⁵²

This account of the approximate date, nature, cause, and duration of this military call-up makes it pretty certain that what is being referred to here is the muster of late March and early April of 1877, described on pages 167 to 171 of this work. It is this muster that was generally supposed to have been the result of a message from Shepstone; here we have a clear statement from Cetshwayo that this was not the case, despite rumours to this effect in Zululand at the time.

To return to Cetshwayo's account of Shepstone's alleged message. It will be noted that he does not represent Shepstone as requesting him to summon an army or anything of that sort; but simply as informing him that he was going to the Boers, and that there might be trouble with them. It might justly be said, of course, that

51. Frere to Kimberley, 4 September, 1880 (C.2740, p.49).

52. Colenso, Commentary, pp.155-6.

such a message was calculated to cause Cetshwayo to summon an army.

Cetshwayo states that this message was conveyed by Kabana. His recollection that Shepstone sent Kabana to him when he was en route to the Transvaal is definitely wrong. There is no doubt that the message Kabana was instructed to convey was sent by Shepstone from Pretoria the day before he annexed the Transvaal. Kabana can only have delivered the message after the Transvaal had in fact already been annexed. Cetshwayo's confusion on this point may have arisen from the fact that the troops moved on into the Transvaal at this time. Since only one message was conveyed to Cetshwayo's by Kabana, we are driven to the conclusion that Cetshwayo's account of Shepstone's message is a greatly distorted version of what Shepstone requested the Newcastle Magistrate, in his letter of 11 April, to pass on to the Zulu King.

Is this possible? There is some evidence that it may well be the case. Kabana was not instructed to say that the country had been annexed, but that it would be.⁵³ It is clear that until Fynney arrived in June, 1877, Cetshwayo did not know that the Transvaal had been annexed, or what Shepstone had done or was doing, or whether or not he was in danger from the Boers. When Fynney told him, on 12 June, that Shepstone had annexed the Transvaal, he said that he was glad to know it:

"I began to wonder why he did not tell me something of what he was doing. I received one message from him sent by Umkabana, from Newcastle, and I heard the Boers were not treating him properly, and that they intended to put him into a corner."

He then described how he would have come to the support of his 'father', Shepstone, had one shot been fired.⁵⁴

The two messengers whom Cetshwayo sent to Pretoria, and who left Zululand before Fynney reached the Royal Kraal, after they had heard Shepstone's explanations about the annexation, made a

53. *Vide supra*, pp. 172-3.

54. Report by Fynney, 4 July, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 24 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27, No.457).

statement which confirms Cetshwayo's ignorance of what had passed in the Transvaal.

"The Messengers thanked me" wrote Shepstone, "for my explanation, they said that I had suddenly disappeared from their eyes, and Cetshwayo had heard that I had gone to a country where death reigned in many forms, where men killed and diseases killed, and that they had been sent to see where I was, how I was, and what I had done. They had been commissioned to thank me for the message I had sent by Kabana, reported in my despatch of June 15th, that they were not aware of the extent and completeness of the measure I had taken, and that Cetshwayo would be glad to know all that I had told them; that much of what they had heard from me was unknown to him and, depending as the Zulus did upon their shields and assegais, they might have committed themselves unwittingly."55

This last enigmatic remark seems to imply that the Zulus were prepared to take military action, and that the news of the annexation would prevent this. This might mean that they were ready to support Shepstone if the Boers had harmed him.

The theory then, is as follows. Shepstone sent no message to Cetshwayo before the annexation. The Zulu muster of late March and early April had nothing to do with Shepstone. Shepstone's message contained in his letter of 11 April to the Magistrate of Newcastle, and delivered after the annexation, was so distorted by Kabana or misunderstood by Cetshwayo as to leave the latter with the impression that Shepstone intended taking some action with regard to the Boers, that some disturbance might result, and that he (Cetshwayo) should be on the alert. Cetshwayo's reply, in this theory, was an offer of military assistance against the Boers if this should prove necessary, not a statement of what he would have done had the Boers resorted to violence, which is the form in which it reached Shepstone. This form of his reply, as we have already noted, there is reason to believe to be inaccurate. Cetshwayo supposed, or later mistakenly recollected, that Shepstone sent this message when he was at or near Newcastle, on his way to Pretoria, and some considerable time before the Transvaal was annexed. Hearing nothing further, Cetshwayo sent two messengers

55. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 7 August, 1877 (Letter-book 6, No.42, T.A.)

to Pretoria to make enquiries and perhaps renew his offer of assistance. In the meantime, and two months after Shepstone had issued his Proclamation, Fynney arrived at the Royal Kraal with the news that the Transvaal had been peacefully annexed; and this was confirmed by the two Zulu messengers on their return.

If our reconstruction of the events is correct, it is possible to see how the story could arise that Shepstone, some time before the annexation, called on Cetshwayo to summon his impis. Magema Magwaza's article in Macmillan's Magazine which seems to have been the means by which the story got about, does not give the name of the messenger through whom Shepstone was supposed to have called on Cetshwayo to collect his army; but it states that it was 'Kaitshana', that is, Mr. Fynney, who brought the news that "all was right, there was no fighting among the Boers";⁵⁶ and so, to this extent, it is consistent with our theory.

There are other possibilities that we must consider. Perhaps the message Shepstone instructed the Magistrate of Newcastle on 11 April, 1877, to send to Cetshwayo, and which was conveyed to him by Kabana, did state what Cetshwayo said it did, and not what Shepstone told the Secretary of State, and the world, it contained. But this is scarcely plausible. The copy of the message that he entered in his own private letter-book⁵⁷ is identical to the copy he sent Carnarvon. And why should Shepstone send a message likely to cause the Zulu King to take military action against the people of the Transvaal, after he had annexed their country?

Another possibility is that Shepstone did send an earlier message of the type Cetshwayo described, but that Cetshwayo later confused this message with the one brought by Kabana. There is no record, however, on Shepstone's side, of any earlier message. (What he asked Dunn to do was to inform Cetshwayo of his arrival

56. Vide supra, p. 187.

57. Shepstone to Boast, 11 April, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p. 156.

in Natal, as a matter of news - not to convey any message).⁵⁸ Cetshwayo distinctly asserted to Fynney in June, 1877, and to Colenso in November, 1880, that the first message he received from Shepstone was that conveyed by Kabana. When Shepstone met the Zulu indunas on 18 October, 1877, to attempt a settlement of the border dispute, the indunas complained that Shepstone had gone to England to settle the dispute with Mr. Burgers, and "we heard nothing of you till we heard by Kabana....."⁵⁹

Shepstone himself, of course, denied the accusations made against him. This is, needless to say, of no value in deciding whether the accusation is true or not. What is of more significance is that when Shepstone visited Cetshwayo in captivity in the Castle in Cape Town, he raised the subject with him.

"It is said that I sent a message to you rousing you to attack the Boers", Shepstone was reported by Cetshwayo to have said; "but you know that I sent no message to you."

Would Shepstone have broached the subject if his conscience was not clear? Cetshwayo stated that he answered:

"Yes, but you did."

"Whom did I send?" asked Shepstone.

"Who then sent Nkabana?" asked Cetshwayo.

"And he admitted it", reported Cetshwayo, "and was silent, and had not a word to say in reply."⁶⁰

Shepstone had no need to deny having sent Kabana. But why did he not pursue further the question of the content of the Kabana message? Why did he apparently allow Cetshwayo to retain the impression that he had admitted having sent, some time before the annexation, a message calculated to rouse the Zulus to attack the Boers? This is but one of the many puzzles that surround this

58. Vide supra, p.148

59. Report by Lazarus Xaba and Sabulawa, 3 November, 1877 (S.N. 6). These two reports were sent by Shepstone to report the proceedings at the 18 October meeting to Cetshwayo. Their report contains an account of the proceedings.

60. Interview between Colenso and Cetshwayo, 1 November, 1880, quoted in Colenso, Commentary, p.754.

whole baffling episode. Another is the mysterious white man with two horses who was supposed to have arrived at Sirayo's kraal.⁶¹ We have not been able to fit him into any coherent explanation of this episode.

It will be seen that no absolute certainty is possible on the question. Bearing this in mind, these are the conclusions I have come to:

1. That the Zulu muster of late March and early April, 1877, had nothing to do with Shepstone.

2. That Shepstone sent no message to Cetshwayo before 11 April, 1877, the day before the annexation.

3. That this message could only have reached Cetshwayo some days after the annexation, and must have been, and was, a blameless one.

4. The story that Shepstone, some time before the annexation, called on Cetshwayo to summon his army, probably arose through misunderstanding and confusion.

For these reasons I consider that the accusation that Shepstone summoned the Zulu impis, in order to coerce the Boers, is most probably without foundation.

61. Vide supra, p. 188.

AFTER THE ANNEXATION

Uncertainty amongst the Zulus - their fear that Shepstone intended annexing Zululand - construction of a new military kraal - Cetshwayo's approaches to the Swazis, Sekukuni, and the Pondos - the origin of Zulu fears of British annexation - misinterpretation of troop movements, and of Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal - newspaper talk - annexation of Zululand seen as the corollary of the annexation of the Transvaal - its advocacy also prompted by fears of Zulu aggression - Bulwer's attitude towards Cetshwayo - Cetshwayo's alleged oppressive rule another argument for annexation - Carnarvon's disclaimer of any intention to annex Zululand - Cetshwayo's opposition to missionary work - the missionaries' unwise behaviour - the killing of converts - rumours, alarms, and the flight of converts and some missionaries from Zululand - the missionaries' hope of British intervention disappointed - their eventual departure from Zululand - Cetshwayo's alleged cruelties towards his people - the missionaries' accounts of these - Robertson's list - its examination by Colenso - conclusion - prevalent view of the question by British officials - Fynney's mission to Zululand - his instructions - the subjects discussed - the annexation - the border dispute - Anglo-Zulu relations - Cetshwayo's alleged cruelties - Mbelini - Cetshwayo's request for permission to attack the Swazis - British plans for the annexation of Zululand - Shepstone empowered to do so - Shepstone's belief in the necessity for the annexation of Zululand - conclusion.

Our examination of the allegation that Shepstone summoned the Zulus to overawe the Boers has led us to anticipate to some extent the question of the Zulu reaction to the annexation of the Transvaal. The greatest uncertainty had prevailed amongst the Zulus concerning Shepstone's mission to the Transvaal, and this uncertainty was by no means dissipated by the act of annexation. What Shepstone had done, and what he intended to do, remained subjects of confusion, anxiety and speculation. Zululand seethed with conflicting rumours. As we have seen, there seems to have been some expectation, on Cetshwayo's part, at any rate, that Shepstone might call upon the Zulu king to come to his assistance. Some Zulus told the border farmers that the English were going to drive the Boers away from the disputed territory and give the land to the Zulus.¹ An opposite rumour among the Zulus was that Shepstone had directed the Boers to return to their deserted farms; this led to parties of Zulus demolishing the abandoned homesteads.² There was great

1. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 25 April, 1877(L.U. 13, No.90); D.T.C. Lafaie to Shepstone, 15 May, 1877(S.S.237, R.2066).
 2. C.A. Potter to Rudolph, 30 April, 1877; Rudolph to Government Secretary, 3 May, 1877(S.S.236, R.1769). enclosing the preceding.

anxiety on both sides in the Zulu border region, both Boers and Zulus evidently fearing some hostile movement from the other.³ But by far the most prevalent, strongly-believed and persistent rumour among the Zulus was that Shepstone was intending to annex Zululand, or, as it was usually expressed, coming to make them pay taxes.

"There is now a settled conviction among the Zulus that Sir Theo. Shepstone intends to annex Zululand - to 'telesa'" reported Charles Potter of 30 April from his trading store on the Pemvaan. "Head Chief of Makrulusua (AbaQulusi) and two others came out to our place last week for information etc. They say Cetywayo has it on good authority from Natal. They said Sir Theo. Shepstone has only gone to the Transvaal to 'blind their eyes', and were very anxious to know the meaning of the massing of English troops at Newcastle."⁴

Rudolph, to whom this was reported, had had a similar experience a few days earlier. Messengers who had come to him from Cetshwayo on other business had seemed unaware, until he told them that the Transvaal was British. On 25 April the same messengers returned to Rudolph, saying that Cetshwayo would ask them many questions about Shepstone, the troops, and so on, and that they would like to be informed on those subjects.

"I said", reported Rudolph, "I could give them no other information that what I had already told them, viz. - That the country now belongs to the English and that the troops are going to be with Sir Theophilus Shepstone in Pretoria.

After this they said they had heard it said the English are going to make Zululand pay taxes (Ukutela). I said I had heard nothing of this and I took this opportunity to tell them that they should not believe all the stories they hear. That whatever Sir Theophilus is going to do he will do straight-forwardly and justly. I said no more to these men and sent them away."⁵

The excitement on the border gradually quietened down. Nevertheless, the belief persisted that Shepstone intended to take some action against Zululand - to annex it, enter it with an armed force, or impose taxes. The mission of Frederick Fynney to Zululand in June was believed among the common people to have some connection with such a step⁶; and as late as August, the Rev. Robertson reported:

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 25 April, 1877 (L.V.13, No.90).

6. R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 26 June, 1877 S.N.A. 1/3/29, No. 443); do. to do., 7 July, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No.468).

"For several months there has been a general expectation that Sir T. Shepstone would enter the country with English troops."⁷

A possible indication of these fears was the construction, in April and May, when British troops were moving up to the Transvaal, of a new military kraal in the bush country near the junction of the White and Black Mfolozi rivers. This military kraal was named "Mpikaizekanye", meaning "let the enemy come".⁸ Frederick Fynney, who visited Zululand in June, concluded from the construction of this kraal - situated as it was in country which provided obstacles to the passage of an army encumbered with cannon and baggage - that Cetshwayo contemplated the possibility of war with the British.⁹

A fear of approaching conflict with the British may also be reflected in Cetshwayo's attempts in 1877 to establish closer relations with the Swazis, with Sekukuni and with the Pondos - although we can never be sure of the accuracy of these reports of inter-tribal intrigues.

In June, 1877, it appears that Cetshwayo made approaches to the Swazis. Native Commissioner Bell reported from New Scotland, near Swaziland, that messengers to the Swazi king had arrived from Cetshwayo. From what he could ascertain, the message called on the Swazis to return to their ancient allegiance to the Zulus, and objected to their having joined the British. The Whites, the Zulus pointed out, would always be asking the Swazis for military help, would impose taxes on them, and take their land from them. Bell believed that the Zulus had also proposed an alliance for a joint attack on the whites; and that the Swazis had made an unfavourable reply. He was of the opinion that the Swazis were anxious not to offend either the Zulus or English, and would,

7. Robertson to Bulwer, 7 August, 1877 (G.H. 350).

8. Robertson to Bulwer, 21 April, 1877 (G.H. 349); R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 24 May, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No.359).

9. Report to Fynney, 4 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27, No.457).

if pressed, join whichever side they considered the more powerful.¹⁰

In August there were reports of communications between Cetshwayo and Sekukuni,¹¹ and Shepstone stated that he had learned that Cetshwayo had advised Sekukuni not to submit to the British Government.¹²

Later in the year the Natal Government received news that Cetshwayo had sent messengers to Umqikela, the Pondo chief, with the object of ascertaining how far the latter might be disposed to take part in any movement against Natal, or against the white man generally.¹³ John Shepstone, the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs,¹⁴ and Bulwer did not attach undue importance to this report. They considered that, in the circumstances, the proposal was more probably put forward as a feeler than seriously intended. Bulwer pointed out that Cetshwayo had been taken by surprise by the unexpected placing of the Transvaal under British protection, and that he feared that the English might have designs on his country.

"In this troubled state of mind", he wrote, "it is not to be wondered at, if, determined as he is to resist to the utmost any attack made upon his sovereignty, he has taken steps to look for auxiliaries, and the communications that he has now made to the Amapondo King is probably with the view of ascertaining how far he may rely upon the support and co-operation of the Amapondo in the event of any cause bringing him into collision with the English."¹⁵

If Cetshwayo's communications with the Pondos and other tribes at this period really contained the proposals of alliance against the English that they were reported to do, this would seem to be the fairest and truest comment that could be made on them. Coming

10. Bell to Osborn, 8, 16, 22 & 24 July 1877 (S.S. 242, R. 2957, R. 2958, R. 2960, R. 1961).

11. Clarke to Government Secretary, 3 August, 1877 (S.S. 242, R. 2932); Letter from correspondent on Zulu border, 9 August, 1877, in De Volksstem, 22 August, 1877.

12. Shepstone to Frere, 15 August, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p. 258).

13. R.M., Alfred County, to A.S.N.A., 24 September, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 743); Field-cornet Hancock to A.S.N.A., 3 October, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/29, No. 765).

14. Report to A.S.N.A. on the preceding, 3 October, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/11, p. 177).

15. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 4 October, 1877 (G.H. 281, No. 168).

from Bulwer, who had a habit of being right in almost everything he said, it is worthy of special note.

Both Cetshwayo and Umqikela heard of the rumours that the former had proposed an alliance against the English, and both were at pains to deny it.¹⁶ Umqikela stated that the object of Cetshwayo's message was to encourage friendly relations between the Pondos and Zulus, and to ensure "that whereas formerly our fathers Tshaka and Faku were at variance with each other, we might be on more amicable terms."¹⁷

This confirms the view that, fearing impending trouble with the English, Cetshwayo was anxious to be on good terms with other powers in South Africa.

The Zulus' fears that Shepstone intended annexing their country were not unfounded. We will deal with this subject in fuller detail towards the end of this chapter, but here it may be said that Shepstone regarded the bringing of Zululand under British rule as ultimately essential, although he had no immediate plans for such a step.

Nevertheless, Cetshwayo cannot have had any real knowledge of Shepstone's views on the subject. How, then, did the belief arise that the English intended annexing Zululand? The movement of the British troops from Newcastle to the Transvaal border seems to have been the first cause of apprehension.¹⁸ The destination of the troops was kept secret, but The Natal Witness confidently and repeatedly asserted that they were intended, not for the Transvaal, but to occupy the disputed territory, or to take some action against the Zulus.¹⁹ "Dr. Smith of the 'Witness'",

16. Cetshwayo's denial is in the letter, Dunn to A.S.N.A., 12 November, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/6/3).

17. Umqikela to Capt. Blyth, 15 November, 1877 enclosure in R.M., Alfred County, to A.S.N.A., 25 November, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.936)

18. Vide supra, p.2; letter from correspondent on Zulu border, 1 May, 1878, in De Volksstem, 21 May, 1878 (relating what he had heard at the time of the annexation).

19. The Natal Witness, 27 March, 3 April, 24 April, 1 May, 29 May, 1 June, 1877.

complained Bulwer angrily, "is making all the wicked mischief he can by declaring the Troops are meant to attack Cetshwayo".²⁰

There is evidence to show that Cetshwayo kept himself informed of what was said in the Colonial newspapers; and the presumption is very great that the Zulus became aware of the Witness's statements.

"The Zulus have again settled down, now they see the troops have passed over", reported Charles Potter on 13 May.²¹ Nevertheless the belief persisted that Shepstone intended to take some action against Zululand. The annexation of the Transvaal, as seen through Zulu eyes, was likely to lead to such a conclusion. It will be remembered that in Chapter V we argued that it was very likely that the Zulus supposed that the main or sole purpose of Shepstone's visit to England in 1876 was to settle the border dispute. He then returned; went to Pretoria; and the next thing the Zulus heard was that the Transvaal had come under British protection - and that the Boers had made no opposition to this move. It is not to be wondered at if they suspected from this that Shepstone had entered into an alliance with the Boers, taken their side in the border dispute, and become hostile to the Zulus.

An annexation of Zululand, following upon that of the Transvaal, was also widely expected amongst the whites of Natal, and of South Africa generally,²² and these expectations were freely aired in the newspapers. It can hardly be doubted that Cetshwayo and his subjects learned that it was being widely predicted and advocated in Natal that their country should be annexed. Cetshwayo was said to have it "on good authority from Natal" that Zululand was to be annexed.²³ Oham, the King's brother, stated that it was Natal Africans who had come to Zululand and "reported

20. Bulwer to Shepstone, 2 May, 1877 (S.P. Case 13). Bulwer actually dated his letter 2 April, but internal evidence shows that this must have been a mistake.

21 Potter to Shepstone, 15 May, 1877 (S.S.257, R.4512).

22. Letter from 'O.F.', n.d., in The Natal Witness, 18 May, 1877; letter from Pilgrims Rest correspondent, 14 June, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 29 June, 1877.

23. Vide supra, p.200.

that the English were about to attack the Zulus."²⁴

The annexation of Zululand was seen by many colonists and newspapers as the natural corollary of the annexation of the Transvaal.²⁵ It was recognized that in annexing the Transvaal, Britain had taken over the border dispute with the Zulus. The only way to provide a satisfactory and final settlement of this dispute, it was argued, was to annex Zululand as well.²⁶

"The Transvaal having been annexed to keep the Boers away from Sekukuni, it is only reasonable that Zululand should be annexed in order to keep the Kafirs away from the Boers", stated The Natal Witness.²⁷

New fears of Zulu aggression also fostered a wish that Zululand should come under British rule. The supposed imminent Zulu attack on the Transvaal, from which only its annexation was alleged to have saved it, and the musterings and military movements that undoubtedly took place in Zululand, were supplemented by rumours of a new warlike temper in the Zulu king and people.²⁸

"We are constantly being told", stated The Natal Witness, "that Cetshwayo gives out that his young men are thirsting for war, and that he can with difficulty restrain them."²⁹

Further disquiet was caused by the reported talk of a party of Zulus sent to work on the Natal Railways, who said that at the word of Cetshwayo they were to kill all white men, except for a few who, stripped of their clothes and dressed in nutyas, were to be kept as slaves.³⁰ That these fears of Zulu aggression were not confined to newspaper editors is shown by a meeting held in Greytown on 19 May, which was attended by from two to three hundred colonists. Resolutions were passed urging improvements in Colonial defence, and the member of the Legislative Council for the county was asked to lay them before the Governor without delay,

24. Nunn to Shepstone, 7 July 1877 (S.S.242, R.2956).

25. The Natal Mercury, 19 April, 1877.

26. The Natal Witness, 13 April, 1877; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 25 April, 1877, in The Natal Mercury, 22 May, 1877.

27. The Natal Witness, 1 May, 1877.

28. Ibid., 27 April, 1877; The Natal Mercury, 24 April, 1877.

29. The Natal Witness, 6 April, 1877.

30. Ibid., 27 April, 1877.

"inasmuch as the inhabitants of this district consider themselves in a very precarious and defenceless condition, many farms being within two days' march of the Zulu country."³¹

Bulwer had in fact appointed a Defence Committee in January, 1877, to consider the defences of the Colony, but had kept its existence secret, to avoid causing unnecessary alarm.³² He had taken this step in view of the disturbed condition of South Africa generally. By July he was contemplating the possibility of a war with the Zulus (though very anxious that it should be averted). He had formed an unfavourable impression of the Zulu King. He was of the opinion that the latter's former friendliness towards the English had been a result only of his fear of the Boers, a fear which had disappeared after the Sekukuni debacle.

"Probably Cetshwayo, personally, " he wrote, "has not and never had much feeling of friendliness for the English; and at the present moment, if anything, he is rather disposed to be vexed that they have restrained his hand for so many years, and at last have covered his enemies with their protection. But there undoubtedly remains a belief in and a certain fear of English power, though even these are qualified by the great blow to the prestige of the white man in South Africa that was struck last year in the Transvaal; and by an overweening confidence of the strength and prowess of the Zulu army; and probably the real state of the case at the present moment is this - that he has no wish to try conclusions with the English unnecessarily, but that he is in such a frame of mind that he is quite prepared to fight, not merely to defend himself and his authority as an independent king, but to fight upon the slightest provocation, regardless of all consequences."³³

This assessment is not entirely just. Cetshwayo certainly wished to wage war on the Swazis; and part of his reason for wishing to do so was because he considered waging war a fitting and essential activity for a Zulu king. But he had also a more particular reason for attacking the Swazis - to assert what he considered to be his rights over that people. (Later events give us every reason to think that Cetshwayo at no time wished for war with the English, and that his professions of friendship were more than mere diplomatic moves.) Bulwer himself later came round to a less unfavour-

31. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1877.

32. Confidential, Bulwer to Cunynghame, 6 January, 1877 (G.H. 299, p. 77).

33. Confidential, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 23 July, 1877 (G.H. 299, p.91).

able interpretation of the Zulu king's motives and intentions. The influence of the 'formidable message' of November, 1876, is clearly apparent in the extract quoted above.

Further sources of disquiet concerning the Zulu king, and reasons for advocating the annexation of Zululand, were the deterioration in the always uneasy relations between Cetshwayo and the missionaries in his country, and the accounts which were circulated at this time of his cruelties towards his own subjects. The Zulu king was known to be hostile to the work of Christian missions. In March and April of 1877 there were reports that attacks had been made on Zulu converts living on mission stations, that several had been killed, and that most of the remaining converts and some of the missionaries had fled to Natal. It was said that the real reason for these attacks was that Cetshwayo wished to show that he had no fear of the English Government.³⁴ Reports reached Natal that Cetshwayo was killing his heathen subjects at a great rate - fifty a month, it was said³⁵ - and that he had announced his intention of shedding more blood than Shaka and Dingane combined.³⁶

"It is high time", ran a letter to The Natal Witness, "the British Government should step in and put an end to this wanton and reckless sacrifice of human life, remove the constant menace and danger to ourselves in Natal, but on higher grounds; our bounden duty to break the yoke of the tyrant and let the oppressed free."³⁷

"Cetywayo", editorialised The Natal Mercury on 8 May, 1877, "...has for many months past exhibited a distressing ferocity of temperament; and his destructive propensities are now finding vent in the slaughter of Christian converts, who are put to death on the plea of being 'umtagate' or witches. There is abundant evidenceto prove that kafir residents at mission stations are being constantly killed in cold blood, and their cattle seized, under the pretext we have named."

The unnatural military system of the Zulus, the newspaper considered, could not last much longer.

"Nor, indeed, can England allow the King - who has been crowned by the hands of her own envoy, who has declared himself to be her child, and who has convenanted to respect human life

34. The Natal Mercury, 27 March, 1877.

35. The Natal Witness, 1 May, 1877.

36. The Natal Mercury, 10 April, 1877.

37. Letter to the Editor, 6 June, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 15 June, 1877.

within his territories - to set at naught his engagements with her by converting his country into a shambles and by singling out unoffending Christian converts as the particular victims of his fury."³⁸

The imposition of some firmer British control over Zululand, or its outright annexation, continued to be advocated and expected in Natal newspapers³⁹ until news came that Lord Carnarvon had, in the House of Lords, denied any wish or intention on the part of the British Government to annex Zululand.⁴⁰ This, coupled with greater calm in Zululand, caused the subject to die away, for the time being.

The question of the Christian missionaries in Zululand deserves closer treatment. The amiable and easy-going Mpande had permitted the missionaries to establish stations in his country; at the time of his death there were over twenty mission stations, belonging to the Norwegians, the Hanoverians, and the Church of England. Although he considered that they had gone mad on one particular subject, that is, religion, Mpande was well-disposed towards the missionaries, valuing their medical and educational skills, and even attending their services on occasion.⁴¹

Cetshwayo, however, was always opposed to them. In his attempt to restore the vigour and strength of the Zulu kingdom, after the laxity and disunion which had developed under the weak rule of his father, he found the missionaries a disruptive element. He expressed his opposition to them to Shepstone on the occasion of his coronation. The nature of the Zulu authorities' objections to the missionaries and their work was put succinctly by Mnyamana, Cetshwayo's principal adviser, to Frederick Fynney, when the latter visited Zululand in June, 1877.

38. The Natal Mercury, 8 May, 1877.

39. See, e.g., also The Times of Natal, 14 April, 1877; The Natal Colonist, 11 May, 1877.

40. The Natal Witness, 26 June, 1877.

41. Confidential Minute on Missionaries, by Fynney, 5 August, 1877 (G.H. 350)

"We will not allow the Zulus to become so-called Christians. It is not the King says so, but every man in Zululand. If a Zulu does anything wrong he at once goes to a mission station and says he wants to become a Christian. If he wants to run away with a girl he becomes a Christian. If he wishes to be exempt from serving the King he puts on clothes, and becomes a Christian. If a man is an Umtakati he becomes a Christian. All these people are the subjects of the King and who will keep a cow for another to milk it? This Christianizing of the Zulus destroys the land, and we will not allow it. If the missionaries want Christians let them bring them from Natal; they shall not get them here. We do not care if the missionaries go or stay, but they must not interfere with the Zulus, that is all. If they do we will take every Zulu who has become a Christian in Zululand away from the stations. We cannot help it, their fellow soldiers or the young men belonging to the different regiments will bring them back. The missionaries desire to set up another power in the land, and as Zululand has only one King that cannot be allowed."⁴²

In view of this attitude, and of the fact that it was, strictly speaking, illegal for a Zulu to become a Christian, it is not surprising that the fruits of the missionaries' labours were scanty. It must be said that the missionaries, some of whom give the impression of being well-meaning, but opinionated and foolish men, did not improve their position by their bearing towards the king of the country in which they lived. It was sometimes far from conciliatory. They were evidently very free in the expression of their opinions on Cetshwayo's shortcomings as a ruler,⁴³ speaking to him on occasion in denunciatory and even threatening terms.⁴⁴ An example may be given. In 1875 Bishop Schreuder of the Norwegian Mission was requested by the Natal Government to present to Cetshwayo a bound copy of Shepstone's coronation report, and to state that the British Government relied upon his faithful observance of the undertakings which he had made on that occasion.⁴⁵ Schreuder, however, did not confine himself to making known the wishes of the British Government, but took it upon himself to deliver a lengthy lecture to Cetshwayo and his indunas on the subject of their duties and obligations, all expressed in a very

42. Report on Zululand, by Fynney, 4 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27).

43. Robertson to Bulwer, 9 April, 1877 (G.H. 349).

44. Bulwer to Robertson, 26 July, 1877 (G.H. 637, No. 397).

45. Carnarvon to Wolseley, 2 April, 1875 (G.H. 27, No. 38).

admonitory and almost hectoring manner. In his report on the occasion,⁴⁶ he refers to almost everything the Zulus said as "stupid" or "silly", and relates how his arguments "stopped all further talk of that kind" or "brought him to his senses". It is with obvious satisfaction that he relates how Cetshwayo bowed his head in his hands and muttered "Oh dear, oh dear, what a man this is." If this is the manner in which the missionaries usually addressed the Zulu king, and it seems that it was, it is little wonder that he wanted to get rid of them.

Nevertheless, no action was taken against them or their converts for several years. From Mnyamana's remarks it appears that Zulus who would otherwise have been punished or killed found sanctuary on mission stations. From the beginning of 1877 this ceased to be the case. On 4 March a convert named Joseph was killed in a brutal fashion by an impi on Mr. Frohling's station, Inyezane. He was supposed to have poisoned cattle and thus to have caused the death of people who ate the cattle.⁴⁷ After his death, the induna of the district brought Frohling a message from Cetshwayo to the effect that the action had been taken against Joseph personally, and that the missionary and his other people need have no fear. Nevertheless, all the converts fled from the station.⁴⁸

On 9 March a Zulu named Magamsela was killed on Mr. Oftebro's Norwegian station at Eshowe. The reason for this killing is less clear, but it seems that it was simply that he wished to become a Christian.

Five weeks later, a lapsed Christian, Jacob, was killed on a charge of witchcraft, which arose, it seems, out of a dispute with his brother over the possession of a girl. Where he was killed is not certain, but it does not seem to have been on a mission station.

46. Schreuder to Shepstone, 20 August, 1875 (C.1401-1, p.23).
47. Frohling to Hohls, 5 March, 1877, enclosure in Hohls to A.S.N.A., 8 March, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/29, No.156); Robertson to Bulwer, 9 April, 1877 (G.H. 349); Report on the State of Affairs in Zululand, by the A.S.N.A., 12 May, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/11, p.114)
48. Frohling to Hohls, 5 March, 1877 (see note 47).

A few days later, another impi came to Eshowe in search of a convert, Johannes, but not finding him there, carried off his property instead.⁴⁹

Sir Bartle Frere later fostered the impression, in his despatches, that great numbers of mission Zulus had been slaughtered;⁵⁰ but this, like all his remarks on Zululand, was wildly exaggerated. The total number of Zulu converts killed was three, those mentioned above. It seems clear that they were killed on Cetshwayo's orders,⁵¹ and there does not appear to have been any sort of trial, at any rate, no opportunity for the accused to defend themselves. It was suspected that these killings were part of a hostile movement by Cetshwayo against the missions in general. This, it goes without saying, was asserted by Frere. But this was almost certainly not the case. The attacks were made on particular Zulus for particular reasons, which except in the case of Magamsela, seem to have had little connection with their being Amakolwa, or converts. Cetshwayo's message to Mr. Frohling, mentioned above, is an indication in this direction. Bulwer made a thorough examination of the whole question. He wrote, towards the end of the year:

"I have heard nothing tending to confirm the opinion so hastily arrived at and so hastily expressed that the attacks actually made were part of a hostile design against the Missionaries and Mission Stations in the Zulu country, or to induce me to alter the opinion which I originally formed upon the information before me that the attacks, however unjustifiable they might be in themselves, were directed against individual natives for personal reasons."⁵²

These attacks, and the rumours that they generated, naturally caused great alarm among the missionaries and their converts. It was whispered that Cetshwayo was only restrained by his indunas from sending impis to kill all the mission natives, and that he had therefore decided to kill them gradually.⁵³ Great numbers of

49. Schreuder to Cato, 17 March, 1877 (G.H. 348); Robertson to Bulwer, 9 and 21 April, 1877 (G.H. 249); Report on the State of Affairs in Zululand, by the A.S.N.A., 12 May, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/11, p.114).

50. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 September, 1878 (C.2220, p.280).

51. Fynney's Report, 4 July, 1877 (see note 42).

52. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 27 November, 1877 (G.H. 281, p.242).

53. Statement of Sir Bartle Frere, 1877.

converts fled into Natal.⁵⁴ By the end of April, close on 80 had gone over into the Lower Tugela district of Natal.⁵⁵

Many missionaries, deserted by their converts, and fearful of the future, also seriously contemplated leaving, but for the moment held their ground. A report, which was quite untrue, circulated among them that one of their number had been told by Bulwer that Zululand was to be annexed; that the matter was in the hands of Shepstone; but that they would be given due warning to enable them to leave in time.⁵⁶ Then when Fynney arrived in Zululand from Pretoria in early June, 1877, he was wrongly understood, by a missionary whom he visited, to have advised him and his followers to leave Zululand as soon as possible, if they wished to save their lives. This reported advice led to a precipitate flight of the German missionaries.⁵⁷ This ill-considered action had further ill-effects. It caused renewed alarm among the remaining Zulu converts, and led to more of them leaving the country.⁵⁸ The Rev. Robertson, anticipating a political crisis, sent all his converts into Natal.⁵⁹ It confirmed the Zulus' suspicions that their country was to be annexed.⁶⁰ Cetshwayo was greatly annoyed at the German missionaries' leaving without informing him of their intention to do so, and refused to allow them to return.⁶¹ By the end of July, 1877, it seems that almost all the mission Zulus had left, and although most of the missionaries remained, in hope of better times to come, mission work in Zululand had practically come to an end.⁶²

54. Bulwer to Shepstone, 13 June, 1877, (G.H. 637, No. 386).
55. R.M., Lower Tugela, to A.S.N.A., 1 May, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No. 296).
56. Confidential, Schreuder to Bulwer, 31 October, 1877 (G.H. 350).
57. Nunn to Shepstone, 7 July, 1877 (S.S. 242, R. 2956); R.M., Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 7 July, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/3/29, No. 468); letter from Zulu border correspondent, 19 September, 1877, in De Volksstem, 3 October, 1877.
58. Confidential, Schreuder to Bulwer, 31 October, 1877 (G.H. 350).
59. Robertson to Bulwer, 26 June, 1877 (G.H. 350); Robertson to Littleton, 7 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 December, 1878 (C. 2252, p. 15).
60. Letter from Zulu border correspondent, 25 July, 1877, in De Volksstem, 25 July, 1877.
61. Oftebro to Shepstone, 30 July, 1877 (S.P. Case 18).
62. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 31 July, 1877 (G.H. 281, p. 192).

The missionaries put their hope, not in a change of heart by Cetshwayo, but in intervention by Britain. A memorial, signed by most of the missionaries in Zululand and addressed to Sir Henry Bulwer, set out the difficulties and dangers under which they laboured as a result of the Zulu king's hostility to their work and of the attacks made on their stations; and requested the help and protection of Britain, without which, they believed, their work would probably have to be abandoned. They would not, the memorialists claimed, have appealed to Bulwer, had not the Zulu nation entered into a solemn compact with the British Government in 1873, which, according to Zulu ideas, made Natal and Zululand one country.⁶³

Bulwer, however, could offer no help. There was no question of any action beyond representations and remonstrances, and these he considered would, in the circumstances, be of no avail, and might in fact do more harm than good.⁶⁴ In his reply to the Memorial, Bulwer alluded to the way in which the Zulu king had received his remonstrance about the killing of girls in Zululand.

"The events which were happening at that time certainly did not make it a favourable one for the reception of friendly counsel, and I fear that the present time is not more favourable....."

He reminded them that at the time of Cetshwayo's coronation Sir Theophilus Shepstone had been able to secure no greater privilege for the missionaries than that of not being expelled without the assent of the Natal Government; and that he had been able to obtain no guarantee whatever for the converts. He had, moreover, expressed the opinion that Zululand was not a field favourable to missionary operations, on account of its being unlawful for a Zulu to be a Christian. If the Natal Government, continued Bulwer, could get no better terms for missionaries than it did in the more peaceful times of 1873, when, moreover, it was doing the Zulus a favour, it was unlikely to do so now, after the events that had taken place during the last twelve months in South East Africa. So the Natal

63. Zululand Missionaries' Memorial, 18 May, 1877 (G.H.350).

Government was not prepared to make any representations to the Zulu king on behalf of the missionaries.⁶⁵

Shepstone was in agreement with these views of Bulwer.⁶⁶

The missionaries also appealed to Sir Bartle Frere, who passed on their communications to Lord Carnarvon. The latter gathered from these communications that the missionaries entertained hopes that Britain would actively interfere to secure their protection. He was anxious that they should be disabused of this belief. The British Government had no intention of annexing Zululand, and any interference such as the missionaries desired might gravely endanger the already critical relations with the Zulus.

"I request therefore", he wrote to Bulwer, "that you will cause the Missionaries to understand distinctly that Her Majesty's Government cannot undertake to compel the King to permit the maintenance of the Mission Stations in Zululand, and that it is desirable for them, if they are of the opinion that Mission work cannot be carried on in Zululand without the armed support of Great Britain, to retire for the present from the Country."⁶⁷

Despite this, most of the missionaries remained in Zululand for some time longer. Their situation, however, did not improve, but rather deteriorated. Cetshwayo learned that they were supplying colonial newspapers with lurid accounts of events in his country; in particular, he was convinced that a sensational and exaggerated account in The Natal Mercury of a fight that broke out at the feast of the first fruits in December, 1877, had been written by a missionary.⁶⁸ He requested Bulwer to advise them to leave his country.⁶⁹ Bulwer declined,⁷⁰ but nevertheless, they did gradually drift out in the ensuing months. Without converts, or the hope of gaining any, there was no point in staying. The king had become

65. Bulwer to Schreuder, Oftebro, Robertson and other missionaries, 24 July, 1877 (G.H. 637, No. 396).

66. Shepstone to Bulwer, 25 July, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.248); Bulwer to Shepstone, 1 August, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

67. Carnarvon to Bulwer, 31 August, 1877 (G.H. 27, No. 455).

68. Statement of Rev. O.C. Oftebro and Dr. Oftebro, 25 February, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No.282). In fact, it was written by Herbert Nunn, the trader.

69. Message from Cetshwayo, 26 January, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.88).

70. Message to Cetshwayo, 20 February, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.90).

more hostile towards them, rather than less. But the principal reason for their retiring when they did seems to have been a conviction that the border dispute with Shepstone's Transvaal Government would lead inevitably to war; and the fact that Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in reply to a deputation sent to him advised them that it would be more prudent for them to leave the country. By mid-1878 they had all left.⁷¹

On the question of Cetshwayo's alleged cruelties towards his heathen subjects, it is extremely difficult to come to any conclusion. The accounts we have invariably consist of general assertions that killings without trial were very numerous, without any figures or concrete details that it might be possible to verify or disprove.

Fynney, on his visit to Zululand, attempted to ascertain the truth of the matter. He found the Zulus very cautious about speaking on such a subject, but he did find some who asserted that Cetshwayo caused great numbers of his people to be put to death without trial.⁷²

There can be little doubt that most of the information or misinformation that reached the outside world on this subject was supplied by the missionaries. In their Memorial to Bulwer they stated that Cetshwayo had not abided by his coronation promises in any particular, and that more people had been killed annually since 1873 than before⁷³ The Rev. Robertson spoke of "almost daily executions",⁷⁴ and of "the hundreds of executions which every year take place in this country."⁷⁵ This testimony must be treated with caution. The missionaries based their hopes for the future on British intervention - Robertson in particular was tireless in urging the annexation of Zululand on the British authorities - and thus had an obvious interest in representing Cetshwayo in the worst possible light. It is clear that although they lived in Zululand,

71. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 December, 1878, and enclosures, (C.2252, p.11).

72. Fynney's Report, 4 July, 1877 (see note 42).

73. Zululand Missionaries' Memorial, 18 May, 1877 (G.H. 350).

74. Robertson to Bulwer, 9 April, 1877 (G.H. 349).

75. Robertson to Bulwer, 26 May, 1877 (G.H. 350).

their reports were based mainly on hearsay. Robertson explained to Frere how he arrived at his conclusions regarding killings in Zululand. Just as in England, he stated, when you see a funeral you know that someone is dead,

"so here, when you see the fugitives running away, when you hear it generally reported that so-and-so has been killed, when you see him no more, you believe that what you have heard is true."⁷⁶

Challenged by Magema Magwaza to produce some concrete facts about killings in Zululand "and not only report what he has heard from discontented Zulus",⁷⁷ Robertson replied that he had personally witnessed five killings in his 18 years in Zululand, but that he was prepared to prove that in this period 24 people had been killed within a radius of eight miles of Kwamagwaza, his station in Zululand, all but five since Mpande's death.⁷⁸ For Sir Bartle Frere he produced a list of 25 Zulus normally resident within a radius of eight miles of Kwamagwaza who had been killed since the accession of Cetshwayo.⁷⁹ Bishop Colenso made enquiries among the residents of Robertson's station concerning the names on this list. He ascertained that of the 25 named, 11 had been killed in Mpande's time, five of them by Mpande's son, Mahanana; his informants knew nothing of the two others, who were presumably killed before they had gone to Kwamagwaza, 10 years earlier; of those killed in Cetshwayo's reign, two were put to death by the induna, Gaozi, and one by his own people, because he was out of his mind. Nine were killed on Cetshwayo's orders, on five different occasions: a man and his wife, because the man tried to dishonour a head-woman; two men who took up arms against an impi sent against one of their kraal, who was not, however, killed; a man and his two sons, who were concerned in taking

76. Robertson to Littleton, 7 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 December, 1878 (C.2252, p.16).

77. Letter from Magema Magwaza, 31 May, 1878, to The Times of Natal, 3 June, 1878.

78. Letter from Robertson, 11 June, 1878 in The Natal Mercury, 24 June, 1878.

79. Robertson to Littleton, 7 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 December, 1878 (C.2252, p.15).

a piece of wood from the king's kraal for purposes of witchcraft; a man, for murder; and another, for running away with a girl.⁸⁰

This is about as close to accurate figures on the subject as we are likely to get. They show that government was stern, and executions common, in Zululand. Cetshwayo did not deny this, and claimed that it was necessary to preserve order. But they scarcely justify Robertson's confident assertions about "daily executions"; still less do they justify Frere's description of Cetshwayo as a "ruthless savage" and "blood-thirsty despot", whose "history is written in characters of blood", whose "atrocious barbarities" and "murders and massacres are simply part of a settled purpose to imitate Chaka" and whose "highest aspiration" was "to emulate Chaka in shedding blood...", etc., etc., etc.⁸¹

Nevertheless it was not only Frere who was convinced that Cetshwayo was a cruel and tyrannical ruler. Bulwer believed that he was shedding blood freely,⁸² and that he went "in fear of his life, being a tyrant and having reason to know that he is hated and dreaded by his own people."⁸³ Shepstone replied in June, 1877, to an enquiry on the subject from Frere, that he believed Cetshwayo in the preceding twelve months had been "guilty of some terrible atrocities among his own people".⁸⁴ The evidence shows that subordinate British officials in South Africa were of much the same opinion.

Allusion has frequently been made, in this rather disjointed account of the relations between the Zulus and the British in the period after Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal, to Frederick Fynney's mission to Zululand. This must now be dealt with in more detail.

80. Colenso, Commentary, p.226.

81. Vijn, p.IX. This book was translated, edited and annotated by Bishop Colenso, who compiled these epithets, and many more, from Frere's despatches published in the Blue-Books.

82. Bulwer to Schreuder, etc., 24 July, 1877 (G.H. 637, No.396).

83. Bulwer to Shepstone, 1 August, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

Shepstone had, in the message to Cetshwayo delivered by Kabana, promised to send his eldest son, Henrique, as soon as he could spare him, to explain to the Zulus the new state of affairs. Henrique contracted fever, so Shepstone instead asked Fynney to go through Zululand and visit Cetshwayo on his return to Natal. He was instructed to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the political condition and feeling of the Zulu people as regards the circumstances in which they were placed; to ascertain the sentiments of Cetshwayo with regard to his own future position and to find out whether "he relies as much as he formerly did on the good will and support of the British Government...."; and to find out whether it was true that he was disregarding his coronation oaths and committing great cruelties on his people. He was also to inform the Zulu king officially that the Transvaal had been annexed, that Shepstone was now the ruler of the country, that the Boers were now British subjects, and that any dispute with them would have to be settled by peaceful discussion with British officials.

Fynney left Pretoria on 16 May, and reached Utrecht on the 28th. He found the border still in a disturbed condition and the border farmers fearing an attack by Mbelini. Fynney made enquiries and found their fears to be greatly exaggerated, if not entirely groundless. After attempting to assure them of this, he left Utrecht for Zululand on 1 June, and reached the royal kraal of Ondine on 11 June. He obtained an interview on the following day, and another on the 14th, and was received very cordially by the king and his indunas.

Fynney first informed the king that the Transvaal had been annexed, and that any dispute with the Boers would henceforth have to be settled by discussion with British officials. Cetshwayo expressed his pleasure at the news of the annexation, stated that he had heard that the Boers had threatened to put Shepstone "into a corner", and described in blood-curdling terms what he would have done if they had.

"I knew all about the soldiers being on their way up, but I would have asked Somseu to allow the soldiers to stand on one side for just a little time, only a little..."

men could do."

Cetshwayo was disappointed that Fynney had not brought some final word concerning the border dispute, as he had understood from Kabana that Shepstone's son, whom Fynney had replaced, would "come with the word respecting the land so long in dispute."

Mnyamana stated: "We want to know what is going to be done about this land; it has stood over as an open question for many years. Somseu took all the papers to England with him to show the great men there, and we have not heard since."

Cetshwayo said he wished Shepstone, now that the Transvaal was English ground, to send the Boers away from the disputed territory. He could claim, he said, by right of conquest, land as far as Pretoria, from which Dingane had driven Mzilikazi, and as far as the country of Sekukuni, whose father had been defeated by the Zulus and had acknowledged himself a Zulu subject. Cetshwayo denied ever having given or sold land to the Boers. They had asked him to do so when he was a 'child' but he had refused.

Fynney had been instructed to ascertain whether Cetshwayo still relied as much as formerly on the good will and support of the British Government. Perhaps unwisely, he put the question directly to Cetshwayo.

"I have not changed", replied Cetshwayo, "I still look upon the English as my friends, as they have not yet done or said anything to make me feel otherwise. They have not in any way turned my heart, therefore I feel that we have still hold of each other's hand. But you must know that from the first the Zulu nation grew up alone, separate and distinct from all others, and has never been subject to any other nation. Tyaka was the first to find out the English and make friends with them; he saved the lives of seven Englishmen from shipwreck at the mouth of the Umfolozi, he took care of them, and from that day even until now the English and Zulu nations have held each other's hands. The English nation is a just one and we are (hlangene) together."

Messages in earlier years had given the Natal Government the impression that Cetshwayo regarded himself and his people as in some way subject to the British. Here, while assuring Fynney of his friendliness towards the English, he is at pains to emphasize the independence of the Zulus. This change may be attributed to the disappearance of the Boer threat, and, with it, of the necessity for ensuring British favour and support; or it may have been a

reaction to the talk of a British annexation of Zululand. Fynney was distrustful even of Cetshwayo's professions.

"In assuring me that he still looked towards the British Government for his strength and power", he wrote, "I could not but feel that Cetywayo simply spoke from expediency, and not truthfully, and that any active remonstrance on the part of the British Government would most likely cause him to throw off the cloak."

Fynney reported that Cetshwayo appeared to contemplate the possibility of war with the English (although he did not believe for a moment that he had any aggressive intentions). He was led to this conclusion by the construction of the new military kraal at the junction of the White and Black Mfolozi rivers,⁸⁵ and by a private conversation between Cetshwayo and one of his (Fynney's) attendants. Cetshwayo asked the latter why the English thought so much of cannon in warfare, remarking that he would not bring his men up in large concentrations, but would scatter them about and so render the cannon ineffective.

Cetshwayo seemed to Fynney to entertain exaggerated ideas of his military power and to over-estimate the number of his warriors, the quality of their guns and their ability to use them. Nevertheless, Fynney believed that the Zulu king could bring 60,000 men into the field - which itself seems to be an over-estimate. Fynney considered that while the Zulu nation would willingly turn out to a man to fight the Boers or the Swazis, the case would be very different in the event of a war with the English. The king's brother, Uhamu, and other chiefs would, he thought, probably turn against him, the Zulu nation would split, and Cetshwayo would find himself deserted by a majority of his people. It may be remarked that this was very generally believed among British officials in South Africa, and that it proved to be quite false. Uhamu, it is true, did go over to the English, but he carried only a relative handful of his people with him, the great majority remaining loyal to the king. The grounds on which this prediction was based was the supposed

85. Vide supra, pp.201.

unpopularity of the Zulu tyrant with his people; its non-fulfillment suggests that those grounds were false.

Fynney confirmed the existence of a widespread belief that Britain intended to levy a tax on the Zulus, or annex their country. He reported that some heads of kraals had told his attendants that they were prepared to pay a tax; but that the young men had said that they would fight rather than do so.

Fynney also questioned Cetshwayo about the fact that the Natal Government had repeatedly heard that he had disregarded the promises he made at his coronation and had put great numbers of his people to death. Cetshwayo denied these allegations. He stated that he killed witches, those who touched Royal women, and those who killed or stole cattle. He stated that he always gave wrongdoers three chances, and that no-one was killed without a fair trial. Fynney was sceptical of these assurances, and certainly found some Zulus who asserted that Cetshwayo put his people to death in great numbers without trial. He remarked, as did many other observers, on the great diminution in the number of cattle in Zululand, caused by the ravages of lung-sickness and redwater, and also by the sale of great numbers to buy guns. This led to a tendency to condemn people as witches in order to get their cattle; and also, he asserted, had the effect that the results of the trials that were held generally depended on how many cattle the accused possessed. Cetshwayo appeared confident of the loyalty of his people, but Fynney believed that his cruel mode of government had rendered him unpopular.

Fynney informed Cetshwayo of the fears entertained by British subjects on the Transvaal border as a result of rumours of the Zulus' warlike intentions; and that it was reported that he was gathering his army, and had given command of two of his regiments to Mbelini, who had threatened the border residents. Cetshwayo rejected all this as Boer invention. Mbelini, he said, was his subject, but he did not endorse his misdeeds. He had permitted the Boers to attack him, which they had done, "but as usual, made

a mess of it."

"This Umbeline", he said, "about whom there is so much talk, has 20 followers, and could be caught at any time. The Boers are a very timid people, I think they must be cowards."

Cetshwayo then sent most of his indunas and all Fynney's attendants away, saying he had a word for Fynney's ears alone.

"I wish you to ask Somseu", he said, "to allow me to make one little raid only, one small swoop; it will not be asking much. Why will he not listen to me? He knows where I want to go, and so do you too, only you won't admit it. It is the custom of our country, when a new King is placed over the nation, to wash their spears, and it has been done in the case of all former Kings of Zululand. I am no King, but sit in a heap. I cannot be King till I have washed my assegais."

Fynney said no more than that he would convey Cetshwayo's request to Shepstone. These words of Cetshwayo's are sometimes represented as a request to be permitted to attack the Boers;⁸⁶ but there is no doubt that he was referring to the Swazis. Fynney was inclined to think that Cetshwayo would attack the Swazis even if refused permission to do so; but this proved not to be the case.

Fynney completed his journey to Natal, arriving at Pietermaritzburg on 2 July,⁸⁷ where he completed his report on his mission to the Zulu king.⁸⁸

We have seen that the Zulus believed that Britain intended to annex their country. This belief was probably the result of Natal newspaper comments and of the talk which these comments reflected. Nevertheless, the fear was not an unreasonable one, for it is clear that Shepstone and the British Government contemplated such a step.

The Royal Commission by the authority of which Shepstone annexed the Transvaal did not mention that state, or any state or territory, by name. It referred only to "the Territories adjacent to our Colonies in South Africa",⁸⁹ and was thus sufficient to

86. E.G., Binns: pp.95-6.

87. The Natal Witness, 6 July, 1877.

88. Fynney's Report, 4 July, 1877 (see note 42). This section is based mainly on this report; but I have also used the report Fynney made to Bulwer on the results of his mission so far as they affected Natal, dated 13 July, 1877, in G.H. 349.

89. Royal Commission, 5 October, 1876, enclosure in Beaumont to Shepstone, 17 November, 1876 (S.P. Case 14).

empower Shepstone to annex Zululand as well as the Transvaal. Writing to Barkly on 22 September, 1876, the day before Shepstone sailed for South Africa, Carnarvon referred to the supposed movement in the Transvaal to request the intervention and assistance of Britain, and to the desire for British rule supposedly widespread amongst the people of the Republic; and continued:

"On the other hand, I have the information that Secocoeni, with whom the President is now at war, wishes to place his country under the Queen's protection, and that Cetywayo, on the part of the Zulus, is inclined to the same course."

In a second despatch of the same date Carnarvon told Barkly that the Royal Commission (which at that time had most probably not yet been drawn up) would appoint Shepstone Special Commissioner to

"the Transvaal Republic, and to the Zulus and other native tribes in the neighbourhood of that Republic and of Natal, with large discretionary powers..... These powers will extend to the acceptance...of any territory whether of the Transvaal Republic or of Native tribes which may be offered to Her Majesty....."⁹⁰

The British Government thus clearly intended Shepstone to have the power to annex Zululand if it should prove desirable and possible.

If it was Shepstone who had advised Carnarvon that Cetshwayo was disposed to place his country under British protection, he was disabused of this notion when he returned to Natal and learned of the Zulu king's defiant message to the Lieut.-Governor. He was, however, as we have seen, inclined at that time to welcome Cetshwayo's new intransigence and aggressiveness as an additional source of pressure on the Transvaal. Nevertheless he recognized its potential dangers to British interests.

"Natal is not likely as yet to be the object of any warlike schemes", he wrote, "but at no very distant date the Zulu difficulty will be what we shall have to face."⁹¹

90. Two despatches, both Secret, Carnarvon to Barkly, 22 September, 1876, enclosures in Secret, Carnarvon to Bulwer, 28 September, 1876 (G.H. 157). These last quoted words were omitted from the version printed in the Blue Book C.1748.

91. Shepstone to Barkly, 23 December, 1876 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.21).

In a letter to Frere of June, 1877, after he had become the Administrator of the Transvaal, he wrote that he attributed the "great change" in Cetshwayo's conduct

"to the effect of the Boer defeat by Sikukuni on his vanity. I went to England in July last year and up to that time there was no difficulty or sign of difficulty with Cetywayo."

"My relations with the Zulus are peculiar", he continued. "In virtue of a law specially enacted by them in 1861 I hold supreme rank in their country and am entitled to the same salute as the King, according to that law I am the King's father! I do not think there would be much difficulty in establishing British rule in Zululand when we are ready for it and our security will sooner or later demand it, but we cannot afford to have too many irons in the fire at once and I have plenty to do here for the present."⁹²

Herbert, in a private letter, informed Shepstone that the British Government was "rather nervous as to the probability of their being pressed to take Zululand also immediately." He advised Shepstone to conduct his policy "so as to prevent any annexation of that country for a year or so."⁹³ Shepstone replied:

"I think that there will be little difficulty in staving off for a time the necessity for formally annexing that Country, but sooner or later the step will be inevitably forced upon you."⁹⁴

Shepstone, in his despatches and private letters written as Administrator of the Transvaal, made many references to the restless and excited condition of Cetshwayo and his subjects, as revealed in Fynney's report, in the missionary troubles, in the supposed great increase in domestic blood-letting, and in the reports of Cetshwayo's negotiations or intrigues with Sekukuni and the Swazis. He regarded this restlessness as a result of the annexation of the Transvaal, which had frustrated the Zulu king's military ambitions, and made him unsure of his position. Annexation of Zululand he considered inevitable, but not immediately necessary. He did not consider that there was any real danger of Zulu aggression. Zululand was "a dangerous but I think manageable volcano". It would be best for

92. Shepstone to Frere, 20 June, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.214).

93. Herbert to Shepstone, 7 June, 1877 (S.P. Case 16).

94. Shepstone to Herbert, 23 July, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.231).

the time being not to interfere, and to let events take their course - a course which he seemed to think might end in revolution in Zululand. Nevertheless, one matter that would have to be settled was the question of the disputed boundary. Shepstone intended making a tour of the eastern and south-eastern districts of the Transvaal, including the Zulu border area. Once there, he would get into touch with Cetshwayo, find out what his views and intentions were regarding the disputed territory, and invite him to make some proposal on the subject.⁹⁵

We have seen in this chapter how the events of the Sekukuni War, of the annexation of the Transvaal, and of the internal troubles of Zululand, caused a marked deterioration in the relations between the Zulus and the British authorities in South Africa. On both sides, trust was replaced by suspicion, and the friendliness which had characterised the relations between the two Governments was considerably cooled. It was of Shepstone in particular that the Zulus were suspicious; this augured ill for the success of the attempt he proposed making to settle the border dispute that he had inherited from the Boers.

95. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 23 July, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.225); Shepstone to Bulwer, 25 July, 1877 (Ibid., p.28); Shepstone to Frere, 1 and 8 August, 1877 (Ibid., pp. 29 and 30); Shepstone to Carnarvon, 31 July, 1877 (Letter-book 6, No. 35, T.A.); Confidential, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 7 August, 1877 (Letter-book 6, T.A.).

SHEPSTONE'S ATTEMPT TO SETTLE THE BORDER DISPUTE, PART I

Condition of the border - Shepstone's plans and hopes - the meeting of 18 October - Shepstone's further views and plans - Cetshwayo modifies the Zulu claim - a revolution brewing in Zululand? - Zulus order Boers off the disputed territory - the partial erection of a 'military kraal' in the disputed territory - Shepstone decides to send his son and Rudolph to Cetshwayo.

In the message which Shepstone had sent to Cetshwayo by the latter's messengers on 7 August, he had stated that he would shortly be setting out on a tour of the border region, and that Cetshwayo might then make some communication with him on the subject of the border dispute.¹

Shepstone set off on his tour of the Eastern and South-Eastern Transvaal on 16 August. He travelled through Middelburg, Lydenburg, the Gold Fields, New Scotland, and Wakkerstroom, and reached Utrecht on 21 September, over a month after he had set out.² While travelling down the eastern part of the Transvaal, he had found that there were border disputes everywhere, disputes which grew more intractable the further southward one travelled. These disputes, he believed, had been intensified by the contempt for the Boers which had been inspired in Africans by the events of the Sekukuni war.³

All was quiet, however, in the Zulu border district, and had been so for several months past. It will be useful at this point to provide a more detailed description of the condition of the frontier. The great difficulty in forming an accurate picture of conditions on the frontier is that almost all the available information on the subject emanates, as one might expect, from periods of alarm. One therefore gets the impression that the region was deserted by the Boers many times over, for there are numerous reports of their fleeing, but very few or none of their returning to their

1. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 7 August, 1877 (Letter-book 6, No. 42, T.A.).
2. Shepstone's Diary for 1877 (S.P. Case 9).
3. Shepstone to Frere, New Scotland, 12 September, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.262).

farms when the alarm was over, as it is evident they must have done. However, in late June and early July of 1877, when the area was comparatively calm, Col. Durnford, and the acting Resident Magistrate of Newcastle, Mr. Boast, made a tour of the area, and Durnford's report may be accepted as a fairly accurate representation of the state of the district as it was when Shepstone opened his negotiations with the Zulus.

It was in the upper waters of the Pongola that the first evidence of the condition of the border presented itself. On the left bank there were many Zulu kraals which had, that year, for the first time, not paid the Transvaal taxes. They refused to pay unless they were given adequate guarantees of protection against the vengeance of Cetshwayo which the payment of Transvaal taxes might provoke. There was a general feeling of alarm and insecurity among the Boers, although Durnford heard of no acts of violence or cattle lifting as having been committed by the Zulus in that district.

Eleven miles on was the German settlement of Luneburg, founded in 1869, and consisting of 20 families possessing 50,000 acres. The settlement was in a flourishing condition, although the people had spent four days in laager in March, 1876, when the attempt to impose taxes on the Zulus in the disputed territory had been made.

Further east, the Zulus were dominant. A missionary, Meyer, had a farm on the Intombe river, but was unable to graze his cattle on it, as the Zulus always drove them off, saying that the land was theirs. In the rich lands east of the Intombe river, Whites still occupied their farms, but Durnford commented that "the Zulus are masters and the whites submit".

It is evident that Durnford and Boast then travelled down the Old Hunting Road. This had formerly been the limit of Boer occupation; but now all the farms along the road were deserted, and many of the farmhouses were burnt or plundered. The only remaining White occupants were Mr. Potter, who ran a store where the Old Hunting Road crossed the Pemvaan river, and Cornelius van Rooyen, whose farm was further to the west, across the White Mfolozi.

It was said that both these men remained by special permission of Cetshwayo.

East of the Blood river, below Lyn Spruit, there were no farmers; but the land to the west of the river was fairly thickly dotted with their homesteads. None of the farmers west of the Blood river had been molested by the Zulus, but they had several stone laagers ready for occupation, which they appeared to consider essential. Practically, reported Durnford, the Blood river and Lyn Spruit formed the boundary between Zululand and the Transvaal.⁴ It appears, however, that by September, when Shepstone arrived in Utrecht, farms on the Zululand side of this line were occupied, except for those along the Old Hunting Road.⁵

The border residents had been anxiously awaiting Shepstone's arrival, hoping that he would institute a new and more secure order of things in their district. He received several addresses of welcome referring to the frequent disturbances of the past and expressing hopes that he would have no difficulty in settling the border dispute and so enabling the border farmers to reap the fruits of their industry in peace and security. One address expressed the hope that he would "take such steps as will make the integrity of this State respected by the barbaric neighbouring nation, and its despotic ruler."⁶

To these addresses Shepstone made guarded replies. He warned that "the adjustment or removal of these difficulties is a serious task, one that will require earnest consideration and the utmost prudence and caution to accomplish...."⁷ He promised only "the

4. Memorandum upon the present condition of the Border Line between the Transvaal and Zululand, from the Pongola to the Buffalo River, by Col. A.W. Durnford, 5 July, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 24 July, 1877, enclosure in Carnarvon to Bulwer, 11 September, 1877 (G.H. 27, No. 457).

5. Clarke to Shepstone, 14 November, 1877 (S.N. 6).

6. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 4 October, 1877 (C. 1961, p.153) enclosing addresses of welcome.

7. Shepstone to P.L. Zietsman, et al, 22 September, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

fullest consideration, and such action as justice and prudence may suggest."⁸

Nevertheless he was fairly sanguine about his chances of settling the question satisfactorily. As soon as he reached Utrecht he requested Mr. Rudolph to send and inform Cetshwayo of his presence, and tell him that he, Shepstone, would await his response to the invitation he had sent him from Pretoria, by his own messengers, regarding the disputed territory. On 4 October the messenger returned and reported that Cetshwayo was delighted to hear that 'his father' was so near; he would at once send up all the heads of the nation, 'all who are himself', including his brothers, to meet Shepstone.

'It appears', wrote Shepstone, "that the Zulus have been in considerable anxiety as to my intention, they expected that I intended to annex them and their country and my confining my communication to the question of the disputed territory is a relief to them, at least to the headmen; the common people would not I think much disapprove, and so this anxiety and relief from it may enable (me) to at once settle amicably the territorial question which is a very difficult one and a very dangerous one to leave open a moment longer than is unavoidable."

"Cetywayo", he continued, "alluded to annexation privately and in somewhat jocular strain to the messenger; he said annexation means that we lose our chieftainship and pay taxes; well, as far as I am personally concerned I am perfectly willing to pay what my father may demand from me, he is my father and I am bound to obey him, and I am ready to do so at once; but the Zulu people are not my property as I am his, they belong to my forefathers and I don't know what they would say!! If I find myself in a position to make a desirable arrangement I shall not dare to lose the opportunity, for as good a one may not occur again, but I shall press nothing, and not put my hand out further than I can pull it back again comfortably."

The last sentence might appear to indicate that Shepstone hoped to be able to bring Zululand under British rule; but the fact that he immediately continues "If I succeed I shall be obliged to appoint at once a Commissioner on the border to keep things straight" seems to show that the "desirable arrangement" he hoped to make was an arrangement concerning only the boundary.⁹ Nevertheless

8. Shepstone to E.F. Rathbone, et al, 25 September, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

9. Shepstone to Herbert, 5 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.267).

there is no doubt that he was not unhopeful of achieving more than a mere boundary arrangement. He had written to Col. Durnford on 17 September, while on his way to Utrecht, that "the more thorough control of the Zulu Country is an absolute necessity, whether this be gained by means of annexation or otherwise."

"I am now nearing Wakkerstroom or rather M.W. Stroom, and Utrecht", he had continued, "and intend to place myself in communication with Cetywayo if possible. I shall after that be in a position, at least I think so, of recommending or taking some definite course which shall have the object of attaining more control over the politics of the Zulu country than we now have."¹⁰

By 11 October Shepstone was still awaiting the arrival of Cetshwayo's delegates. Rain had set in, and this was a likely cause of further delay. By this time, Shepstone had heard of the outbreak of disturbances on the eastern frontier of the Cape with the Galeka chief, Kreli. This he considered likely to have an unsettling effect on other tribes in South Africa, and he became less hopeful about his impending negotiations with the Zulus. "Had I known in time of the imminence of matters between Sir Bartle Frere and Krili (sic) I should have avoided this meeting for the present" he wrote to Herbert on the 11th.¹¹

On the 14th messengers came from Mnyamana, the Zulu Prime Minister, announcing the arrival of the Zulu Indunas on the border. Shepstone learned that the delegation consisted of a large force of men. He was disturbed by this, and sent to Mnyamana to say

"that I had not asked for a force but merely for a communication from Cetywayo about the boundary and that if I found that there was to be any demonstration of force I would not meet them at all."

Mnyamana, however, scouted the idea of any demonstration, and urged Shepstone to meet them.¹²

On 18 October the meeting took place. Shepstone had not wished large numbers of Zulus to traverse country occupied by Boers,

10. Shepstone to Durnford, 17 September, 1877 (S.P. Case 15).

11. Shepstone to Herbert, 11 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.276).

12. Shepstone's Diary for 1877 (S.P. Case 9).

so the meeting was held on a large flat-topped hill, subsequently known as Conference Hill, overlooking the Blood river. The Blood river was, as we have seen, the effective limit of Boer occupation in this area. Shepstone was accompanied by his son, Henrique, who was now the Transvaal Secretary for Native Affairs, Gert Rudolph, Capt. Clarke, a Dr. Ash, and an escort of 45 men. No Boers were allowed to attend, as Shepstone feared that their presence might cause the discussions to become too heated. 500 Zulus were present, of whom 300 were men of rank; they referred to themselves as 'the Zulu Nation'. The Zulu delegation was headed by Mnyamana.¹³

This conference is the turning point in Shepstone's career. Up to this point he had achieved success in almost everything to which he had turned his hand - culminating in his astounding annexation of the Transvaal. From this point on, his career is a dreary succession of failures, ending in his recall and retirement.

Shepstone had hoped that the Zulus, relieved to find that he had come only to settle the border and not to annex their country, would prove amenable and complaisant. He was shocked at their attitude.

"They were respectful and civil to me personally", he reported, "but were exacting and unreasonable in their demands, and the tone they exhibited was very self-asserting, almost defiant and in every way unsatisfactory. I never saw them in such a confident condition before..."¹⁴

At no moment during the whole interview was there apparent the smallest hope of any reasonable arrangement being arrived at, the arrogant and overbearing tone adopted by the Prime Minister was of course concurred in by all his colleagues, and although occasionally expressions were uttered by a few betraying anxiety or regret on account of the language used, such expressions were instantly rebuked and suppressed."¹⁵

Shepstone first asked the Zulus to state what they claimed as the boundary. But the Zulus objected to this procedure. They had, they said, always reported everything concerning their quarrel with the Boers to Shepstone; he knew all about it; and now he should

13. Ibid., Shepstone to Herbert, 28 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.281); Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.51).
14. Shepstone to Herbert, 28 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.281).
15. Shepstone to Carnarvon. 1 December. 1877 (C 2242 p 52)

put right all their wrongs as he knew them. They wished all their complaints and representations to be followed up. They had expected to meet the Boers face to face and question them and be questioned about their rival claims.

Shepstone was opposed to this plan. As we have mentioned, he deliberately excluded all Boers from the meeting for fear that their presence might inflame feelings. He now told the Zulus that he did not want to go into the old disputes, claims and arguments. Rather than rake up the animosities of the past, he wished, now that he was the ruler of the Boers' country and not merely a third party, to let by-gones be by-gones, to start afresh, and to agree on a mutually satisfactory boundary, irrespective of old quarrels.

This caused the Zulus to accuse Shepstone of taking the Boers' side. Further argument followed, and Shepstone insisted on the Zulus' stating what boundary they claimed. Eventually Mnyamana went into a short summary of Zulu history, stating that they could claim, by right of conquest, Natal and the country beyond it, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. They did not, however, intend to press these claims; but they would demand as the boundary, the Buffalo up to the Drakensberg, from thence to the Vaal river, up the Vaal river to its sources, and thence to the sea.

Shepstone rejected this claim as out of the question.

"Mnyamana, you are a man and have charge of men. Do you think for a moment that such a boundary is possible? How can you propose such a thing?"

He pointed out that the Zulus' rights of conquest had been nullified by their defeat at the hands of the Boers; and that when the English had first come to Natal they had found the Zulu nation in a condition of vassalship under the Boers. This was admitted by the Zulus, but their claim was persisted in.

Shepstone then proposed an alternative boundary - the Blood river and Lyn Spruit line.

The Zulu Indunas would not hear of it. They accused Shepstone of siding with the Boers and of intending to take their land.

"Why did you come saying let us make a plan if you have come

to rob us even as the Boers did?" asked the Indunas. "You might just as well state at once what you have come determined to do."

Shepstone stated that he understood that the line he had proposed had always been regarded as the boundary since Mpande's time, and that all the quarrels had been concerning land beyond it (that is, on the Zulu side of it). He pointed to a deserted farm on the far side of the Blood river, and asked how it was that its occupant had been driven off, while the farmers on the Transvaal side had been allowed to remain. Surely, he implied, this showed that the Blood river was accepted in some sense as a boundary.

This was indignantly denied by the Zulus. The reason they had not driven the Boers off, they said, was because they had wished to settle the dispute peacefully. In response to urgings and advice from Natal, they had taken no active measures to assert their rights, but had instead referred everything to Shepstone, trusting to him to provide a peaceful settlement. They denied ever having accepted that the land on the Transvaal side of the Blood river was Boer territory. Some Boers had been granted permission by the Zulus to graze cattle there; that was all. Others had then followed, but they were far off and

"like a toad which is seen a long way off jumping no notice was taken of it until all of a sudden they found it had jumped right into their house, and this was how the Boers had done."

Long and complicated arguments followed on the question of what exactly constituted the "disputed territory" - a question which throughout the long history of this border dispute was always a subject of the utmost confusion - but no agreement could be arrived at.

In the course of argument the Zulus suggested the stationing of British officers within what they claimed as their territory, at Utrecht and Wakkerstroom. This was rejected by Shepstone - it was, he said, still their claim of the Buffalo and Vaal.

"I might just as well", he said, "point to the sea behind you, this is nonsense."

"Well we cannot consent to what you propose", said the Indunas.

"Since you have taken the Boer Country you have become a Boer and it is for this cause that we wished the old matters to be gone into. Is this your way of bringing up children, the eldest to be made to give way to the younger? Today you have brought forth the Boers and they are now first with you notwithstanding that we are your firstborn. Was not Tshaka your firstborn?"

"Is not the younger born then ever taken care of?" asked Shepstone. "I thought that what I was proposing was just to both and that the younger would then have nothing to cry for nor the elder either."

The Zulus then modified their claim. They said that Shepstone had asked them what they wanted, and that they had told him. But they were prepared to submit to a line up the Buffalo to its junction with the Incuba (a stream which ran through or near the town of Utrecht), up the latter to its sources, from thence along the watershed to the Mkonto or Assegai river, and along this river.

Shepstone rejected this as just as impossible as their earlier proposal. A great deal of argument followed, ranging over the historical relationships of the Boers, the Zulus, and the English. Shepstone was accused of bad faith, of having changed, and of siding with the Boers. Shepstone realised that no agreement was possible, and proposed referring the whole matter to Cetshwayo. This was opposed by the Indunas. They stated that they represented Cetshwayo and the Zulu nation, that Cetshwayo and Mpande were present in them. They had full powers to settle the question, and no-one would gainsay what they decided. Shepstone said that he could come to no agreement with them, and that even if he had been able to do so, he would not have considered it final until Cetshwayo had also agreed.

"I do not believe that he would act as you are doing", he said. "He is a man, I know him."

The Indunas at first refused to send any messengers to the King. Eventually it was agreed that Shepstone and the Indunas should send messengers jointly. With this, the meeting broke up.¹⁶

16. My two principal sources for this meeting are the Minute by the Transvaal S.N.A. (H.C. Shepstone) briefly stating what took place at the meeting, 16 January, 1878 (S.N. 6); and the Report of the messengers, Lazarus Xaba and Sabulawa, 3 November, 1877

On the following day Shepstone sent his two messengers, Lazarus Xaba, and Sabulawa, to Cetshwayo, and departed himself for Pietermaritzburg, to see Bulwer and inform him of what had passed. He told the Zulu Indunas that he was taking the opportunity afforded by the absence of the messengers to pay a hurried visit to his wife and family, whom he had not seen since his departure for the Transvaal, almost a year earlier.

"They will of course suspect political objects", he hoped, "and the visit itself will suggest to them joint action in the event of any action at all being necessary or forced on by their line of conduct."¹⁷

He reached Pietermaritzburg on the 22nd.¹⁸ Bulwer was away on a tour of the Colony, but returned immediately he heard of Shepstone's arrival.¹⁹ There is no record of their conversation, but Shepstone wrote to Herbert on the 28th from Pietermaritzburg, and this letter will give some clue to his views, intentions and hopes.

He was inclined to attribute the attitude and behaviour of the Zulus to events that had passed in other parts of South Africa, that is, in the Eastern Transvaal, and on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape.

"From one's knowledge of human nature", he wrote, "one might speculate as to what the effect of the Sekukuni defeat of the

(S.N. 6). The latter two men were the messengers sent by Shepstone to Cetshwayo, and their report includes an account of what they told the Zulu King concerning the events of the meeting. These two accounts are not entirely the same, but their difference lies in a different selection of detail, and in a slightly different presentation of the order in which the various arguments and remarks were made, rather than in any real inconsistency. The most important difference is that the messengers do not appear to have mentioned the Indunas' second boundary proposal, that including the Incuba river. But Shepstone states elsewhere that this proposal was made, so I have accepted it. Those portions of my account in inverted commas are taken from the messengers' account, which is the fuller of the two. It cannot be guaranteed that they are the precise words spoken, but there is no reason to doubt their substantial accuracy. I have also used Shepstone's despatch to Carnarvon of 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.51); and a message from Cetshwayo to the Natal Government, 23 November, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.41).

17. Shepstone to Herbert, 28 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.281).
18. Shepstone's Diary (S.P. Case 9).
19. Bulwer to Shepstone, 23 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

the Boers would probably be, but it is impossible to realise or understand what it really has been without seeing it as I have now done during my long journey along the eastern Border of the Transvaal from the Gold Fields to Natal. The prestige of the Boers has quite gone; fortunately, however, the natives draw a distinction between the Boers and the English. The latter, they say, beat the former 'but after all' say the Zulus 'what was the Boer to beat? we now see he is inferior to the despised Basutu!"

He believed that the exaggerated and distorted news that had undoubtedly reached Zululand of the outbreak of hostilities between Kreli and the Cape Government had also had a damaging effect.

"It is said that Cetywayo has emissaries with Kreli; it has, I believe been shown beyond doubt that he has representatives with the Pondo people who are next door neighbours to Kreli, and this may account for the tone which I met with among the Zulus. Had I suspected even the possibility of the outbreak on the Cape Frontier I should have avoided meeting the Zulus at all just now....."

As things were, Shepstone hoped to play for time.

"Under the present circumstances of actual hostilities having broken out between Krili and the Cape Government, it is of the utmost importance that every effort should be made to avoid any appearance even of rupture with the Zulus, and my object will be to postpone, without showing any weakness of purpose, all direct issue on the subject of the disputed boundary to some more convenient season. I hope to succeed in this but cannot feel sure."

He believed Bulwer agreed with him in the line of policy he proposed to pursue; he intended to act in "full concert" with him, as the question affected so nearly the interests of Natal.

"I shall", he wrote, "return at once to the Zulu border to receive Cetywayo's reply to the messages sent to him, after which I shall write to you the result and the course which Cetywayo's reply will force or enable me to take. I hope however that no serious difficulty will arise. I have usually succeeded in this kind of negotiation, but 'it is a long lane', they say 'that has no turning', and I may fail. I think however that as yet there is no cause for anything more than a little anxiety and it is only the exaggerated native accounts of the Krili affair, or rather the effect which they may produce, that make me feel even this misgiving."²⁰

On 31 October Shepstone left Pietermaritzburg and reached Utrecht on 5 November.²¹ A few days earlier Lazarus Xaba and Sabulawa had returned and reported on their mission to Cetshwayo. They

20. Shepstone to Herbert, 28 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.281).

21. Shepstone's Diary (S.P. Case 9).

had left Utrecht on 19 October, crossed the Blood river, and spent the night at Bemba's kraal, where the Indunas were also staying. They informed the Indunas that Shepstone had gone to Pietermaritzburg. The Indunas asked Shepstone's messengers what their message to Cetshwayo was. They replied that they had been told simply to report to him the events of the meeting. The Indunas were suspicious of this, and seemed to suspect that they had some further message to convey.

On the following day the messengers set out for the Royal Kraal, Ondine. After speaking with Hamu, the King's brother, they obtained an interview with Cetshwayo himself. They described the meeting of 18 October in detail, and concluded by saying that Shepstone had faith in Cetshwayo and trusted that they would be able to settle the matter amicably between them. The settlement might take five years to accomplish, and in the meantime Transvaal farmers living amongst the subjects of the Zulu King should not be molested.

Cetshwayo did not, as Shepstone had hoped, repudiate the Indunas, but reacted to his proposals in much the same way as they had done. Why, he asked, did Shepstone commence by talking of a boundary, without first replying to all the messages and letters he had sent him? His charges against the Boers should be discussed first, he said, before the boundary question was gone into.

He was loud in his complaints that his 'father' Shepstone had thrown him over. The boundary he named was, Cetshwayo declared, right in the middle of Zululand.

"How is it that he to whom I have always been reporting matters comes today and sees me and the Boers like two dogs quarreling over a bone (which bone is Shaka's), the Boers trying to get it from me, should at once come between us and, because he is the stronger dog, take it from us both?"

He saw now he had made a mistake in reporting things exclusively to Shepstone.

"I should have spoken to all the governments who would all have heard my complaints and acted for me and I would not today have been thrown over by my Father."

"Let my Father, now that he has thrown me on one side, tell me to whom I am now to report matters."

Cetshwayo was at pains to emphasize that his longstanding special relationship with Shepstone - the fact that the latter was technically his 'father' - had no effect on the relations between Shepstone and the Zulu nation. "I am his", said Cetshwayo, "but the Zulu nation belongs to Senzangakona". This implied that Shepstone could not insist, as the obedience due to a father from a son, that the Zulu nation should accept the boundary he proposed. And the boundary he proposed was quite unacceptable. The Lyn Spruit or Idudusi was right in the middle of Zululand. He repeated his Indunas' arguments concerning the wide tracts of South Africa to which the Zulus had a good claim. Had they not driven Mzilikazi out of the Transvaal? Did not Shaka himself lie buried in Natal? And now Shepstone named the Idudusi. "Has there ever been anyone who has been closed in right across his own doorway?" He would continue to claim the country he considered to belong rightfully to the Zulu nation - but he would claim it by words and not by deeds. He had no wish for any fighting. "I would retaliate though, if attacked, as even a wife beaten by a husband protects herself by catching hold of the stick."

He then named the boundary which he was prepared to accept; it was a modification, in the Transvaal's favour, of the boundary named by the Indunas. He named the Blood river to its sources, thence to Magidela's Neck, and thence along the watershed between the Pongola and Assegai rivers.²² He instructed the messengers to return to the Indunas (who were still at Bemba's kraal, near the disputed territory) with Zulu messengers, and then proceed to Utrecht to report his words to Shepstone.

Sabulawa, Shepstone's messenger, diplomatically remarked that Shepstone might suspect them of giving the wrong message when he heard such harsh words as Cetshwayo had uttered; but the Zulu King declined to modify his message.

22. The line C - C on the map, continued as described. It is impossible from this rough description to mark the intended line upon the map with any accuracy.

Sabulawa thus feared that Shepstone would be angry at Cetshwayo's recalcitrance. When, on the other hand, he and Lazarus Xaba returned to Bemba's kraal, and reported the Zulu King's words to the Indunas, the latter were angry at what they regarded as Cetshwayo's compliance. His suggested boundary was also described as being 'right in the middle of the Zulu Country.' They refused to allow the Zulu messengers to accompany the Transvaal messengers to Shepstone, as instructed by Cetshway . Instead, they made them return with them to the Royal Kraal. The Indunas told the Transvaal messengers to tell Shepstone what they had said about Cetshwayo's message so that he might not be deceived by the latter's words.

Sabulawa and Lazarus Xaba continued, and reported all this to Henrique Shepstone, the Transvaal Secretary for Native Affairs.²³ A few days later, on 5 November, Shepstone returned and learned of the results of the mission to Cetshwayo.

"I cannot but consider", he wrote, shortly afterwards, to Frere, "the attitudes and temper of the Zulus just now as more than usually dangerous to the peace of the country; I am however as yet unable to satisfy myself what the cause of all this is and what their object can be."

No doubt, he considered, distorted versions of the war with Kreli were having some effect. But he was much struck by the public disagreement between the Zulu King and his Indunas; by the fact that the latter had violently denounced Cetshwayo and his reply, and had refused to allow the Zulu messengers to go on to Utrecht.

"This is a novel picture in Zulu affairs and appears to me to point to the possibility of a revolution in Zululand, and as the only chance of gain to the revolutionary party would be to drag us into hostilities with the Zulu King, the danger is that an attempt may be made to do this."²⁴

This curious theory - that the intransigence of the Zulu Indunas was not to be explained solely in terms of the border dispute, but was caused by their design to embroil Zululand in war with Britain and so bring about a revolution in Zululand - was repeated by Shepstone in many of his letters.

23. This account of this mission to Cetshwayo I have derived from the Report of Lazarus Xaba and Sabulawa, 3 November, 1877 (S.N.6).

24. Shepstone to Frere, 9 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.285).

"I have a very strong suspicion", he wrote to Frere on 1 December, "that the headmen are pressing things to their extremes to bring about confusion and relieve them from the present state of things. I can account for their conduct only in this way."²⁵

"My impression that the revolutionary spirit in Zululand is the main strength of this exacting conduct is daily growing stronger" he wrote on 5 January, 1878. "It requires a disturbance for its own ends, and it requires too that this disturbance should be with us or they that favour it fear those ends would not be attained."²⁶

This theory was a very bold piece of inference, and the evidence in its favour was very scanty. As we shall see, it seemed to Bulwer an entirely unnecessary hypothesis; to him the circumstances of the border dispute provided a sufficient explanation for all the Zulus' words and actions.

Shepstone learned, on his return to Utrecht, that the Zulu Indunas had not confined themselves to words. On the day after the meeting between Shepstone and the Indunas, several farmers near the Hunting Road had been told by parties of Zulus to leave their farms. This order was repeated in more peremptory terms on 1 November; the farmers reported that they had been told to leave at once or die in the ruins of their houses. The first line of farms along the Hunting Road had been abandoned for at least eighteen months, the farm-houses having been stripped of all wood-work and iron-work and left in ruins. Now farmers in the second and third lines began to move off.²⁷

Another wave of eviction orders followed on 10 and 11 November. On the 10th, about 40 armed Zulus arrived at the house of the storekeeper Charles Potter, at the Old Hunting Road drift across the Pemfaan. They ignored his instructions to wait, and burst into the house. They said that they had been sent by Cetshwayo to tell him to leave the Zulu country immediately.²⁸ From Potter's

25. Shepstone to Frere, 1 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.296).

26. Shepstone to Frere, 5 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.317).

27. Clarke to Shepstone, 14 November, 1877 (S.N. 6).

28. C. Potter to H.C. Shepstone, 15 November, 1877 (S.S.258, R. 4609).

they moved on to other farmers and delivered the same orders. At the farm of J. Potgieter they were intercepted by a group of African messengers sent by Shepstone to enquire into the truth of the report that border farmers had been ordered to leave. A lengthy discussion ensued between the Zulus and Shepstone's men, in which the latter succeeded in raising doubts in the minds of the former as to whether their orders, which it appears they had received from Mnyamana, really represented the wishes of Cetshwayo. The Zulus decided to return to Zululand for further orders.²⁹ It seems quite likely that the serving of these eviction orders was initiated by Mnyamana without Cetshwayo's knowledge. This is what Shepstone believed.³⁰ But the question is an academic one, for Cetshwayo, although he may not have originated the policy, approved of it, and expressed his determination that the Boers should leave his country.³¹

On the 13th, the German settlers of Luneburg were ordered to leave. The Rev. Filter, the leader of the settlement, was told that the Zulu King did wish them to leave from any ill-will he bore them; the case was simply that the land was not theirs, but the Zulus', and that he now wanted it in order to build a kraal upon it. Filter told the Zulu messengers that they should speak to Somtseu, not to him. They said that messengers had been sent to Somtseu in Pietermaritzburg, whence they heard he had gone.³² In fact messengers - the men whom the Indunas had refused to allow accompany Lazarus Xaba and Sabulawa back to Utrecht - did appear in Pietermaritzburg on 23 November, only to find that Shepstone had once again departed. They had been instructed to tell the Lieut.-Governor, in the presence of Shepstone, what had passed at the

29. Statement of Manyosi, Nongamulana and Sabulawa, 13 November, 1877, (Enclosure A - Confidential Despatch of 1 December, 1877, S.N.6)

30. Draft, H.C. Shepstone to Potter, 12 November, 1877 (S.S.258).

31. H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph to Shepstone, 4 December, 1877 (S.N. 6).

32. Filter et al to Shepstone, 15 November, 1877; Statement of Manzini, 15 November, 1877 (S.N. 6).

meeting of 18 October, so that the Lieut-Governor might know what claim Cetshwayo had made and why he had made it. In Shepstone's absence, they informed the Lieut-Governor of what had passed, including Cetshwayo's subsequent modification of the Zulu claim. This shows that by this time Cetshwayo and his Indunas had settled their differences and that Cetshwayo's view had prevailed.³³

Rumours had been flying about for several days that the Zulus intended sending in an armed force to build a military kraal in the Pongola valley.³⁴ On the evening of 16 November, Charles Potter, the store-keeper, rode into Utrecht with the news that 2,000 Zulus, all fully armed, had that morning marched up to the Pongola river with orders from Cetshwayo to build a military kraal within three miles of Luneburg. They had been ordered, according to Potter, to molest no-one, but to build the kraal, and, if fired upon, to fire in return. This news caused Shepstone great anxiety. A military kraal in the position proposed would command most of the districts of Utrecht and Wakkerstroom, would block communications with Swaziland, and would cause the evacuation of great numbers of farms hitherto unaffected by border questions. It was quite unnecessary for either the defence or internal management of Zululand; its existence would be a perpetual menace and would produce irritation of the most dangerous kind.

"I feel therefore", he wrote to Bulwer, "that the building of this kraal must be prevented at all hazards."

"The project is not a new one", he added, "but the execution of it has been delayed from year to year by the exertions of the Landdrost, Mr. Rudolph. The selection of the moment when the question of the disputed territory is being discussed to take forcible possession of the highest portion of that territory without giving me any notice of the intention to do so, although I have been in constant communication with Cetywayo and his headmen, is an act which I was scarcely prepared to expect, and which may be but the commencement of a series of others more directly hostile."

33. Message from Cetshwayo, 23 November, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p. 41).

34. C. Potter to H.C. Shepstone, 15 November, 1877 (S.S. 258, R.4609); Clarke to Shepstone, 14 November, 1877 (Enclosure B in Confidential Despatch of 1 December, 1877, S.N. 6).

Shepstone, on hearing the news, sent Capt. Clarke and Mr. Rudolph to ride through the night, to inform the commanders of the Zulu force that he intended to remonstrate with the King about the building of the kraal, and to try to induce them to delay any action until the decision of the King had been received. At the same time, Shepstone requested Bulwer to make the troops at Newcastle available to him should he need them.³⁵

Clarke and Rudolph located the Zulu force on the 18th, near the junction of the Intombe and Pongola rivers, about three miles from Luneburg. They could see only about 300 men, but learned that the rest of the force was in the forest, cutting poles and brushwood. The commanders of the force stated, in reply to their questions,

"that their intentions were purely pacific, that Cetywayo had ordered them to build a kraal to accommodate his native subjects who were living on farms occupied by Boers in this District, that the land belonged to the Zulu nation who had a right to do what it liked with its own, that their orders were not to molest the white inhabitants or to injure their property but to go home after their work was done.

Clarke and Rudolph pointed out that the land could not be flatly asserted to be Zulu territory; the question was in dispute, and negotiations were pending. In the circumstances the building of the kraal was an act of aggression.

The Zulus admitted the force of this, but said they dared not disobey Cetshwayo's orders. Moreover, if they disbanded their men without doing anything, there was the danger that discontented individuals, released from the bonds of discipline, would rob and damage the white people's property. As a compromise, they stated that they would build only the framework of the kraal, which could easily be removed if this were decided on, and then return home at once.³⁶

On the 19th, the Zulu force, having constructed only a small

35. Confidential Shepstone to Bulwer, 11 p.m., 16 November, 1877 (G.H. 351).

36. Clarke and Rudolph to Shepstone, 19 November, 1877 (Enclosure C in Confidential Despatch of 1 December, 1877, S.N.6).

cattle enclosure and stacked some poles on the ground, returned to Zululand. From the shape of the cattle-enclosure it was apparent that the uncompleted kraal was not intended as a military kraal, as had been supposed, but as an ordinary residential one.³⁷ Nevertheless, the passage of the Zulu force through the disputed territory caused about twenty more farmers to abandon their farms, and many deserted farm-houses were pillaged and damaged by the Zulus returning home.³⁸

Shepstone had earlier decided to send his son, Henrique Shepstone, with Gert Rudolph, to the Zulu King, to complain of the Indunas' eviction orders and to attempt to agree on a temporary boundary, pending the full settlement of the question. On 21 November, 16 Indunas came with a message from Cetshwayo. It was to the effect that Cetshwayo approved of the answers which Shepstone had made to the Indunas at the meeting of 18 October, that the Indunas' demands had been excessive, and that he now wished his 'father' to say where the boundary ought to be, and that he would object if he did not agree with it. The messengers had heard of the Pongola 'military kraal' incident only on their way up. They regretted that the Zulu force had been sent without any explanation to Shepstone; but they themselves had not been instructed to provide any explanation. Nevertheless they pointed out that the construction of a kraal in that area was an old ambition, that Mpande had once sent men to effect it, but that they had been driven away by the Boers. They hoped Shepstone would overlook it.

But Shepstone was not inclined to take so lenient a view. He pointed out the aggressiveness of Cetshwayo's action in sending, without notice, a large body of armed men to a position in his rear at a time when, as he supposed, he was engaged in friendly

37. Colenso to Frere, 17 March, 1879, quoted in Colenso, Commentary, pp.87-8.

38. Confidential, Shepstone to Bulwer, 23 November, 1877 (G.H. 351).

negotiations with the Zulus. Hitherto he had ascribed acts of hostility on the border to the Indunas alone, and had intended to send an embassy to Cetshwayo to complain of them; now he hesitated to do so.

The Zulu messengers urged Shepstone to send the embassy. It was, they said, the only way in which he could ascertain the real wishes, feelings and intentions of the Zulu King. He must not assume that the interpretation which he had put upon the 'Military Kraal' episode, however justifiable, was the one which Cetshwayo intended should be put upon it.

Eventually Shepstone agreed to send Henrique and Rudolph as planned. He told the Zulu messengers that he would entrust his own officers with his view concerning the boundary; but that he had little hope of any very satisfactory issue. The messengers thanked him, and, related Shepstone, "begged of me to stand, as they said I had always stood, between the Zulu people and the precipice."³⁹

- Disagreement b/n Zulus
Indunas & Shepstone.
- Cetshwayo sent his army
to build kraal in the
disputed country
- every conflict in SA b/n
Cetshwayo's instigation and
his hand in the affair

39. Ibid.; Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.51).

SHEPSTONE'S ATTEMPT TO SETTLE THE BORDER DISPUTE - part II.

Shepstone changes his mind, and adopts the full Transvaal claim - criticism of the ostensible reasons for his conversion - his real motives - Shepstone and the suppressed documents - his new interpretation of the 1854 line - Henrique Shepstone and Rudolph's mission to Cetshwayo - Zulu disturbances continue, and Shepstone adopts a firmer line - Bulwer's disquiet at Shepstone's dealings with the Zulus - he proposes arbitration to Cetshwayo - Shepstone prepares for war - condition of the frontier - further negotiations with Cetshwayo prove fruitless - the fight at the Feast of the First Fruits.

Before describing the mission to Zululand undertaken by H.C. Shepstone and Gert Rudolph, it will be necessary to explain how Shepstone's views on the border question had changed since his meeting with the Indunas on 18 October.

At this meeting he had claimed the land ceded by Mpande in 1854, but had not claimed the line said to have been ceded by Cetshwayo in 1861. Cetshwayo had previously, in a formal statement of his case written for him in April, 1876, by John Dunn, accepted the 1854 cession as valid;¹ and in the course of the negotiations with Shepstone now under examination, he had modified the Indunas' original claim and had claimed only to the 1854 line.² This he interpreted as the Blood river to Magidela's Nek (C - C). Shepstone interpreted it as being the Blood river - Lynspruit line (C - D). The other disagreement between them concerned the trans-Pongolan territory. Shepstone maintained that the Pongola was the ancient boundary of Zululand. Cetshwayo rejected this, and claimed considerable territory to the north of the Pongola. It was these disagreements that caused the Zulus to accuse Shepstone in a somewhat intemperate manner of having taken the side of the Boers. Nevertheless, the fact was that on 18 October he did not claim anything like the full extent of the territory formerly claimed by the old South African Republic.

"It was not for some weeks after this meeting that in conversation at Utrecht with some Dutch farmers, of whom Mr. Coenrad Meyer was one, during which they were bringing to my notice

1. Vide supra, p.121.

2. Vide supra, p.238.

the danger I appeared to be in of surrendering the just rights of the Transvaal in the matter of the Zulu boundary, that Mr. Meyer asked me what weakness I had discovered in the case of the beacons line? I replied that the beacons had been built up by the Republican Government without the knowledge and certainly in spite of the protests of the Zulu authorities, so that it was an act of aggression and not based upon the consent of both parties. I then learned for the first time, what has since been proved by evidence the most incontrovertible, overwhelming, and clear, that this boundary line had been formally ratified by the giving and receiving of tokens of thanks, and that the beacons had been built up in the presence of the President and members of the Executive Council of the Republic, in the presence of Commissioners from both Panda and Cetywayo, and that the spot on which every beacon was to stand was indicated by the Zulu Commissioners themselves placing the first stones upon it."³

What caused Shepstone to change his mind? In the first place, he claimed that his former assumption that the Zulus had the better case had been the result of misrepresentation by the Zulus, and reticence on the part of the Transvaal. At the 18 October meeting he had not claimed the 1861 line

"because of the impression I had received in Natal, and adopted as correct, that what the Zulus so perseveringly represented by messages and complaints to Natal was substantially true. The Republican Government never communicated the merits of their side of the case to the Government of Natal, so far as I know; they were, it would appear, content to have them to advance when the necessity for doing so should arise. I knew but the Zulu side, and acted according to my knowledge which I supposed was complete."⁴

We may remark in passing that this last sentence says little for Shepstone's way of going about things.

In the extract quoted above Shepstone implies that it was at Utrecht during November, 1877, that he first heard the merits of the Transvaal case. It was in a despatch dated 1 December, 1877, that he first informed the Secretary of State that he had no doubt Cetshwayo had ceded land down to the line A - A in 1861 in return for being given the custody of his two fugitive brothers, and that the line of beacons had been erected in 1864 with the full consent and participation of the Zulu Commissioners sent up for that purpose by Mpande and Cetshwayo.⁵ Enclosed in two des-

3. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 2 January, 1878 (C.2079, p.54).

4. Ibid.

5. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.52).

patches dated 7 December, 1877⁶ and 18 January, 1878⁷, Shepstone sent the documents which, in his opinion, constituted the "incontrovertable, overwhelming and clear" evidence in support of the Transvaal case. These documents can be grouped in a number of categories. Some are irrelevant to the issue, or go no way towards proving or disproving the Transvaal claim. Many are ex parte assertions by the Boers involved in the proceedings in dispute. They establish nothing more than Shepstone knew already - that is, that the Boers claimed the disputed territory - unless, of course, it is held that the Boers were incapable of falsehood. Any such illusions would be immediately dispelled by reading sub-enclosure 6 in the despatch of 18 January, 1878.⁸ This is a statement by ex-President Pretorius, dated 22 December, 1877, giving an account of his visit to Mpande and Cetshwayo immediately after the alleged cession of 1861. The discrepancy, or rather, complete contradiction, between this account of his visit and the reports he made at the time,⁹ is too great to be explained by forgetfulness. Another group of documents - reports of Commissions to Mpande and Cetshwayo and so on - prove nothing but the opposition of the Zulus to the line claimed by the Boers. We are left with three documents which bear directly on the question. They are (i) the treaty of 28 and 29 March, 1861, which contained Cetshwayo's alleged deed of cession;¹⁰ (ii) Mpande's so-called "ratification" of 5 August, 1861;¹¹ and (iii) the message from Cetshwayo, dated Waaihoek, 16 March, 1861, which the 1878 Commission characterised as "plainly a fabrication".¹²

6. Confidential, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 7 December, 1877 (C.O. 879/12, African No.147, p.196).

7. Confidential, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 18 January, 1878 (C.O. 879/13, African No. 150, p.90).

8. Statement of M.W. Pretorius, 22 December, 1877, sub-enclosure 6 in Confidential, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 18 January, 1878 (C.O. 879/13, African No. 150, p.99).

9. Vide supra, p.30-1.

10. Vide supra, p.22.

11. Vide supra, p.23.

12. Vide supra, p.20.

The first document, Cetshwayo's 'cession', was the principal document on which the Transvaal case was based. If one accepted what it stated as true it would certainly establish the Transvaal case. But as we have seen in Chapter II, there are the strongest possible grounds for doubting the truth of this document. What we are trying to discover, however, is what caused Shepstone to change his mind regarding the merits of the border dispute. He claimed that, while in Natal, he had been kept in the dark concerning the grounds on which the Transvaal based its claim.¹³ It was only in Utrecht in November, 1877, we are to understand, that he found evidence "abundant, and conclusive"¹⁴ to prove the Transvaal case. It cannot have been this 'treaty' of 28 and 29 March, 1861, that caused Shepstone to change his mind, however, for he knew of it long before he went up to the Transvaal. It had been transmitted to the Natal Government by President Pretorius in 1865.¹⁵ Shepstone had referred to this treaty in a Minute on the disputed territory which he had written as Natal Secretary for Native Affairs in June, 1876,¹⁶ and had appended a copy of it to his Minute. It was printed in the Blue-Book C.1961, on p.23.

This treaty does not represent the alleged cession as being the quid pro quo for the return of Cetshwayo's brothers.¹⁷ It might be thought that the discovery that this was so lent plausibility in Shepstone's eyes to the transaction. This is not the case. The Minute referred to above, as well as many other writings, make it clear that when in Natal he knew the nature of the alleged agreement.

There is no record that Shepstone, while in Natal, knew of

13. Vide supra, p.247. See also, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.52); Shepstone to Bulwer, 26 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.294).
14. Shepstone to Bulwer, 26 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.294).
15. Pretorius to Maclean, 23 March, 1865 (C.1961, p.22).
16. Minute by Shepstone on the disputed territory, 25 June, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/7, p.274 - it is also printed in C.1961, p.1).
17. Vide supra, p.25.

Mpande's so-called 'ratification' of 5 August, 1861. Presumably this must be part of the new evidence which Shepstone claimed opened his eyes to the truth. But as evidence it is very flimsy. It is, as we have earlier pointed out, a denial of Cetshwayo's alleged cession and a new deed of cession, not a ratification at all.¹⁸ It cannot have been this single document which caused Shepstone to change his mind. It cannot be argued that it was only in November, 1877, that he learned for the first time of the Boers' claim that the beaconing off of the boundary in 1864 had been done with the consent and assistance of the Zulus. President Pretorius had asserted this in his letter to the Natal Government of 23 March, 1865.¹⁹ Then, Shepstone had apparently disbelieved him, and believed the Zulus. When in November, 1877, several Boers of Utrecht made the same assertion, he believed them and disbelieved the Zulus. He mentioned in his despatch of 1 December to Lord Carnarvon, that a few months after the beaconing-off of 1864, one of the Zulu Commissioners present on that occasion, Gebula by name, had brought a message from Mpande to the Natal Government complaining of the arbitrary conduct of the Boers in erecting a line of beacons in Zululand, in the face of Zulu protests. This complaint he now dismissed as duplicity and misrepresentation. In an apparent attempt to justify this arbitrary acceptance of one of two contrary assertions, he quoted what he called "a similar instance of Zulu misrepresentation on the same question." In 1861, he explained, he went to Zululand to settle the succession on Cetshwayo. Mpande expressed his deep gratitude, and Cetshwayo had every reason to feel the same.

"There is on record in the office at Utrecht", he continued, "that on the 16th March, 1861 a message was received from Cetywayo, thanking the Boers for stopping and taking care of Panda's two sons; explaining away my visit to Zululand, saying that he had refused to have anything to do with me, repudiating altogether the English influence, and placing

18. Vide supra, p. 27.

19. Vide supra, footnote 15.

himself and his people at the disposal of the Boers. There is a suggestion also that if the Boers ask him for land he will give it. This message was sent only a few days before Cetshwayo moved towards Utrecht, to negotiate for the delivery to him of his brothers, and shows that the suggestion to give land was his."²⁰

What Shepstone failed to notice was that this alleged message antedated by two months the events to which it referred. Cetshwayo could not possibly have referred to Shepstone's visit when negotiating with the Utrecht Boers in March, 1861, because Shepstone visited Zululand only in May of that year. What Shepstone called Zulu misrepresentation was in fact Boer forgery.²¹

We may sum up by saying that Shepstone's ostensible reasons for changing his mind are unconvincing. The "incontrovertable, overwhelming and clear" evidence which he claimed had wrought this transformation in his beliefs was in fact extremely flimsy. The case is simply that, whereas in Natal he had believed the Zulus, in the Transvaal he believed the Boers. We must look elsewhere than to his ostensible reasons in order to explain Shepstone's volte-face.

Basically, the Zulus were right, though somewhat premature, in their accusation that since taking the Boers' country, he had become a Boer. As the ruler of the Transvaal he was under considerable psychological pressure to support the Boer case. It is but natural for a ruler to support the best interests of the country he rules. In Shepstone's case there were other more particular reasons why he should feel himself impelled to support the Transvaal case. In annexing the country he had laid great stress on its weakness in relation to the surrounding tribes, and had represented himself as the saviour of the small White community from the black hordes that surrounded it. It would appear very strange if, having said all this, he then proceeded to hand over to the Zulus

20. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.57).

21. The document to which Shepstone refers is that which we have, in Chapter II, labelled Document I, and which the 1878 Commission described as a 'fabrication'. Vide supra, p.24.

territory considered by the Boers to be part of the Transvaal. In fact, he had, in his various statements, made before he met the Zulus in October, virtually committed himself to supporting the Boer side of the border dispute. In his Annexation Proclamation he had referred to the abandonment of territory to the natives in the north (i.e., the Schoemansdal district) and pointed out:

"That this decay of power and ebb of authority in the north is being followed by similar processes in the south under yet more dangerous circumstances, people of this state residing in that direction have been compelled within the last three months, at the bidding of native chiefs, and at a moment's notice, to leave their farms and homes, their standing crops, some which were ready for reaping, and other property, all to be taken possession of by natives, but that the Government is more powerless than ever to vindicate its assumed rights, or to resist the declension that is threatening its existence."²²

Writing to Carnarvon in a despatch which bears all the marks of having been intended for publication, he had stated of Cetshwayo:

"Since the Sekukuni fiasco he has assumed the exercise of sovereignty over a portion of Transvaal territory. He has ordered this farmer to leave his farm, and granted to another the privileges of remaining on his. These orders have been obeyed, numbers of farms have been abandoned, and the houses and standing crops of the Boers have been taken possession of by the Zulus; so that the process that has been going on for years in the North of abandoning farms and houses and other property to the natives, is now commencing in the South....."²³

In the Executive Council of the South African Republic, he is officially recorded as having said "Cetshwayo now virtually rules over land belonging to this state."²⁴

In his enthusiasm to represent the Transvaal as being in the weakest and most desperate condition, Shepstone virtually prejudged the merits of the border dispute, and appeared to assume that the disputed territory was rightfully the Transvaal's. It is little wonder that the Boers of Utrecht looked to him to vindicate their claims against the Zulu King.²⁵ The behaviour of the Zulus at and after the 18 October meeting was not such as to incline Shepstone to take a favourable view of their claims and interests. The

22. Proclamation by Shepstone, 12 April, 1877 (C.1776, p.157).

23. Copy, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 12 March, 1877 (G.H. 348).

24. Vide supra, p. 185.

25. Vide supra, p. 228.

discovery of the document in which Cetshwayo was represented as repudiating the English, and making slighting remarks about Shepstone himself - a document which was certainly a fabrication, had Shepstone only realised it - must have influenced him further against the Zulus. To have supported the Zulus' claims after they had caused numerous Boers to flee from their farms, including some who had never before been affected by border disturbances, was a political impossibility. This was doubly the case in view of the disaffection towards British rule which had begun to manifest itself among the Boers in some parts of the Transvaal.²⁶ Shepstone urgently needed to win the support of his new subjects - to have handed over to the Zulus long-occupied land which he had virtually promised to reclaim for the Transvaal would have turned every Boer against him.

As Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, Shepstone had been instinctively antagonistic towards the Transvaal's ambitions, and had assumed its case to be invalid. As Administrator of the Transvaal, circumstanced as he was, he suddenly saw new plausibility in what he had formally dismissed. But this revision of his former opinions concerning the border dispute was the result only of the new position from which he viewed it; it was not caused, as he claimed it was, by the discovery of any new evidence. And in making the revision, he exchanged a correct opinion for an incorrect one; and displayed throughout a distressing lack of clear thought.

We have referred, in Chapter.II to what we called the "suppressed documents" - papers in the Transvaal Archives which cast the utmost possible doubt on the validity of the Transvaal case, and which were kept from the knowledge of the Commission which investigated the question in 1878. (These consist of two treaties dated 1858 and 1864, by which the Zulus were supposed to have ceded improbably vast tracts of land; the reports and minutes of a commission which unsuccessfully attempted to secure Mpande's ratifi-

26. Confidential, Shepstone to Bulwer, 19 November, 1877 (G.H.351)

cation to Cetshwayo's supposed cession of March, 1861, and which met with insistent denials from Cetshwayo that he had ceded any land; and Pretorius's letter to Schoeman, recognizing the spuriousness of the alleged cession of March, 1861.²⁷) The question now arises - who suppressed these documents? It is hardly likely that they were not found. Speaking of the beacon-erection of 1864, Shepstone wrote to Carnarvon:

"Of these events I have not yet been able to find any official record, but I have no doubt they exist in some of the offices and will eventually be forthcoming."²⁸

This indicates that an intensive search of the Transvaal's records was undertaken. That it was mere chance that only those documents favourable to the Transvaal's case were found is too much to believe. Someone in the Transvaal administration was guilty of deliberate deception. It may or may not have been Shepstone. It is unlikely that he personally went grubbing about in the dusty and disordered Government records; so it is quite possible that the existence of these documents was concealed from him by subordinate officials, possibly officials who had remained on from the previous administration. One can only speculate, for there is no direct evidence either way.

Shepstone's views changed in another respect. At the 18 October meeting he had claimed the Blood river - Lynspruit line (C - D) on the strength of the 1854 treaty with Mpande. He now decided that the line agreed on by this treaty was the Old Hunting Road (E - E). The wording of the treaty itself, though obscure, gave no support to this interpretation. Shepstone appeared to rely on two other circumstances. In 1873, when in Zululand for the coronation of Cetshwayo, he had, at the request of the Zulus, sent a Mr. Taylor and certain Natal Indunas to inspect the disputed territory in the company of several Zulus. In his despatch to Carnarvon of 1 December, he stated that the Zulus had on that occasion pointed out to

27. Vide supra, p.28-31.

28. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1873 (a. 22. 10. 56)

Mr. Taylor the Old Hunting Road as the line over which the Boers were encroaching.²⁹ He also elicited a statement, dated 2 December, 1877, from Manyosi, one of the Natal Indunas who had accompanied Taylor, to the effect that he had been shown the Old Hunting Road as the boundary which had been given by Mpande, and which was the only one acceptable to the Zulus.³⁰ However, Mr. Taylor reported at the time that he had inspected only the beacons line; that the Zulus had laid great stress on visiting the 'old beacons' or 'Umpan-da's beacons' some 20 miles further west; and that Manyosi had accordingly accompanied some of them to do so. He thus stated what Manyosi set out to do, but his report contains no account of the result of the latter's observations. He mentioned a good road, used by traders and hunters, running parallel to the beacons line of 1864, but no-where in his report is there any mention of a road serving as a boundary.³¹ The Old Hunting Road ran roughly parallel with the beacons line, and for most of its length at less than ten miles distance from it. Manyosi's later statement that the Old Hunting Road had been pointed out to him as the proper boundary between Zululand and the Transvaal may perhaps be explained by the propensity said by many observers to be characteristic of subject peoples, to give the answer likely to prove most pleasing to the questioner.

In his despatch of 1 December, 1877, to Lord Carnarvon, Shepstone wrote:

"In speaking with me on the question of this boundary in 1873, Cetshwayo told me that he could rightly claim to the Drakensberg, but he supposed that as his father had given the road to the Boers, he should have to consent to that, and there is evidence to show that Panda had at some former period granted the line of the Old Hunting Road."³²

When this alleged conversation was mentioned by H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph during their discussions with Cetshwayo, the latter

29. *Ibid.*, p.57.

30. Statement of Manyosi, 2 December, 1877 (S.N. 6).

31. W.H. Taylor to Shepstone, n.d., (S.N.6).

32. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.57).

denied having said anything of the sort.³³ Shepstone's Report on the Coronation, and his separate Minute on the discussions concerning the border question held with the Zulus on that occasion, contain no reference to any such remark. On the contrary, he wrote, in the latter document:

"The Zulu view is, that the whole of the Transvaal occupation below the Drakensberg is an encroachment upon their territory and rights - that the district of Utrecht and part of that of Wakkerstroom, is Zulu Territory...."³⁴

In this Minute he laid great stress on the "vehemence" and "strong and angry feeling" of the Zulus on the question - feelings which could "scarcely be described in language too strong". This scarcely accords with his later representation of Cetshwayo as mildly, and with philosophical detachment, conceding most of the Boers' case. This supposedly remembered conversation is a mere fantasy born of wishful thinking.

Henrique Shepstone and Gert Rudolph, accompanied by H.W. Taylor and Manyosi, set out for Ulundi on 24 November. They were under instructions to make an official complaint to the Zulu King about the molestation of the border farmers, and the building of the 'military kraal.' They were also to inform him that Shepstone had changed his mind, and that he now claimed the beaconed line of 1864, but that he was prepared, without surrendering any Transvaal rights, to accept the Old Hunting Road as a provisional boundary. "God speed them and their mission of peace", wrote Shepstone in his diary.³⁵ He was reasonably optimistic about the mission. His last communication from the Zulu King, he considered, indicated

"that my position is considerably improved in so far as appearances go and I have every hope that the Zulus have by their injudicious conduct given me the whip hand in the coming negotiations.

33. H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph to Shepstone, 4 December, 1877 (S.N. 6).

34. Minute on the Relations of the Zulus with the Transvaal, as described from a Zulu point of view, by Shepstone, 20 February, 1874 (G.H.343).

35. Diary for 1877 (S.P. Case 9).

The messengers from Cetywayo³⁶ evidently see very clearly themselves that matters have become very serious and they as evidently showed their anxiety that they should not be allowed to become more so. This I look upon as a good sign seeing that several of them were energetic men holding military commands."³⁷

The mission got off to an inauspicious start. They stayed the night at Mr. Gundersen's Mission Station, about four miles from the Royal Kraal. This annoyed Cetshwayo, who considered that they should have gone straight on and slept at his Kraal. However, he met them at 10 the next morning.

Manyosi commenced by listing the grievances Shepstone had against the Zulus - the unreasonableness and insolence of the Indunas at the 18 October meeting, the notices sent shortly afterwards ordering the border farmers to quit, and the sending of the force to build a kraal at a time when friendly negotiations were still supposed to be in progress.

Henrique Shepstone then informed the Zulus that his father no longer adhered to what he had proposed at the 18 October meeting; that he had now learned the Boer side of the question as well as the Zulu, and had found that the 1864 beacons line was the boundary that could not be disputed, it having been ceded by Cetshwayo in 1861. However, he would not press this, but would be satisfied with a line running up the Blood river to the Old Hunting Road and then along this road to the Pongola, as a provisional boundary. This line, he said, had been accepted by Cetshwayo in conversation with Shepstone in 1873.

Cetshwayo said that the Zulu people (that is, the Indunas present) would have to answer.

Mnyamana replied that he had meant no offence by his remarks at the 18 October meeting. He denied the Transvaal's claims, and accused Shepstone of having always been secretly on the Boers' side.

"Yes, it appears now that the Boers must have been sent by him

36. Vide supra, p.244-5.

37. Shepstone to Frere, 23 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.290).

to occupy and steal this land since he has now taken them and upholds their claim....."

Cetshwayo denied having made any cession of land.

"Why does Somtseu in taking the Boers' land give them ours too, we both belong to him, where does he propose to place us? Let him say if he has given me up and I will find a man as high in rank as he is in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, who take me up and write letters for me to the Queen."

All the land below the Drakensberg between the Vaal and the Buffalo belonged to the Zulus; so did Natal - did not Shaka lie there uncared for? - but he did not claim it out of his regard for his 'father Somtseu'.

Cetshwayo denied having told Shepstone that the road was the boundary, and wanted to know who had been present at the time he was supposed to have said it.

Henrique Shepstone made attempts to establish the road as a boundary, but all was denied by the Zulus. This line, said Cetshwayo, was "closing him in right at his door". The boundary dispute, he said, had been brought about by his having listened to Shepstone, who had told him not to fight with the Boers as right would triumph in the end. If it had not been for this, the Zulus would have settled the question long ago.

A great deal of argument followed. The Transvaal delegation suggested adjournment to the following day to hear Cetshwayo's reply. Cetshwayo said that this delay was not necessary, and told the Indunas (who represented the Zulu nation, to whom the land belonged) to reply. Mnyamana said that it was for the King to reply. Cetshwayo then stated what boundary he claimed. He made no further concession, claiming the Blood river and the watershed between the Assegai and Pongola rivers, as he had done before. Upon the Transvaal delegates attempting to remonstrate, he stated that he had made up his mind and would not alter it - if anything more was said about it he would close his ears and give no answer. Somtseu could do as he pleased, he added; and repeated that if he cast him off, there was a man his equal in Pietermaritzburg who would take him up and write to the Queen for him. He told the Transvaal dele-

gation to tell Shepstone to move the people living in the land he claimed, as otherwise some accident would happen. The land was his, and he intended to proceed with the building of the Pongola valley kraal. He would not however, he said, be the first to go to war.

This ended the meeting, and H.C. Shepstone and his companions returned to the Transvaal, reaching Utrecht on 30 November. Their mission had been a total failure. It had not solved anything; it had merely exacerbated the relations between Zululand and the Transvaal, and between Cetshwayo and Shepstone. H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph, in their report to Theophilus Shepstone, stated that the tone and manner in which Cetshwayo and his Indunas "spoke of the boundary which he proposed and of Your Excellency personally were extremely independent and overbearing, indeed we may say they were defiant...." Nevertheless, they stated that the bearing of the King and his Indunas towards them was "respectful".³⁸ There is reason to doubt whether this is strictly accurate. Shepstone recorded in his diary that they had found Cetshwayo "impracticable, overbearing and insulting".³⁹ Bulwer wrote to Carnarvon later in December that he could not understand why Rudolph and H.C. Shepstone had officially reported that they had been received "respectfully", when in fact he knew they had been received "very badly and with the scantiest courtesy".⁴⁰

Cetshwayo had now avowedly declared his intention of occupying the disputed territory.

"My only hope of delaying overt action", wrote Shepstone to Carnarvon, "is in the threat that Cetywayo made to get the 'man' in Natal to write a letter for him to Her Majesty."

Cetshwayo had stated that he would send messengers a few days after H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph to confirm his reply. Shepstone intended proposing to Cetshwayo through them that a reply to that

38. H.C. Shepstone and Rudolph to Shepstone, 4 December, 1877 (S.N. 6).

39. Diary for 1877 (S.P. Case 9).

40. Private, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 24 December, 1877 (G.H.649, No. 9).

letter (to the Queen) should be awaited, and that things should be allowed to remain as they were until then, when negotiations could be opened afresh.⁴¹

In the next few days, however, he decided that firmer action was necessary. Aggressions upon farmers continued and spread into hitherto unaffected areas. In deference to Shepstone's wish that clashes should be avoided, the farmers submitted without resistance, and many sustained substantial losses of property.

"Yesterday", wrote Shepstone on 4 December, "a deputation came to me, and described their condition as most distressing, and fast becoming hopeless. One said that a Zulu Chief had entered his house, and after examining the rooms it contained, expressed his intention of occupying it, pointed to the bedroom as the apartment he would assign to his principal wife, and to the large outside shed which the farmer kept his wagon in, as very suitable for his beer-drinking gatherings."⁴²

Almost all the farmers south of the Pongola had abandoned their farms, reported Shepstone, and most of the abandoned homesteads had been destroyed or greatly damaged. Since Cetshwayo also claimed land north of the Pongola, this process was likely to continue. So when Shepstone met the Zulu messengers on 3 December, he adopted a firmer tone. He told them that he had no objection to Cetshwayo's taking advice from another quarter, or getting this adviser to write on his behalf to the Queen. He too would write; but in the meantime a temporary boundary was essential. The line demanded by Cetshwayo was quite unacceptable. He therefore adopted the Old Hunting Road as the temporary boundary, although he had no doubt that the proper boundary was the line beacons off in 1864. He could not permit the erection of a military kraal on the Pongola. He regretted that he who had crowned Cetshwayo should be obliged to speak to him in such a tone. The talk of war was distasteful to him, and he regretted that Cetshwayo and Mnyamana referred to it so frequently. He wished to prevent war and secure the peace and quiet of the country. If there was any further aggression north of the road, the Zulus should not blame him for the consequences.

41. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 1 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.58).

42. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 4 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.57).

The messengers smiled at the thought of Cetshwayo's going to war; they said he was "only talking to his 'father' to gain his point". Shepstone considered it unlikely that Cetshwayo would resort to hostilities; but the annual feast of the first fruits, which was also a military review, was due to take place in about the last week of December; the possible outcome of this could not be looked forward to without anxiety.⁴³

Shepstone accordingly took precautions. He had already, in November, as soon as he had heard of the irruption into the disputed territory of the Zulu force sent to build the 'military kraal', written to Bulwer asking for authorization to use the troops stationed at Newcastle, if this should prove necessary. This had been granted. He now instructed half the infantry and all the artillery at Pretoria to move to Heidelberg, nearer the Zulu border; "...and I may probably find it necessary", he wrote, "to request that they may come still nearer". To Bulwer he wrote pointing out "the critical and anxious position in which things continue with the Zulu King", and the fact that Natal would share the immediate consequences of any outbreak of hostilities. For this reason, it was desirable that every step in connection with the border dispute should be taken with the knowledge and concurrence of both Governments. Such concurrence, he wrote, would impress Cetshwayo and cause him to see in a more serious light than he appeared to do, the dangerous issues of a war. Hence, he continued, he would be glad to co-operate with Bulwer to bring about a peaceful settlement.⁴⁴

Bulwer had already, in reply to a message from Cetshwayo telling him of the 18 October meeting and of the modified claim which he had since put forward,⁴⁵ sent a message to the Zulu King, expressing Natal's long-standing desire for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the border dispute - a desire which was nonetheless now the Transvaal was British. The message had been in the

43. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 4 December, 1877 (C.2242, p.77).

44. Confidential, Shepstone to Bulwer, 4 December, 1877 (G.H.351).

45. Vide supra. p.241-2.

most general terms, and had simply stated that the Lieut-Governor was glad to hear that negotiations had been opened, that he felt the question would now be approached in a friendly spirit, and that there seemed at last the prospect of a just and satisfactory settlement, which would give great pleasure to Her Majesty's Government.⁴⁶

Something more specific was now called for. Bulwer had become disquieted by Shepstone's handling of the dispute. He felt that his policy was based on wrong assumptions concerning the Zulus' motives. Bulwer considered their attitude, unreasonable and intemperate though it might be, explicable solely in terms of the border dispute. He was quite unconvinced by Shepstone's theory that the Indunas were bent on war with Britain as a means of bringing about revolution in Zululand. Such a hypothesis, in his opinion, was far-fetched, unsupported by the evidence, and unnecessary in order to explain the Zulu' actions. He realised what angry passions the long-festering wound of the border dispute aroused in the Zulu breast.

"Do you not think", he appealed to Shepstone, "that the strong feeling shown by the Indunas, and the strong action taken by them, may possibly have been due to an apprehension in their minds that we are not prepared to act justly by them? to an impression that, so long as the claim was one made by our Dutch neighbours, we looked upon it with disfavour, and were strongly opposed to it, but that, now that we have stepped into the Dutchman's shoes, we have succeeded to his claims, we have taken them up as our own, and look upon them in a very different light from what we did?"⁴⁷

Shepstone's reaction to the 'military kraal' episode caused Bulwer further misgivings and anxiety. Shepstone wrote to him that a military kraal in such a position would be a "perpetual menace" to the Transvaal, and that the building of it would have to be "prevented at all hazards".⁴⁸ This did not seem to Bulwer the true nature of the objection to this Zulu action. The site of the kraal was in territory claimed by the Zulus, territory which might well turn out to be rightfully theirs. No valid objection could be made to their building a kraal in their own country. It was the

46. Message to Cetshwayo 3 December, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.47).

47. Bulwer to Shepstone, 14 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

48. Vide supra, p.242.

timing of the action, the building of the kraal at a moment when negotiations were still pending, the anticipating of the proper settlement of the dispute, that was objectionable, even though it might have been caused by an apprehension on the part of Cetshwayo that he was not going to have justice done him. This being so, Bulwer did not regard it as justifiable or expedient to prevent the building of the kraal "at all hazards" - that is, at the cost of war. Shepstone was not, he knew, militarily prepared to wage war on the powerful Zulu nation. He feared that he had been misled by his theories of a revolutionary party in Zululand seeking war for its own ends, into imagining that he would not have the whole Zulu nation to fight, and that the Zulu military machine would crumble and disintegrate when struck. This, Bulwer feared, would prove a grave mistake. In the event, however, the Zulus withdrew, and so the threat of war receded. But Bulwer's misgivings remained. He evidently felt that Shepstone was coming unduly under the influence of the Boers, and adopting their views.⁴⁹ This feeling must have been strengthened by Shepstone's decision that the Transvaal was in the right in the border dispute. Bulwer seems to have been dubious about the new information which Shepstone claimed to have received concerning the Transvaal claims. How was it, he asked, that the Natal Government had never known the grounds of the Transvaal claim - that it had remained in profound ignorance of what had been happening on its borders? It was obvious why the Boers should have wished to conceal their encroachment upon a British sphere of influence. "But", wrote Bulwer to Shepstone, "we must have been very ill-served not to have found out what was going on." This remark, addressed as it was to the man who had served as Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal for thirty years, it would be an un-

49. Bulwer's views I have gleaned from Bulwer to Shepstone, 14 and 21 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 13); and Bulwer to Frere, 26 November, 1877 (G.H. 649, No. 6).

derstatement to describe as pointed.⁵⁰

When Bulwer heard of the complete failure of Rudolph and H.C. Shepstone's mission, he decided that further direct negotiation between the Zulus and Shepstone was useless. One reason for this was that the Zulus had evidently lost all their belief in Shepstone personally. The mission of Rudolph and Shepstone to the Zulu King had not improved matters, but rather the reverse. They had been received, according to Bulwer, "very badly and with the scantiest courtesy"; and members of the Shepstone family, in their private letters, had complained very bitterly of that reception.

"The reception was a bad beginning", wrote Bulwer to Carnarvon, "nor were Henrique Shepstone and Rudolph the men to improve the matter.

They committed some great mistakes at the interview with the King, and some part of the discussion, so I have been told on good authority, was about the behaviour and bearing of the Zulus to Sir T. Shepstone at the October interview. Shepstone's son being one of the mission, and the principal member of it, there was too much family feeling enlisted in the matter, and this part of the discussion was unprofitable and not at all calculated to help the far larger question at issue which is one of peace or war between the English and the Zulus."⁵¹

With the receipt of Shepstone's despatches of 1 and 4 December, it was evident to Bulwer that a crisis had been reached. Relations between Shepstone and Cetshwayo had never been more hostile. Neither would give way. Cetshwayo had declared his intention of occupying the disputed territory and of building the Pongola valley kraal; Shepstone had made it clear that any such action would be resisted by force. All possibility of a settlement of the dispute by bilateral negotiation between the Transvaal and Zululand was at an end.⁵² At the same time Shepstone appealed to Bulwer for his assistance. Bulwer had heard that members of Shepstone's family and others connected with him had complained that the Transvaal Administrator was not getting proper support from the Governor of Natal.⁵³ Shepstone's vaguely-worded appeal for co-operation in sett-

50. Bulwer to Shepstone, 5 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 13).

51. Private, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 24 December, 1877 (G.H. 649 No. 9.).

52. Bulwer to Frere, 10 December, 1877 (G.H. 637, No.446).

53. Minute by Bulwer, 31 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/3/30. No. 530).

ling the dispute might have been intended to veil a similar reproach.⁵⁴ Bulwer had no idea what exactly Shepstone wanted him to do. But he dared risk no further delay; and on 8 December, after consultation with his advisers, he sent an important message to the Zulu King.

The message proposed arbitration. He had heard, he stated, that Cetshwayo had expressed his intention of occupying the land in dispute. Such a proceeding, he warned, would be incompatible with the peaceful settlement of the question and could not fail to lead to the most serious consequences. The Transvaal was now British, like Natal; an injury to one was an injury to the other, and to the Great House to which they both belonged. Of what use, he asked, were the friendly relations which had always existed between the Zulus and the English if they did not enable a dispute like the present one to be settled in a friendly fashion? If negotiations with the Transvaal were fruitless, other means of settlement were open. If Cetshwayo was agreeable, Bulwer would write to the British Government, or to the High Commissioner, and ask for fitting persons to be sent to examine the question with fresh minds, and, after enquiry, to decide on the dispute. In the meantime there should be no interference in the disputed territory.⁵⁵

An anxious month passed before any reply was received to this message. As the time for the annual feast of the first fruits grew nearer, Shepstone's anxiety increased. If the Zulus intended war, as he feared they did, he expected that the attack would come after the completion of this ceremony.⁵⁶ He therefore made further preparations. On 6 December he requested the commanding officer in Newcastle to send as large a force as he could spare to Utrecht.⁵⁷

54. Bulwer to Shepstone, 23 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 13).

55. Message to Cetshwayo, 8 December, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.49).

56. Shepstone to Frere, 15 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.); Shepstone to Commandant, Transvaal, 15 December, 1877 (letter-book 2, T.A.).

57. Shepstone to Major Tucker, 5 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

Shortly afterwards he instructed the force which he had earlier moved from Pretoria to Heidelberg⁵⁸ to move on to Standerton,⁵⁹ and then to Utrecht.⁶⁰ On 14 December he caused the Landdrost to advise the border farmers to place their families in secure positions and hold themselves in readiness for active service.⁶¹ The results of this advice were not quite what Shepstone had expected. It was interpreted as an intimation of an imminent outbreak of war, and what was described as a 'stampede' took place, as the border farmers removed, not only their families, but themselves too, from the scene of possible danger. For two days the roads to the Vaal river were lined with 2,000 wagons and large herds of cattle.⁶² The abandonment of the border region was now almost complete. A correspondent of The Natal Mercury who travelled to Swaziland early in January, 1878, saw only one Boer south of the Assegai river.⁶³ This flight is not to be ascribed simply to funk. The Boers were determined not to give any military assistance to Shepstone. He had annexed their country with the excuse that they were incapable of defending themselves. Now it was up to him and his soldiers to defend the country.⁶⁴

Despite these alarms, there was no Zulu invasion, and no

58. Vide supra, p.261.

59. Shepstone to O.C. Heidelberg, 8 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

60. Shepstone to O.C. Standerton, 15 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

61. De Volksstem, 8 January, 1878; letters from Utrecht correspondents, 20 and 21 December, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 28 December, 1877; Memorial to Shepstone from Utrecht and Wakkerstroom burghers, 2 February, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 8 February, 1878 (G.H. 352, No.9); Shepstone to Frere, 15 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.311); letter, 12 January, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 22 January, 1878; Memorial from L. Viljoen and 48 others of Utrecht, 25 April, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 3 June, 1878 (G.H. 353). I have not been able to find the original instruction.

62. Letter from Wakkerstroom correspondent, 20 December, 1877, in De Volksstem, 1 January, 1878; De Volksstem, 8 January, 1878.

63. Letter, 12 January, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 22 January, 1878.

64. Letter from Wakkerstroom correspondent, 20 December, 1877, in De Volksstem, 1 January, 1878.

violence on the border. In the territory claimed by Cetshwayo, the Zulus built kraals, helped themselves to useful articles abandoned on the deserted farms, patrolled the roads and stopped and questioned travellers.⁶⁵ In the territory between the Blood and Buffalo rivers, which was not claimed by the Zulus, the desolation of the abandoned farms was not even thus disturbed. An officer in the Royal Engineers has left an account of a ride through this area, south of the town of Utrecht.

"In the two days we passed through a country showing abundant signs of settlement, but except the farms immediately near the town of Utrecht, the defence centres and Mr. Uys' farm, the country was deserted.

The comfortable looking houses with doors and shutters fastened, the orchards and gardens with fruit rotting on the ground, the dogs, cats, geese and poultry which came round us when we dismounted, seeking for food, left a melancholy impression on our minds almost weird from the absence of ostensible cause. There was no appearance of fire; we saw no marks of violence anywhere.

There were not many kraals and the few natives whom we saw came to us to ask advice and assistance. They said that they were loth to leave their houses and crops as they knew by the experiences of the white farmers that a movement of stock at this time of year meant a heavy loss. On the other hand, should the Zulus advance, they would lose wives, children and all they had."⁶⁶

Desultory negotiations were still continuing between Shepstone and Cetshwayo. On 19 December, Bemba, a Zulu chief residing near the Blood river, and two younger men, arrived in Utrecht with a message from Cetshwayo. The Zulu King, they stated, had heard that it was believed that he intended to attack the Transvaal, but he had no such intention. He had also heard that the Transvaal was preparing to attack him. As regards the force sent to build the kraal, he had instructed them to do no damage, and was making enquiries into the allegations that they had. Shepstone replied that all the talk of war had come from the Zulus. He had initially approached them in a peaceful and conciliatory manner, only to be met with hostility and defiance, followed by unwarrantable acts

65. Letter from Zulu border correspondent, 31 December, 1877, in De Volksstem, 15 January, 1878.

66. Lieut. F.H. Macdowil (?) to (?), 26 December, 1877 (S.S.258, R.4649).

of aggression upon the territory and people of the Transvaal. The consequence was that the districts of Utrecht and Wakkerstroom were nearly depopulated and that large losses and damage had been incurred by the farmers. He wished to know whether Cetshwayo intended proceeding with his aggressive acts or not. He proposed stationing a force of soldiers on the right bank of the Blood river in an attempt to restore confidence on the border; he wished the Zulus to know that it was not being placed there with any hostile intention.⁶⁷

On 22 December, Shepstone sent two of his own messengers, Nongamulana and Sabulawa, to the Zulu King to explain his plan to station troops on the Blood river, and to ask him what course he intended to follow, that of peaceful settlement or that of war; that is, whether he still intended to adhere to his threat to occupy by force the 'military kraal' position on the left bank of the Pongola.⁶⁸

Two days later, on the 24th, a further message came from Cetshwayo, evidently in reply to the message sent to him by Shepstone on 3 December.⁶⁹ He had no new proposals to make. He had, he said, named two boundaries, both of which Shepstone had rejected. The Hunting Road, on the other hand was right in the middle of the Zulu country. He had done all he could, and did not know what to do further, except request his 'father' to point out a place sufficiently large for the Zulu people to move to. As for the threatened letter to the Queen, that was mere talk; "he was merely beseeching his Father, remembering that he had brought him up and crowned him and hoping that therefore he would listen to him"⁷⁰.

Meanwhile Nongamulana and Sabulawa, Shepstone's messengers,

67. Diary for 1877 (S.P. Case 9).

68. Ibid.; Shepstone to Frere, 22 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, No. 24, T.A.).

69. Vide supra, pp.260

70. Statement of Piti, Faku, Ungexini, Usizibana, 24 December, 1877 (S.N. 6).

had reached Ulundi. They did not see Cetshwayo on the 24th, the day they arrived, but saw his chief Induna, Mnyamana, and another Induna. They informed them of Shepstone's intention to station troops on the Blood river, and of his reasons for doing so. On the following day they obtained an interview with the King. They found him in a very mild and benign mood, in marked contrast to the angry frame of mind he had shown on former occasions. This changed demeanour they attributed to the receipt of the message from the Governor of Natal a few days earlier, although they were unable to gain any clue from Zulu sources as to what the content of this message had been; neither did Cetshwayo allude to it in his reply to Shepstone's message. Despite the Zulu King's more amiable mood, the ensuing conversations were entirely fruitless. Cetshwayo declared that he would not and could not modify his territorial claims, and he rejected Shepstone's proposed boundary as out of the question. Nevertheless he insisted that he would not fight. He had heard, he said, that Shepstone intended sending an army to attack him. If so, he would not resist, and when the force came it would find him unarmed, for he could not fight his 'father'. If he had wished to fight, he would have fought the Boers, who had given him great provocation, but he had not done so in deference to his 'father'.

There was no necessity for Shepstone to station troops on the Blood river, he said, as that territory was not claimed by the Zulus, and so the farmers there had no reason for fleeing. Of course Shepstone had every right to do as he wished in his own country, but what if he, Cetshwayo, decided to send up an armed force to the Blood river to give his people confidence; would it be possible for the two forces to face one another for two days without war erupting? However, he did not intend to send any force up.

He also referred to his former remark about the 'man' in Pietermaritzburg who would take him up in place of Shepstone. He did not mean, he explained, that he would go to this man of his own accord; but if Shepstone cast him off, he would ask him to recommend some other man in Pietermaritzburg able and willing to take him up.

The messengers stayed at Cetshwayo's kraal three days. The feast of the first fruits was in progress, and each day the King sent for Shepstone's men and placed them near him to see the military review. The soldiers knew who they were, and many contemptuous references to Shepstone were made. The various regiments (the messengers saw ten in all) clamoured to be led to war against the white man and declared that they would die for the disputed territory. "You hear what they say", said Cetshwayo, "that is the Zulu people speaking, and I dare not go against what they say about the land; they would turn against me were I to do so." Several times he commented in this strain. But he also remarked once that many of those who clamoured loudest would be the first to desert him if anything should happen.

In taking leave, Cetshwayo repeated that he had no intention of fighting, and stated that he would disperse all his regiments immediately after the review, which would end in three days' time. If Shepstone came, he would find him unarmed. But he would not alter his decision on the boundary. When the messengers took leave of the Indunas, the latter asked them what the King's reply was. They agreed with what Cetshwayo said as regards the boundary; but not with his pacifist protestations. The King might say that he would not fight, said Mnyamana, with the concurrence of all the other Indunas present, but they were prepared to die fighting for their territorial rights. "Take your official answer however", he said. "What we say is only conversation, but it is the truth."

The messengers returned to Utrecht and reported the results

of their mission on the last day of December, 1877.⁷¹

Meanwhile in Zululand the feast of the first fruits ended in disaster. A fight broke out between two of the regiments, the Ngobamakosi, consisting of young men, and the Tulwana, to which Cetshwayo belonged. Sixty to seventy men were killed.⁷² Cetshwayo sent to Shepstone to inform him of what had happened, and to tell him that he would soon be calling all the Zulu people together in order to enquire into the occurrence, and that he, Shepstone, should therefore not be alarmed by reports of Zulu musterings, as they would be for that purpose only.⁷³ Shepstone seized the opportunity of telling Cetshwayo it was all his fault, that the causes productive of such effects had been operating since 1856, "and that if he would examine the history of his own acts from that date he would discover the cause and remove it if he chose."⁷⁴

The fight had other effects. The King's brother, Hamu, who was the chief Induna of the Tulwana, apparently also held Cetshwayo responsible for what had happened. He retired in a huff to his home near the disputed territory, and shortly afterwards sent word to Shepstone, via the trader, Herbert Nunn, that in the event of war with Britain, he would not fight, but go over to the British.⁷⁵ We have already mentioned that the exaggerated accounts of the fight caused Cetshwayo's relations with the missionaries, whom he accused of spreading these reports, to deteriorate further.⁷⁶ Together with Hamu's promise of defection (and he had said that he would not be alone), the incident strengthened Shepstone's belief that Zululand was in a state of near-revolution.⁷⁷ And such an outbreak of barbarity naturally heightened the fear of white

71. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 2 January, 1878 (C.2079, p.51); Statement of Nongamulana and Sabulawa, 31 December, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 January, 1878 (C.2079, p.56).

72. Binns, pp.97-8

73. Messages from Cetshwayo, 18 to 23 January, 1878 (S.N.6).

74. Shepstone to Bulwer, 19 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.329).

75. Nunn to S.N.A., Transvaal, 4 January, 1878 (S.S.258, R.4628).

76. Vide supra, p.214

colonists in South Africa, and made them less inclined than ever to tolerate the existence any further of an independent Zululand.⁷⁸

By the end of 1878 the prospects for peace were as gloomy as ever.

78. The Natal Witness, 12 January, 1878.

THE INTERVENTION OF BULWER IN THE BORDER DISPUTE

Shepstone's hardening attitude towards the Zulus - the rise of Boer rebelliousness in the Transvaal - the Zulu problem one of its main causes - Shepstone urges the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom - Colenso's role in the border dispute - Cetshwayo accepts Bulwer's offer of arbitration - Bulwer writes to Shepstone - Shepstone accepts arbitration, but complains of Bulwer's interference - the argument between Bulwer and Shepstone - their permanent estrangement - the merits of the argument - Frere's consent obtained - Bulwer appoints the Commission - the unsuccessful attempt to establish a temporary neutral belt in the disputed territory - the Transvaal and the Zulus appoint representatives - white public opinion opposed to arbitration - retirement of Shepstone from the Zulu scene.

The two messengers sent by Shepstone to the Zulu King on 22 December, 1878, had found the latter remarkably more friendly and conciliatory than he had hitherto been.¹ But Cetshwayo's new amiability met with no like response in Shepstone. His attitude was stiffening and hardening. On 16 November he had written to Frere that he had "by no means lost hope" that his negotiations with Cetshwayo would end "more or less satisfactorily"² By December he was seriously contemplating the possibility of war, and discussing the likelihood of being able to call out the burghers in the Transvaal, to raise volunteers in the Free State, and to call on the Swazis for assistance.³ Neither did he view the prospect of a Zulu war with any great reluctance.

"One thing is quite certain", he wrote, "that if we are forced into hostilities we cannot stop short of breaking down the Zulu power which after all is the root and real strength of all native difficulties in South Africa.

This seems to be a great task but I do not think that there would be any very great difficulty in accomplishing it, Cetshwayo is a most cruel, bloodthirsty savage and is not personally popular with his people, these latter see the quiet and security in which their fellows live under the Government of Natal just across a stream of water and sigh for similar quiet, they are not likely therefore, I think, to fight very zealously for a state of things which many, if not most of them wish to see ended and I should not be at all surprised, if any action has to be taken by us against the Zulus, that such action will be welcomed rather than opposed by a large proportion of the people, but it would not of course do to depend too much upon such a possibility."⁴

1. Vide supra, p.269.

2. Shepstone to Frere, 16 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.289).

3. Shepstone to Frere, 7 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, pp.299-300).

A long private letter to Carnarvon of 11 December, makes it clear that Shepstone had come to see the destruction of the Zulu military power as the solution of all his political problems, or as a necessary condition of their solution.

For the Zulu border imbroglio was far from being Shepstone's only problem. Even had the Transvaal been in a state of profound peace and security, the financial and administrative problems following the collapse of the Republican regime would have taxed the powers of an abler administrator than Shepstone. The Delagoa Bay Railway fiasco had to be cleared up. Big debts had to be paid. The economic position of the country made it difficult to raise sufficient revenue. The new Government lacked the skilled and energetic administrators who could have brought order out of the chaos left behind by Burgers. The Attorney-General's sole qualification was a Doctorate in Divinity, "and Dutch Divinity too".⁵ The Chief Justice was a Cape lawyer in his twenties. The Master of the Supreme Court was a mere youth by the name of Rider Haggard. The financial management of the country was left entirely to the father-in-law of one of Shepstone's sons, a man named Henderson, who, while saving thousands of pounds by his strict review of the Boers' claims on the Government (thus helping to make the new regime unpopular) was strangely accommodating towards the Cape Commercial Bank, which could well have waited. The Bank received nearly a third of the Parliamentary grant of £100,000, and the grant was exhausted by the end of 1877.⁶ Shepstone complained of the lack of proper support and help, but the truth is that he was no better an administrator than most of his subordinates. His experience as Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal for so many years had not fitted him for his new post. Shrewdness, good sense, patience and an imposing demeanour were not enough. Efficiency, energy,

5. Shepstone to Bulwer, 29 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.339).

6. De Kiewiet, pp.143-5.

briskness and reforming zeal were what were needed, and these were not the qualities which 30 years as the autocratic chief of the tribes of Natal had instilled in him.

"Unless I had seen it", wrote Frere in May, 1879, "I could not have believed that in two years things could have drifted into such a mess. They were obviously bad enough when the country was annexed, but nothing save lifelong habits of trusting that 'something would turn up' can explain to my mind the apparent absence of all effort to devise or substitute a better system..... When you come to talk to him you find him full of good sense as well as of information, but it never seems to occur to him that he has any duty but to sit still and let things slide."⁷

Shepstone's problems were not only financial and administrative, but political and military. As he found during his progress towards the Zulu frontier, almost the entire Transvaal boundary was uncertain, disputed, or in a state of disorder. The Government in Pretoria exercised only the most tenuous jurisdiction, or none at all, over many tribes ostensibly within the boundaries of the country. Collecting tax from such people was a ticklish business. Already Sekukuni, who was supposed to have agreed to pay the 2,000 cattle fine imposed on him by President Burgers' Government, was being very tardy and troublesome about doing so, and it was not long before skirmishes between him and tribes loyal to the Government led to a second Sekukuni War. Far more serious than Sekukuni or the other native tribes, however, was the opposition to Shepstone and to British rule that was daily growing in strength amongst the Boer population. It is commonly stated by historians that it was not so much the annexation itself, as the maladministration that followed it, that caused the disaffection amongst the Boers and led to the ever-growing agitation for independence. All the evidence points to the correctness of this conclusion. The mission of Kruger and Jorrissen to England immediately after the annexation might appear to indicate an invincible opposition to British rule from the start. But Jorrissen had stated privately that he considered that a return to the old order would be calamitous,

7. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 2 May 1879, quoted in Martineau, pp.306-7.

and even Kruger had assured Shepstone of his loyalty to the new regime in the event of their mission proving unsuccessful.⁸ He was at first as good as his word, and on his return advocated loyalty to and co-operation with the new Government of the country.⁹ He soon found, however, that the spirit of acquiescence, prevalent when he departed, had evaporated, and had been replaced by a nascent nationalism, and a growing desire for the restoration of independence. He had asked Carnarvon to hold a plebiscite to establish whether in fact the people were in favour of British rule; this had been refused, and Kruger now joined the ranks of the "lying signature-hunting emissaries"¹⁰ who were conducting an unofficial referendum on the question. His defection gave a tremendous boost to the opposition party; "he is a host in himself", said Shepstone gloomily.¹¹ A number of causes may be assigned to this upsurge of disaffection in the Transvaal. The new administration was from the start desperately short of money. One result was that the hated railway tax had to be continued, although the railway scheme had been dropped. Insufficient resources, underpaid officials and overworked departments led to the postponing or abandoning of promised reforms, the expectation of which had caused much of the early support the regime had enjoyed. Dr. de Kiewiet writes:

"An administration that was military and fiscal, obsessed with the narrow duties of economy, a regime of barren achievement stubbornly defending its failures was the result."¹²

The Government became increasingly alienated from the people. The promises regarding the use of the Dutch language were not kept. The lack of constitutional government and representative institu-

8. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 14 May, 1877 (C.1883, p.9).

9. Letter from Pretoria correspondent, 9 January, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 17 January, 1878; letter from Utrecht correspondent, 18 January, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 31 January, 1878.

10. Shepstone to Herbert, 19 February, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.352).

11. Shepstone to Bulwer, 16 February, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.347).

12. De Kiewiet, p.145.

tions was resented by a people who had ruled themselves for two generations. Above all, the feeling grew that the Transvaal had been annexed not so much by Britain as by Natal, the source of all evil in Boer eyes; Shepstone was a Natalian, and most of the offices in the country were monopolised by men from Natal.¹³ It was suspected that the Delagoa Bay railway had been discontinued in favour of a rival Natal railway.¹⁴ Relations between the military and the Boers were poor; the red coat, it was said, became in Boer eyes "the badge of an offensive and aggressive domination...."¹⁵ The dislike and contempt and lack of sympathy felt by Shepstone and his subordinates for the Boers and their ways¹⁶ soon communicated themselves to the latter. In particular, an article by Rider Haggard that appeared in The Gentleman's Magazine, in which the Boers were described as lazy, dirty, bug-ridden, etc., aroused great anger; according to De Volksstem, it did "more to 'inflame' the minds of the people of this country, than all the so-called agitators put together..."¹⁷

There can be little doubt that the Boers had acquiesced so tamely in Shepstone's annexation of their country only because they had been aware of the chaotic state it was in, and because they had believed that British rule would bring order and prosperity out of that chaos. That the opposition to the Shepstone regime which developed was the result of the nonfulfilment of these expectations, rather than a result of the annexation itself, is indicated by the fact that it was almost as virulent amongst the English population of the Transvaal (who had been vociferously in favour of annexation) as it was amongst the Boers.¹⁸

13. Frere to Hicks-Beach, n.d., quoted in Hicks-Beach, Vol.I, p.83.

14. De Volksstem, 5 March, 1878.

15. The Natal Mercury, 4 March, 1878.

16. This is an impression gathered from reading a great mass of letters and other documents.

17. De Volksstem, n.d., quoted in The Natal Mercury, 8 March, 1878.

18. Letter from Pilgrims' Rest correspondent, 14 February, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 2 March, 1878; The Natal Mercury, 22 December, 1877; Letter from Pilgrims' Rest correspondent, 7 February, 1878, in The Natal Mercury, 21 February, 1878; The Natal Mercury, 4 March, 1878.

We have mentioned lack of money, and Shepstone's defects of character as causes of the ineffectualness of the new regime.

Another important cause was the Zulu border dispute, which kept Shepstone away from the capital for over six months. When he left Pretoria, on 16 August, 1877, there was no sign of Boer disaffection; by the time he returned, on 4 March, 1878, the country was in a state of half-rebellion. Even Shepstone himself admitted that "in spite of papers being every week sent down to me, things are getting into arrear...."¹⁹ Sargeaunt, the Treasury official sent out to examine the Transvaal's finances, urged Shepstone by every weekly post to return to Pretoria; "you are much required here";²⁰ "many serious matters await your attention";²¹ "come back as soon as you can";²² "there are ten thousand matters requiring your decision."²³ Newspapers became filled with complaints about the continued absence of the Administrator "to the utter neglect of the affairs of the country",²⁴ and about the inaction of the officials in Pretoria.

"You will have noticed by the papers", wrote the Pilgrims Rest correspondent of The Natal Witness in November, "that the people are growling because Sir Theophilus Shepstone's Government does nothing. While His Excellency remains on the Zulu Border these Pretoria officials let things 'slide' as they may, and have not inaugurated a single one of those many reforms which are so much required."²⁵

By February, 1878, Shepstone was still on the Zulu border.

The same correspondent wrote:

"Although English people in this colony regret to appear in opposition to their own Government, they are yet being driven to it against their will, because they see all the interests of the country suffering, and affairs being allowed to drift into hopeless confusion, on account apparently, of the want

19. Shepstone to Bulwer, 26 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.338).

20. Sargeaunt to Shepstone, 23 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 19).

21. Ibid., 6 February, 1878.

22. Ibid., 6 February, 1878.

23. Ibid., 13 February, 1878.

24. De Volksstem, 22 January, 1878.

25. Letter from Pilgrims' Rest correspondent, 29 November, 1877, in The Natal Witness, 14 December, 1877.

of an able head to guide and control them. While Sir Theophilus remains on the border, attending exclusively to one matter, and all others are allowed to 'slide' for the present, people can scarcely be blamed for grumbling."²⁶

It was not only in this indirect way that the Zulu border dispute contributed to the growth of Boer discontent and rebelliousness. The Boers had hoped that Shepstone, with his renowned skill in 'Kaffir diplomacy', and his position as Cetshwayo's 'father', would impose peace on this frontier. After the conference of 18 October, their hopes were soon dashed. The Zulu border became more disturbed and dangerous than it had ever been before. It was the supposed peril of a Zulu invasion and the weakness of the Boers in the face of this threat that had provided the ostensible reason for the annexation of the Transvaal. Now, under British rule, farmers who had scarcely been affected by earlier commotions were existing miserably on their dwindling rations in laager, while the Zulus wrecked their farms.

Shepstone's "Kafir diplomacy", commented De Volksstem, "now that it is disclosed, shows what a dead failure it is and what a sham it has been. The long vaunted boast of being father of the Zulus - whose word was paramount with Ketchwayo - has now as suddenly as painfully and humiliatingly collapsed. And the personal dislike and contempt which Ketchwayo and his Zulus bear for the great 'Somtseu' has considerably aggravated and increased our difficulties on the border."²⁷

The border farmers, many of whom had welcomed the coming into power of what they had supposed would be a strong government, joined in the rising clamour for the restoration of independence.²⁸ Solomon Prinsloo, an 'agitator' who visited the border area in January and February of 1878, collecting signatures against the annexation, reported that 99 out of a 100 Boers there were opposed to British rule.²⁹

This lengthy digression on the rise of Boer opposition to the

26. Letter from Pilgrims' Rest correspondent, 14 February, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 2 March, 1878.

27. De Volksstem, 22 January, 1878.

28. Letter from Utrecht correspondent, 1 February, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 7 February, 1878.

29. The Natal Mercury, 12 March 1878.

Shepstone Government, and to British rule generally,³⁰ has been necessary in order to account for Shepstone's hardening attitude towards the Zulus. It is clear that he became increasingly convinced that if he were to restore the confidence of the Boers in him and in his Government, and to win their loyalty to Britain, the Zulu kingdom would have to be destroyed. As early as 11 December, 1877, in the private letter to Carnarvon, alluded to above, he raises the cry of 'Cetshwayo delendus est'.

I am exceedingly disappointed at the tone and attitude which Cetywayo has so suddenly assumed" he wrote. "I had hoped to have got over the next year or two quietly and to have had time to turn all my attention to the reforms and changes necessary to bring the Government of the Transvaal into proper working order, of itself quite a sufficient task to engage all one's energies. It would have been too sanguine to hope that the Zulu difficulty could have been long postponed because the annexation of the Transvaal brought us face to face with it and made it sooner or later inevitable."

Shepstone told Carnarvon that he had been as accommodating and conciliatory as he possibly could; that he could withdraw no further; and that war was possible.

"Nor do I think", he continued, "that it would be a very difficult thing to break up the Zulu power, and when that is done you may calculate more certainly upon peace in South Africa. Cetywayo is the secret hope of every petty independent chief hundreds of miles away from him who feels a desire that his colour should prevail, and it will not be until this hope is destroyed that they will make up their minds to submit to the rule of civilisation. Your Lordship will not, I am sure, suppose from what I have written that I am a lover of disturbance or war; my instincts and wishes are all in the contrary direction as I think my whole life hitherto has shown; I see however that incongruous, perhaps antagonistic elements are daily approaching each other and that they must sooner or later produce the inevitable result; if we were prepared the sooner this result is produced the better. This frontier war with Kreli has revealed weak points and has very much advanced the chances of events occurring unexpectedly so that the sooner the root of the evil which I consider to be the Zulu power and military organization is dealt with the easier our task will be."³¹

In an official despatch of 5 January, 1878, Shepstone expanded

30. In dealing with this aspect of the subject I have ignored chronology and have referred to and quoted documents of a later date than the point we had reached in the narrative; but the same causes were operating at this earlier period.

31. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 11 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letters-book 2, p.306).

on the necessity for the destruction of Zululand. The gist of his remarks was that the military system of the Zulus had become a dangerous anachronism. The Zulu constitution was military; every man was a soldier; manual labour was considered degrading; the sole object of life was fighting and war. These notions were still inculcated into Zulu children as strongly as they had been 50 years earlier when they had been necessary for the building up and existence of the nation. The scope for the exercise of the Zulus' military ardour had become more and more circumscribed over the years, and was now cut off altogether. But the pent-up warlike fervour continued to accumulate.

"War is the universal cry among the soldiers who are anxious to live up to their traditions, and are disappointed in their early expectations; the rulers of Zululand have failed to perceive in time that some alteration in the ideas, tastes and aspirations of the people was necessary to meet the changed circumstances which have rendered their military organisation a contradiction, and the idea is gaining ground among the people that their nation has outlived the object of its existence. Had Cetshwayo's thirty thousand warriors been in time changed to labourers working for wages, Zululand would have been a prosperous peaceful country instead of what it now is, a source of perpetual danger to itself and its neighbours."

Shepstone repeated his theory that the war party in Zululand wished to embroil the country in war with Britain as a means of securing for their country the benefits of a revolution.

"I believe that the cruelties, the indiscriminate shedding of blood, and the continued dread of being put to death for the most venial fault, or for no fault at all, have rendered the conditions of Zulu life unsupportable. When the Zulu people look upon their own lot and that of their brothers and sisters in Natal, who enjoy the same security to life and property that a white man does, they cannot help drawing comparisons unfavourable to their own Government, or avoid longing for a change."

Shepstone went on to suggest that war was both inevitable and desirable.

"The abandonment of so large a portion of the lower part of the Transvaal forced upon the white inhabitants by Cetshwayo's demands and actions, and the state of things as above described in the Zulu country, produce a tension that cannot last long unless one side gives way. For this Government to yield would not help the case in Zululand; its nature admits of no such remedy. It may be that Cetshwayo will tacitly give way, but even this will be but a temporary postponement of an explosion that must come, of a difficulty that must be met. The state of things points to the necessity for the presence in this part of the country of a much more powerful military force than is here or available at present.

When the Zulu Government is so changed as to be amenable to the

demands of humanity, and the people are allowed by that Government to be approached by civilizing and christianizing influences without danger to the lives of those Zulu subjects who submit to those influences, but not until then, will the peace of South Africa rest on a surer basis than it does at present."³²

A further complication in the border crisis was the part played, or supposed to have been played, by Bishop Colenso. Cetshwayo had threatened Shepstone that if he cast him off, there was a man his equal in Pietermaritzburg who would take him up and write to the Queen on his behalf.³³ According to Colenso's daughter, Frances, the man in question was the Governor of Natal;³⁴ but Shepstone was certain that the allusion was to Bishop Colenso himself. This seemed to be confirmed when Colenso's lawyer son, Frank, and his legal partner, Smith, claimed that they had been appointed Diplomatic Agents by Cetshwayo, and that in future all negotiations between the British Government and Cetshwayo were to be carried on through them. Bulwer refused to accept this, 'appointment', and Cetshwayo later repudiated it.³⁵ Cetshwayo's distrust of the house of Shepstone, it emerged, was the cause of this strange episode.³⁶ Sir Theophilus's brother, John Shepstone, was the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, and all communications with the Zulus passed through his hands. Thus both in the Transvaal and Natal a member of the Shepstone family stood between Cetshwayo and the British Government, in whose justness he still had faith. It was in an attempt to by-pass the Shesptones that Cetshwayo sent messengers to Bishop Colenso, whom he knew he could trust, with the request that his views and position on the boundary question should be put in writing before being transmitted to the Lieut.-Governor. Colenso stated that he had declined to interfere in this way; but

32. Shepstone to Carnarvon, 5 January, 1878 (G.2079, p.54).

33. Vide supra, p.258.

34. Colenso & Durnford, p.104.

35. Ibid., pp.137-8.

36. Statements of Umfunzi and Nkissimane, Indunas and messengers of Cetshwayo, made before the Attorney-General, 5 February, 1878 (G.H.352).

that the Zulus had been very urgent, and that he had therefore advised them to see a lawyer. Colenso claimed that he had not directed them specifically to his son; but they went to him, and presumably some misunderstanding resulted in the supposed appointment of Frank Colenso and his partner as 'Diplomatic Agents'.³⁷ Cetshwayo later explained why he had sent to Colenso:

"'Cetswayo' also states that the message sent to Sobantu (Colenso) was out of no disrespect to his Excellency as the messengers were told to go to Mr. H. Shepstone also, but only with a view to have his intentions regarding the disputed boundary made more public as after Sir Theophilus throwing him over, he did not know who would speak a good word for him."³⁸

Cetshwayo subsequently decided to draw a distinction between Transvaal Shepstones and Natal Shepstones, and to trust the latter.

"'Cetswayo' states that he is quite satisfied that his Excellency will see all justice done him, and that Mr. J. Shepstone he looks on as in the place of his Brother Sir Theiphilus, (with) whom he had no fault to find whilst he was in Natal."³⁹

Colenso stated that recommending the Zulu messengers to see a lawyer, and advising Cetshwayo, when asked by him for advice, not to contemplate war but to submit the dispute to arbitration, represented the full extent of his interference in Zulu matters.⁴⁰ Shepstone, however, was convinced that Colenso's harmful advice to the Zulu king was a serious, if not the most important, obstacle to a satisfactory settlement.

"I confess", he wrote to Frere, on 1 December, 1877, "that with all my experience of 30 years with the Zulus I am utterly puzzled by the attitude they are assuming. It is said that Cetywayo is being advised from Natal and it is commonly reported in Zululand that his adviser is Bishop Colenso. Indeed Cetywayo all but said so. If this be so I am afraid that there is no chance of a peaceful solution of the question, for Cetywayo will put a very different construction upon the Bishop's words to what the Bishop intends."⁴¹

He later came to the conclusion that the Bishop's interference was not merely unintentionally harmful but actively malicious.

37. Colenso to Bulwer, 21 December, 1877 (G.H. 352).

38. Dunn to Bulwer, 21 December, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 13).

39. Dunn to Bulwer, 1 January, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 93).

40. Colenso to Bulwer, 21 December 1877 (G.H. 352).

41. Shepstone to Frere, 1 December 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p. 296).

Colenso had, said Shepstone, sent Magera Magwaza to Zululand as soon as it had become known that he, Shepstone, was intending to communicate with Cetshwayo on the boundary question; and the message Magera Magwaza had conveyed had given "the key-note in anticipation", and had accounted for the tone adopted by the Zulus.⁴²

"When I approached the discussion of this boundary question", wrote Shepstone, "I found that the Zulus were acting under a misconception of my intentions and upon advice given evidently under a similar misconception. I know of course where that advice came from.

The Zulus thought that Natal had nothing to do with the question and little interest in the result, I had been described as an adventurer acting without authority, and as a consequence of this the Zulus looked upon me as merely the successor of Burgers whom I had ousted and a leader of the Boers."⁴³

The official reply of the Transvaal Secretary for Native Affairs, Henrique Shepstone, to Smith and Colenso's claim to be Cetshwayo's Diplomatic Agents, shows to what extent the Shepstones considered the Colensos to be the source of all their troubles.

"I should frankly tell you the Administrator's conviction that by continuing to interfere in such matters as you assume to have jurisdiction in you will contribute more towards the shedding of blood than towards any peaceful issue, and that the private and unauthorized meddling from Natal in the matter now pending between the Government of the Transvaal and the Zulu King has already caused the evacuation of scores of farms, the destruction of many homesteads, and the loss of much Transvaal property."⁴⁴

Newspaper comment was even less restrained. The vapourings of the Utrecht correspondent of the Transvaal Argus probably echoed the sentiments of many border farmers.

"The great difficulty in the way of a settlement seems to lie in the intervention of the powerful wirepuller behind the Zulu scenes, and the powerful and pernicious influence he exercises at Exeter Hall, the meddling priest who is actuated purely by a mania for notoriety, and who does not care a brass farthing for the true interests of the black races; who would sit Nero-like on an ant-heap and sing his own praises while the Zulus were desolating the country with fire and assegai. Robben island is the only fitting place for such dangerous maniacs."⁴⁵

42. Shepstone to Bulwer, 10 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.302).

43. Shepstone to Bulwer, 14 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.321).

44. H.C. Shepstone to Smith and Colenso, 18 December, 1877 (Letter-book 2, T.A.).

45. Letter from the Utrecht correspondent of the Transvaal Argus, 14 December, 1878, printed in The Natal Witness, 3 January, 1878.

Shepstone no doubt exaggerated the Bishop's influence on events. But the Zulus may have gained some inkling of the suspicion and hostility which Colenso entertained towards his one-time friend, and which are revealed in his private letters.

"He does not believe in right & truth & justice - but in his own prestige & in a crafty policy", he stormed in a letter to Chesson, the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society. He maintained that Cetshwayo was doing all he could to avoid war.

"But then the 'prestige' of Sir T.S. That can only be maintained by his being allowed to dictate his own terms to Cetshwayo, & being 'reinforced' so as to be able to compel the Zulus to submit to his demands, without (as the Natal Papers have more than once said) any regard to the justice of them."⁴⁶

On the eve of the outbreak of war Colenso was convinced that it was Shepstone's machinations that lay behind Frere's aggressive policy towards the Zulus.

"And it is my firm conviction", he wrote to Chesson, "that Sir T.S. by his representations to Sir B.F. is at the bottom of all the present movement against Cetshwayo, having said to himself after his rebuff at the Blood R. 'Delendus est', & knowing that all past and present failures would be swallowed up and lost sight of in one grand, overwhelming catastrophe, extending British rule over Zululand."⁴⁷

We must now resume our account of the negotiations between the Zulus and the British authorities in the Transvaal and Natal. It will be remembered that on 8 December, 1877, Bulwer had sent a message to Cetshwayo, proposing arbitration.⁴⁸ The messenger returned on 5 January, 1878. They reported that the Zulu King and his Indunas had been greatly relieved to hear Bulwer's words.

"After our message was delivered, all of them appeared like men who had been carrying a very heavy burden, and who had only then been told they could put it down and rest."⁴⁹

Cetshwayo, in his reply, expressed his gratitude for Bulwer's

46. Colenso to Chesson, 17 February, 1878 (Colenso Papers, File 25, K.C.).

47. Colenso to Chesson, 6 December, 1878 (Colenso Papers, File 25, K.C.).

48. Vide Supra, p.265.

49. Statement of Kilane and Umgovu, 17 January, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.68).

message. It showed, he said, "that the Natal Government still wishes Cetshwayo to drink water and live." He said he had begun to be afraid that the Natal Government were going to follow in the footsteps of Shepstone and throw him off. He was loud in his complaints about Shepstone, who since taking over the Transvaal had "quite altered his voice with the Zulu Nation."

"He wishes to cast Cetshwayo off, he is no more a father but a firebrand, if he is tired of carrying Cetshwayo now as he did while he was with the Natal Government, then why does he not put him down, and allow the Natal Government to look after him as it has always done."

He denied any intention of occupying the disputed territory by force. The disputed territory was already occupied by Zulus, and he had instructed them to remain there, and not move off the land before the dispute was settled. He had not intended to cause trouble by ordering the kraal (the so-called military kraal) to be built; he had ordered it only because his people were already living on the ground in dispute; since then he had taken no further steps. He had not threatened war, and had no wish for it. Why should he wish to fight the English, when he had not fought the Dutch, who had given him abundant cause for war? It was not he, but Shepstone, who now spoke of war.

Bulwer had suggested writing to the British Government or the High Commissioner and asking for men to be sent to make enquiries and decide the dispute. Cetshwayo agreed to this proposal, but with a reservation.

"Before sending for people across the sea, for the settlement of the boundary", his messengers reported, "Cetshwayo would be glad if the Governor of Natal would send his representatives to see what the claims of Cetshwayo are, and hear what he says, and to hear what the others say, and if these cannot come to an understanding on the matter, then a letter can be sent beyond the sea for other people to come and see what can be done."⁵⁰

50. Message from Cetshwayo, 5 January, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.59); Dunn to Bulwer, 21 December, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 13). Dunn's letter was brought by the messengers of 5 January, 1878.

This was better than Bulwer had dared to hope. For the preceding month he had lived in fear that the Zulus would assert their territorial claims by force, and that war would result. He was still in no doubt that there existed in Zululand a large and clamorous party eager for war regardless of all consequences; but Cetshwayo's message showed that calmer counsels had prevailed, that the King realised that war with the English would prove disastrous for his people, and that he wished the matter to be settled peaceably, if that were possible.⁵¹

Bulwer informed Shepstone of Cetshwayo's message and suggested the steps that should next be taken. With Shepstone's approval, he would appoint two or three Commissioners to hear evidence and, if necessary, inspect the territory. They would report to him (Bulwer) and he would make their report known to the two parties, together with any recommendation they might make for the settlement of the question. If the Commissioners' proposed settlement proved unsatisfactory to one party or to both, the objections would be communicated to Bulwer. In such a case, he would refer the question, together with the Report, Evidence and Objections, to the High Commissioner and the Home Government with the request that a Special Boundary Commissioner should be sent to decide the question, both parties agreeing to abide by this final award. Pending proceedings, a line should be drawn, which Bulwer was prepared to indicate, between the two parties, beyond which neither party should pass.

Bulwer stated that he had suggested to Cetshwayo that the question should be dealt with by people who had no previous acquaintance with it. But since Cetshwayo had wished representatives of the Natal Government to undertake the task, he was prepared to appoint them, if Shepstone agreed; for if their decision proved unacceptable, there was always the further reference to the High

51. Bulwer to Carnarvon, 7 January, 1878 (G.H. 281, p.287).

Commissioner or Her Majesty's Government to fall back on. If the Zulu King was prepared to abide by the decision of any person appointed by Her Majesty's Government or the High Commissioner, wrote Bulwer, he did not anticipate any objection on the part of the Transvaal Government.⁵²

Bulwer followed up this despatch with a private letter written on the following day. In it, he expressed his belief that the Zulus were sincere in their wish for a peaceful solution, that there was every hope that the question could be settled without coming to blows, and that if this were possible, nothing could justify a war.

Bulwer had been made uneasy by some of Shepstone's letters and despatches. The latter's proposal to station troops on the Blood river might, he feared, jeopardise the chances of a peaceful issue by sowing suspicion in Cetshwayo's mind concerning Bulwer's dealing with him. The Zulu King had agreed to abstain from interference in the disputed territory pending a settlement. "If you employ the time in massing your troops on the border", wrote Bulwer, "he may think that I have simply been gaining time for you." Shepstone had, indeed, remarked that Bulwer's message to Cetshwayo offering mediation, would enable him to choose his own time for action; and that he would have to take action unless Cetshwayo gave way.

"But I did not send my message merely to gain you time", protested Bulwer, "but in order, if possible, to bring about a peaceable solution of the question, and to prevent that action which you say is necessary. I speak to you frankly as a friend. What action do you mean? and what do you mean by Cetshwayo's giving way?"

The Zulu King had, Bulwer pointed out, abandoned the military kraal, and ceased to make good his claims by force.

"Do you mean that he should give up his claim, and give way to your claim, or else that you must take action - that is, that you intend war? You know that you cannot expect him to do that".

Why, argued Bulwer, should there be war if the question could

52. Bulwer to Shepstone, 8 January, 1878 (G.H. 637, No.3).

be settled by negotiation? His proposals for securing a settlement were entirely fair. If the Zulu King were prepared to accept a decision arrived at in this way, surely the Transvaal should be prepared to do the same.

"I really cannot see why this question should not be settled without a single shot being fired. If the Zulus are in earnest to have it settled peaceably we certainly ought to be very much in earnest with the same object."

Of course, the Boers might not be of the same mind, observed Bulwer - this was a danger to be guarded against.

With the war on the Cape eastern frontier going from bad to worse, with rumours of war in other places, with mutinous feeling growing in the Transvaal, the border dispute still festering, and Shepstone, it seemed, coming increasingly under the influence of the Boers in his dealings with the Zulus, Bulwer, in the sweltering heat of a Pietermaritzburg January, uneasily surveyed the murky prospects for peace. It was 105 degrees in the shade, and, he concluded,

"last night a furious hot wind blew. The very elements are dark and threatening and warlike, in this unhappy South Africa."⁵³

On receiving Bulwer's despatch, Shepstone consulted the leading Boers of the district who had formerly held Government posts. These men professed to find Bulwer's proposal admirable, Christian and humane; they had no misgiving as to the justice of the Transvaal claim; but they feared that during the delay occasioned by such an investigation, the persons and property of Transvaal subjects would be subject to insult and injury. Bulwer had proposed to indicate a line beyond which neither party should pass. The problem was to enforce the observance of this line. No dependence, they said, could be put on the word of a savage like Cetshwayo. They favoured Bulwer's taking possession of the disputed territory, or of the dividing line, while the question was being settled.

Shepstone considered these views "weighty and serious", and supported the proposal that Bulwer should take temporary charge of the border area. He also decided, in deference to Bulwer's

53. Bulwer to Shepstone, 9 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 13).

views, not to carry out his proposal to station troops on the Blood river.⁵⁴

In a private letter to Bulwer, Shepstone rebutted the suggestion that he intended using the delay caused by arbitration to prepare for war. Cetshwayo by his actions had caused the abandonment of ten times the territory hitherto known as the disputed territory. Cetshwayo would have to abate his unreasonable demands, or the Transvaal would have to abandon permanently two of its provinces. The latter Shepstone could not contemplate. The only fitting and proper course would have been for an armed force to have been stationed on the line of occupied farms. This Shepstone had been unable to do, and Cetshwayo had had it all his own way. "Cetywayo has taken his action and taken it successfully, and certainly some action will have to be taken on our part" - that is, on the part of Her Majesty's Government by the High Commissioner after consultation with the Governors of Natal and the Transvaal. What that action should be depended on circumstances. He had not, declared Shepstone, contemplated any aggressive action.

In this same letter Shepstone complained of Bulwer's interference. When Bulwer had informed him of the message he had sent to Cetshwayo on the 8th December, Shepstone had raised no objection to its terms, even though it clearly offered to arrange a mediation by a third party. Now that Cetshwayo had accepted this offer, however, he complained that Bulwer had gone much further than he had asked him to, had acted without consulting him, and had cut the ground from under his feet.

When he had first approached the discussion of the boundary question, he explained, he had found that the Zulus were under a misconception (and encouraged in it by the Colenso faction); they regarded him as merely the successor of Burgers, whom he had ousted, and supposed that Natal had nothing to do with the question and

54. Shepstone to Bulwer, 15 January, 1878 (Letter-book 2, No.42, T.A.).

little interest in the result. He had asked Bulwer to correct this impression by telling the Zulus that the Government of Natal was interested in a peaceful settlement. Bulwer had complied and sent a message implying all he, Shepstone, could have wished to be said.⁵⁵ It was obvious, wrote Shepstone, that his object had been to bring pressure to bear on Cetshwayo and so induce him to come to a reasonable agreement. Bulwer, observed Shepstone, had made no allusion to mediation or arbitration in his first message.

"You assumed that I was the proper person for Cetywayo to negotiate with, and to settle the question with, but in your second you in terms propose arbitration or its equivalent, and offer to become the direct channel of communication between Cetywayo and the High Commissioner, or the Secretary of State, and you do this without consulting me, or giving me an opportunity of making a suggestion on this subject. I might have suggested that by such a course you would be putting on pressure with one hand while you were relieving it with the other, that you were taking, or would be taking the negotiations in a summary way out of my hands, that you would be cutting the ground from under my feet by suggesting inferentially that my demand might very possibly be considered wrong."

Shepstone went on to explain:

"You consider that Cetywayo's reply is satisfactory, and so do I, but what does it show? It shows I think that he never intended to fight, that his plan was to threaten, and bluster, and injure the Boers as far as he dare, but that he would ultimately have given way to what he, of all men in the world must, and does know is a righteous demand. The offer of arbitration suggests uncertainty, delay and many other contingencies, all of which are in favour of his dishonesty and your message moreover offered him independent, direct communication with the Secretary of State, and the High Commissioner, a champion as he will suppose, to defend him against the Transvaal claims as Natal has heretofore unwittingly been on this same question; of course he would receive such proposals with open arms and no wonder that he and his great men felt, as it was said to you 'relieved' when they heard of them."

Arbitration might take years to accomplish. During this time Cetshwayo would remain in possession, because he had used public violence to put himself in possession. Nevertheless there was no alternative now, but to make the best of it, and abide the issue.

"I shall be glad, aye, deeply grateful, if by your mediation we are extracted from the dilemma we are in, and a fair chance

55. In fact Bulwer's first message, that of 3 December, 1877, had not been sent in compliance with Shepstone's request, which was only made in a letter dated 4 December, 1877. Neither was Shepstone's request as definite and explicit as he here makes it out to be. Vide supra, pp.261-2.

of permanent peace established. Zulu diplomacy must not be underrated; ever since the establishment of the Boer Government here, it has been Zulu policy to misrepresent to each everything said or done by the other, and by so doing to keep Natal, and the Transvaal, as much as possible at cross purposes on Zulu matters. This is the policy they are adopting now, and we must be careful, that they are not successful."⁵⁶

Bulwer replied that he was "sincerely grieved" to learn that Shepstone considered his action had damaged his position. But he hastened to justify himself. He pointed out that whereas Shepstone now declared that Bulwer's first message (that of 3 December) was all he could have wished, at the time he had described it as too mild a dose to affect Cetshwayo's feverish condition.

"The second message you say went too far on the other side; for, by suggesting a reference of the question to the High Commissioner or the Queen's Government, it destroyed your powers of further negotiations with the King and of disposing of the question with him directly. But consider, for one moment, if you please, all the circumstances of the position at that time. I had been most scrupulous from the first not to do or say anything that would appear to meddle or interfere in any way with your negotiations with the King. I had been most scrupulous on this point; and, when I sent my first message, by sending it in the form of an answer I avoided even the appearance of a spontaneous interference, whilst I took advantage of the opportunity to say all that I could to help your negotiations. Yet events were moving fast, and, at the time you learned what my message was, you considered it all too mild. For by that time had taken place the mission of your son and Mr. Rudolph to the King, and that mission had been a failure. Then came your Despatches to Lord Carnarvon of the 4th of December, or thereabouts, in which you described the position as very serious. And, indeed, so it appeared to be, and so much so as to make it uncertain whether a collision might not take place at any moment. In your Despatch also to me of that date you referred to the critical and anxious position in which things were. You reminded me of the position in which this Colony was, of the additional anxiety which you felt because this Colony could not escape the immediate consequences resulting from a collision, you spoke of the necessity of the two Governments now acting together so that Cetshwayo might see in a more serious light than he appeared to do the dangerous issues of a war, and, whilst you did not indicate to me what action you wished me to take, you showed me very clearly that you wished me to take some action.

Both from what you said to me, and from what I heard was said by others to others, it almost appeared as if I had been guilty of a want of support of you, and of a want of action which had brought about this critical state of things. I felt that this was not justified in any way, because my want of action up to that time had been due entirely to my indisposition to do anything that would appear an interference with you, and my actions had not gone therefore beyond that message where I had taken the opportunity to say all that I could to support you which I could do without seeming to interfere.

But I felt very much concerned at the idea that I had been wanting in this respect; and the critical position in which you were placed at that time filled me with anxiety, for

it really seemed that at any moment hostilities might break out; and what the immediate consequences of hostilities would be at that time coming as they would on the back of the Cape war, it was at that time impossible to foresee, except that they would certainly prove in the highest degree calamitous, no matter what the ultimate issue might be. Your negotiations appeared to be at an end; the war feeling among the Zulus ran high; and, looking to this state of things, and with the representations and warnings that you sent to me, I felt that I must not lose a moment to do everything in my power to prevent a collision that appeared imminent. My only fear was that my representations might come too late, or that they might not be listened to. But I lost no time in sending them. I again pointed out to the King what the state of the case was. I told him of the connection between the Transvaal and this Government and the English all belonging to one great house; and I told him this although I could scarcely doubt that he was fully aware of it; and I pointed out to him the serious consequences of a collision. But this did not seem to me enough, nor did it seem enough to those with whom I was able to consult at the moment. The feeling in Zululand was very strong on the subject of the disputed territory. Rightly or wrongly they believed themselves to have claims and rights, and claims and rights they were prepared to fight for, whatever the consequences might be. To hold out merely a threat to them of consequences when their feelings were so highly strung was not calculated to stay the evil. Their tone was defiant, not merely against the Transvaal, but against all consequences, in support of their asserted rights. They had given up - very wrongly so no doubt - but they had given up all intention of negotiating with your Government further on the subject. Their action had been wrong, unquestionably, in what they had done, but they had taken it, and they were prepared to fight. Events had got into a blind alley; there seemed no chance of direct negotiations between your Government and the Zulu King which could get them out of that blind alley; and the only chance of getting them out of it, and of preventing a collision, seemed to be by opening a new way of egress. It was necessary to point out this way of egress and to do so at once and without a moment's delay - so seemed to us here - if we would prevent the crisis solving itself by a war which appeared only too imminent; and this I did by making the suggestion of a reference of the question to those higher authorities to which the Transvaal Government could not possibly object.

The great object, the one object, was to save a collision. It was a chance if the suggestion could do it; but it seemed to us the best and the only chance. This was the one object I had in view - to avert the danger of war. You now seem to think that war would not have taken place; but you did not think so then, nor did I, nor do I now, nor do those by whom I am advised. All our information has been to show that war might at any moment have broken out; and, although it is not for me to say that my message averted war, yet it is quite certain that it produced a very considerable change in the counsels of the Zulus, and that it has paved the way to a settlement of the question without war."⁵⁷

Shepstone's reply is dated 31 January, 1878. In it, he emphasised that when he had asked Bulwer to assist, he had not

57. Bulwer to Shepstone, 23 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 13).

considered that the possibility or usefulness of further negotiations between himself and the Zulus was at an end; and he repeated that, whatever the force of Bulwer's arguments and objections, he should have consulted him, Shepstone, before making such a drastic intervention.

"Now as to the effect of your second message; the negotiations with Cetywayo were being conducted by me, whether judiciously or not need not perhaps be the question just now; the progress and tone of those negotiations were alike unsatisfactory; I could not tell whether Cetywayo meant war, or his people meant revolution, and the existence of revolutionary feeling in Zululand was, and still is, a very appreciable element in every estimate of probabilities; all I could see was that every provocation was being given to the Government of the Transvaal to use force, but the object I could not discover, the reason for this conduct was, and still is, a mystery to me unless I attribute it to representations from near Maritzburg, made in ignorance of my real intentions and with the object of thwarting them whatever they might be. In consequence of this every message I sent and every step I took was experimental, I thought at length that a little pressure from your side would suffice, would cause our claims to be listened to, and if listened to, I believed that they would be acquiesced in, and our difference ended; but the reins had not slipped out of my hands, nor had I any intention of letting them slip; I take it that the description given by your messengers of the relief and satisfaction afforded to Cetywayo and his Indunas by your message, shows that I was not far wrong in my estimate of the situation at that moment; naturally they would all say that your words were unlike my words; that yours were comforting while mine were disturbing; mine put pressure upon them, yours took it off, and relieved them from the necessity of further negotiating with me on a question upon which they must feel themselves in the wrong.

Your may have supposed that the claims I had put forward were not fair claims, and that I urged them injudiciously, indeed you give me to understand this latter in one of your letters. In my view I could have gone much further, continued much longer, and, by merely maintaining the position I had assumed, brought more pressure to bear without risking war; and if, contrary to my expectations, I had found war becoming imminent, I could at any time have asked you to propose mediation and put a stop to it; where I feel that you have damaged my position is that you summarily put a stop to my proceedings without giving me the least notice of your intention to do so.

You may have thought me wrong and my actions dangerous, as you evidently did think, but why not tell me so first? Why suggest this to Cetywayo? because the inference to be drawn from your message to him does suggest it, before hearing what I had to say to your proposal. Towards you I did not stand in the same position as Cetywayo, I do not represent a foreign power, I am merely a co-worker with you, having the same object in view, at least in so far as the preservation of the peace of the country is concerned. I had therefore I think a right to have been consulted before you communicated either with Cetywayo or Sir Bartle Frere. I cannot conceal from myself the answer to this, that suggests itself, i.e., that you may have thought a previous reference to me would have been useless; that I might have been obstructive; that I was acting on a theory based upon wrong information, and therefore that it was better that you should do as you did. Had you

first consulted me I should certainly have asked you to delay making your proposal to Cetywayo. Personally, I assure you, I have not an atom of feeling in the matter, I know very well that you acted as you believed would be for the best and that your object was to help me in this as in every matter in which I have had the advantage of having anything to do with you."⁵⁸

Bulwer in his reply stated that Shepstone's letters and despatches written before his, Bulwer's, intervention had seemed to imply inaction, remissness and lack of support on his part; and that what Shepstone himself had implied, others in the Transvaal had explicitly stated. He had been surprised to find his unwillingness to interfere interpreted as remissness, and astonished to learn that it was considered by some that if war came, it would be largely his fault. When called upon to act, therefore, he had acted as he had thought best.

"You called upon me to act. You did not say how. If you had only told me plainly what it was you wished me to do, then my way would have been pointed out to me, and so far as I could have done what you wished me to do I would have done it. But you did not say, you did not point out the way, you left it to me to find out."

There seemed from Shepstone's despatches no time to be lost in consultation; he had acted swiftly to avert war. He still did not consider that he had done anything to prejudice Shepstone's position or prestige. It had seemed to him that he could best help him, Natal and Her Majesty's Government, by preventing war.

"You say now that if let alone the Zulu would have listened to your claims and acquiesced in them. I think you are most mistaken in this. All that we have heard tends to show that your claims would never have been listened to or been acquiesced in; and that the Zulus would have gone to war, no matter the final consequences, rather than yield to the Transvaal Government the claims of the latter."

Bulwer commented that he feared they would never agree fully on the matter; but said he thought that Shepstone would one day admit that there was more reason for what he had done than he was presently prepared to admit, or than he honestly thought at that time.⁵⁹

58. Shepstone to Bulwer, 31 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.339).

59. Bulwer to Shepstone, 6 February, 1878 (S.P. Case 13).

Shepstone did not pursue the question further.

"I do not think that after all there is much difference between us, and I wish you to believe that I have no sympathy whatever with the idea that interpreted or rather mis-interpreted your anxiety not to interfere to mean a desire not to support or help, I knew you too well to suppose so for one moment. Nor can I write much today, for it is painful for me to do so, and I am half blinded for several hours after having written for one hour."⁶⁰

Despite the protestations of undiminished affection that punctuate this correspondence, the relations between the two men never again recovered their former friendliness. Bulwer remained convinced that Shepstone had been unjust and wrongheaded in his dealings with the Zulus. Shepstone resented Bulwer's intrusion into his domain, with its implication that he was incompetent in what was supposed to be his field of special authority. His supersession by Bulwer was confirmed in a despatch to the latter from the Secretary of State.

"Although there has been nothing in Sir T. Shepstone's conduct to warrant such an inference, it is no doubt possible that a Zulu savage might regard him as likely to be influenced by his present position as Administrator of the Transvaal territory, to abandon his former attitude of friendship towards the Zulu nation in favour of the Transvaal Boers, and therefore, while fully appreciating the ability displayed by Sir T. Shepstone in his past conduct with regard to this difficult subject, I am disposed to think that under present circumstances it would be advisable to accept Cetywayo's offer to treat with the Government in Natal in the hope that by opening another channel of communication resort to violent measures may be avoided."⁶¹

"I see by a despatch addressed to you from the Colonial Office that the Zulu matter has been taken out of my hands and placed in yours", wrote Shepstone to Bulwer. "I am very much relieved of course by this arrangement, but it is rather hard upon you, and I think that the logical sequence of this is that the District of Utrecht and part of that of Wakkerstroom should become part of Natal, so as to place all Zulu matters in the hands of the Natal Government."⁶²

Even after his retirement, Shepstone continued to suspect Bulwer of harbouring no friendly feelings towards him. In a letter to

60. Shepstone to Bulwer, 12 February, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.346).

61. Hicks-Beach to Bulwer, 14 February, 1878, enclosure in Hicks-Beach to Shepstone, 14 February, 1878 (C.2000, pp.152 & 153).

62. Shepstone to Bulwer, 30 March, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.15).

his son, dated June, 1880, he attributed the fact that he was not consulted at all on Zulu matters "as even the Secy. of State is not above doing" to "the jealous feeling which Sir H. Bulwer appears to have instilled into the members of this Govt."⁶³

Perhaps a word should be added concerning the merits of the dispute. Bulwer may be blamed for having suggested arbitration to the Zulus without having first consulted Shepstone. On the other hand, Shepstone's despatches showed that a crisis was very near, that war was very likely, and that no time could safely be lost. If Shepstone's appeal to Bulwer for assistance had not been so vague, if he had made it clear to him exactly what he wanted him to do, the latter would not have had scope for committing what Shepstone regarded as an error. It is remarkable, too, that Shepstone made no protest about Bulwer's offer of arbitration when he first learned that it had been made, but only when he learned that Cetshwayo had accepted it. Shepstone's belief that the Zulus would eventually have climbed down, we must agree with Bulwer, was false. It was based on the obstinate and unshakeable conviction that the Zulus were in the wrong and knew they were in the wrong; whereas the Zulus were equally unshakeably convinced that they were in the right, which in fact they were. On the balance, we may conclude that Bulwer had the better of the argument.

Meanwhile Bulwer pushed on his arrangements for the Enquiry. Having obtained Shepstone's acceptance, however grudging, he requested the permission of the High Commissioner to proceed. This permission was given in a despatch which left no doubt as to where Sir Bartle Frere's sympathies lay or what he considered the outcome of an enquiry likely to be.

He recognized that such an enquiry would be productive of delay, but he did not consider this altogether disadvantageous; it

63. Shepstone to H.C. Shepstone, 7 June, 1880 (Shepstone Papers, File F, K.C.).

would give time for passions to cool and would "increase our means of defending whatever we may find to be our unquestionable rights." He had little hope of permanent peace being attained by means of an enquiry.

"Unless both Cetywayo and his army and people have been greatly misrepresented, I do not see what reasonable hope we can entertain of their laying aside schemes of Military Conquest, and taking to the ways of peace."

He could not expect the Zulu King to accept a decision adverse to his claim, nor to remain long content were he to get all he demanded. Even if immediate war were averted, their position would long continue to be one of armed observation;

"but this, in my opinion, only makes it more desirable that, before hostilities commence, there should be no reasonable room for doubt as to the justice of all our claims."⁶⁴

This was scarcely encouraging to one who was sincerely striving for peace, but it did permit Bulwer to proceed with the plan which he hoped would result in a peaceful solution. He appointed the members of the Commission who were to make the enquiry. His choice fell on John Shepstone, the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs; Col. Durnford, of the Royal Engineers, and a friend of the Colenso family; and Michael Gallwey, the Attorney-General.

The most pressing problem was the necessity of establishing some sort of workable modus vivendi on the border until a permanent solution had been reached. Shepstone had suggested that Bulwer should temporarily take over the disputed territory; but the latter considered that as Lieut.-Governor of Natal he lacked the authority to exercise jurisdiction outside the borders of the Colony.⁶⁵

The urgent necessity for some arrangement on the border was underlined by a fresh outbreak of disturbances. First reports proved to be much exaggerated, but it later emerged that three bands of armed Zulus had been seen six or seven miles south-east

64. Frere to Bulwer, 26 January, 1878 (G.H. 352, No.2).

65. Bulwer to Shepstone, 23 January, 1878 (G.H.637, No.15).

of Luneburg on 24 January, destroying crops and damaging homesteads on the deserted farms. One of these bands had been sent, supposedly by Cetshwayo, to arrest or execute two Zulus who lived under their chief Manyonyoba on Meyer's mission station north of the Pongola - an example of the situation common in this area, where two populations lived side by side owing allegiance to two different governments. Eight Zulus crossed the river to carry out this order. One of the intended victims was luckily absent. The other was seized and an attempt was made to take him to the Abaqulusi military kraal, as Manyonyoba had said that he would get into trouble with the white people if he allowed blood to be spilt so near them. The man, however, resisted, and was killed. His wives, children and cattle were removed to Zululand.⁶⁶

Bulwer consequently sent to Cetshwayo to emphasize the absolute necessity of such occurrences being stopped, if a peaceful settlement was to be attained. He suggested that the land between the Old Hunting Road and the line claimed by the Transvaal (or the "New Hunting Road") should be "neutral"; but he did not explain what he considered such a declaration of neutrality would entail.⁶⁷

Almost six weeks passed before a reply to this suggestion was received. During this time John Dunn was sent to the disputed territory by Cetshwayo to ascertain more certainly the position of the boundary claimed by the Transvaal.⁶⁸ Presumably this was in connection with Bulwer's proposal for a neutral belt. But in the event, Cetshwayo rejected the idea. In his reply, he denied knowledge of the disturbances in the disputed territory and asked why Shepstone had not communicated with him first, before complaining to Natal. About the proposal for a neutral belt, the messengers reported as follows:

66. Shepstone to Bulwer, 7 February, 1878 (G.H. 35, No.8).

67. Message to Cetshwayo, 1 February, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p. 77).

68. Shepstone to Bulwer, 16 February, 1878 (Letter-book 2, No. 10, T.A.).

"The King also informs the Governor of Natal that the two roads mentioned in His Excellency's message are both in Zululand, and therefore the King cannot see how the ground between the roads can belong to both parties."⁶⁹

Either he had misunderstood the proposal (which was not unlikely, as Bulwer had not made it very clear) or else he was determined not to agree to anything which might be interpreted as abating one jot of what he claimed.

By this time the Commission had begun its enquiry, and it was too late to try to make some other arrangement. So nothing was done, and this seems to have worked as well as any other arrangement was likely to have done.

Shepstone appointed as members of the commission to put the Transvaal case, his son Henrique, who was Secretary for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, Gert Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, and Peter Uys, a border farmer who had taken part in many of the negotiations with the Zulus (and who was later killed in the Zulu War).⁷⁰

Cetshwayo appointed the border chief, Sirayo; Gebula, a messenger who had taken part in most of the negotiations with the Boers; Mundulu, an old headman of Mpande; while as his personal representative he appointed his servant Sintwango.⁷¹

White public opinion was critical of, or hostile towards, Bulwer's intervention. Things should have been left in the hands of Shepstone, it was felt; arbitration would be useless; it would merely delay a final solution; Cetshwayo would never abide by an adverse decision; arbitration might postpone war, but an eventual war with the Zulus was inevitable. It was explicitly stated in many editorials and by many newspaper correspondents that a Zulu War was not only inevitable but desirable - that peace and security would never be attained in any part of South Africa as long as the military power of the Zulus remained unbroken.⁷²

69. Message from Cetshwayo, 11 March, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.98).

70. Shepstone to Bulwer, 20 February, 1878 (Letter-book 2, No. 12, T.A.).

71. Message from Cetshwayo, 4 March, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.93).

72. The Natal Mercury, 4 February, 1878, 21 February, 1878, The Natal Witness, 16 February, 1878, and others.

The farmers of the border district expressed their hostility towards the arbitration scheme in uncompromising terms. A petition addressed to Shepstone, signed by 80 burghers, and dated 2 February, 1878, protested:

That they have heard with anxiety and understand that arbitration is spoken of which would have to determine over our property and possessions and which we fear will decide in favour of a crowned robber, murderer and breaker of his word, who knows as well as we, that he is claiming a thing which does not belong to him, and which he endeavours to repossess by deceitful ways. Which he himself voluntarily and with the concurrence of his predecessor Panda, and with the consent of his Indunas, ceded unto us without any compulsion from our side for which reason we are sure that such arbitration is an absurdity and an impossibility. We therefore hereby protest against all proposed or to be undertaken arbitration, and we will with all legal means at our disposal or to be obtained by us resist a decision or disposition over our property which we know that would be unlawful and unjust."

For these reasons, and because they could remain no longer in laager, away from their farms, they petitioned Shepstone to wage war on the Zulus, or to enable and assist them to do so. They pledged themselves to assist in "subduing the Zulu nation and making it harmless."⁷³

Shepstone told the deputation that a civilized government was obliged to exhaust every peaceable means of vindicating its rights before resorting to force, and that as Cetshwayo had consented to arbitration, the Transvaal was bound to show at least as great a desire for a peaceful settlement. Nevertheless, he sympathised with the petitioners, and excused the violence of their language by saying that it was

"scarcely to be wondered at when it is remembered that these men are compelled to occupy with their families fortified camps, while their farms in the neighbourhood are being occupied by Zulus, while their crops are being reaped and their cultivated lands are being tilled by Zulus, and while the timber of their houses is being used as Zulu firewood."⁷⁴

Bulwer was more critical. Of course, he pointed out, if the Boers wanted war, they would be opposed to anything, such as arbitration, which might prevent it. Their conviction that arbit-

73. Petition dated 2 February, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 8 February, 1878 (G.H. 352, No.9).

74. Shepstone to Bulwer, 8 February, 1878 (G.H. 352, No.9).

ration would be against them accorded ill with the statement of the leading men of the district, consulted earlier by Shepstone, that they had no misgiving that arbitration would not show the justice of their claims. And if the delay of arbitration caused them impoverishment, the havoc of war would do the same to a greater degree.⁷⁵

On 27 February⁷⁶ Shepstone at length left the Zulu border for Pretoria, which he reached on 4 March. He had been away from the capital for over six months. His time henceforth was fully occupied in attempting to pull his disordered colony together and pacify his rebellious subjects. Bulwer's intervention had taken the negotiations with the Zulus out of his hands. From this point on he moves into the background, and the central places in Britain's dealings with the Zulu kingdom are occupied by Bulwer, by the Commission which he had set up, and by the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere.

The Border Commission began its Enquiry on 12 March, 1878.⁷⁷ The Commission met on the farm of James Rorke, near a drift through the Buffalo. It was the ultimate failure of their labours that was to cause Rorke's Drift to be endowed with a wider fame.

75. Bulwer to Shepstone, 23 February, 1878 (G.H. 638, No.40).

76. Diary for 1878 (S.P. Case 9).

77. H.C. Shepstone's Diary for 1878 (S.P. Case 27).

THE BOUNDARY REPORT AND SIR BARTLE FRERE.

Opening of the Border Commission proceedings - Fynney's visit to Zululand - further proceedings of the Commission - disturbances in the disputed territory in May, 1878 - the conclusions of the Border Commission - Sir Bartle Frere, and his views on South African affairs - his objections to the Border Report - the Commissioners' replies - Frere's decision to accept the Report in form but to nullify it in practice - his wish to overthrow Cetshwayo and annex Zululand - Frere requests reinforcements and departs for Natal.

The proceedings of the Border Commission at Rorke's Drift¹ were begun on Tuesday, 12th March, 1878, by the Transvaal Commissioners' stating their claim. As instructed by Shepstone,² they claimed the beacons line of 1864 (the line A - A on the map). The Zulus then stated their claim. They had evidently been instructed to claim the maximum possible, for the line they described, running up the Buffalo to its sources, and thence into the Transvaal beyond the Oliphants river, went far beyond what Cetshwayo had earlier declared himself willing to accept. The Commission then adjourned for two days.

On the 14th the proceedings were resumed. Henrique Shepstone explained the facts that the Transvaal Commission was prepared to prove and the first Transvaal witness, P.L. Uys (who also was one of the Transvaal delegates), gave his evidence. When the Zulu Commission was invited to cross-examine him, however, they declined to do so. They declared that everything Uys said was untrue, that they had not come about the so-called 1861 line, but only to state their claim, and that they had received no authority from the King to question Transvaal witnesses or call any of their own.³

1. Information on the day to day proceeding of the Commission I have obtained from Henrique Shepstone's diary for 1878 (S.P. Case 27); and the Report made to Shepstone by the Transvaal Commissioners, 20 April, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 18 May, 1878 (G.H. 353).
2. Minute by Shepstone for the Guidance of the Transvaal Commissioners, 12 March, 1878 (S.N. 6)
3. H.C. Shepstone's diary, 15 March, 1878 (S.P. Case 27); Confidential, Bulwer to Frere, 24 April, 1878 (G.H. 299, p.118).

This curiously unco-operative attitude was reported to Bulwer, who despatched Frederick Fynney to Zululand to clear up the matter. Fynney was delayed by illness and reached the Royal Kraal only on 8th April. It was an unsatisfactory visit. Cetshwayo claimed to be ill (which Fynney did not believe) and refused to see him. Fynney therefore saw only the Indunas. The latter showed great suspicion towards Fynney, the Boundary Commission and the Natal Government. Why, they asked him, had he come from the direction of Natal, and not from the direction of the Boundary Commission's place of meeting? Why had the Governor of Natal sent to ask, and not John Shepstone (a member of the Commission)? Had Fynney been sent with the object of making the Zulus tell two different stories? Fynney gathered that Cetshwayo professed to believe that the Natal Government secretly supported the claim made by Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The Indunas alternated between asking him who it was that had said that the Zulu delegates would not call witnesses, and asking him why they should call witnesses, seeing that all the land belonged to the Zulus. The most that Fynney achieved was an undertaking by Mnyamana that messengers would be sent to the Zulu delegates at the Enquiry to know if it were true that they did not call witnesses or ask questions.

Fynney wrote a very disgruntled report on his mission, in which he made a number of unfavourable comments on the political temper of Cetshwayo and his subjects. The younger regiments were hot for war, he reported, and Cetshwayo himself, though unwilling to take the initiative, would be glad of any pretext for trying his military strength, of which he had an inflated idea, against the English. Nevertheless, he believed that Cetshwayo was unpopular with the older Zulus, and that in the event of war with the English, he would be deserted by large numbers of his people. Fynney concluded his report with a curious remark. He believed, he wrote:

"That the King in all he does is acting under advice, by whom given I am not prepared to say."

The allusion, presumably - inevitably - is to that sinister figure, Dr. Colenso.⁴

With the advantage of hindsight we can see that Fynney was too hasty in his judgement on Cetshwayo and his people, and that he allowed himself to be influenced too greatly by the unfriendly reception accorded him in Zululand. This unfriendly reception in its turn was the product of the Zulus' initial lack of faith in the Natal Government and the Boundary Commission which it had set up. As the Commission's proceedings continued, however, the Zulus lost their suspicions and their sullen unco-operativeness. They certainly called witnesses, and though it is not clear whether they questioned the Transvaal witnesses, the members of the Natal Commission submitted both sides to a searching questioning. Cetshwayo later sent a message to the Natal Government thanking it for the Enquiry, and expressing his perfect satisfaction with the manner in which it had been conducted.⁵

It should be recorded that the Transvaal Commission did not share this satisfaction, and resented the level of strict equality with the Zulus on which they were placed by the Natal Commissioners.⁶

Meanwhile the proceedings at Rorkes Drift continued. It appears from Henrique Shepstone's diary that things went badly for the Transvaal at first. Gunjini "made a mess of it"; C. van Rooyen was "middling but very forgetful - rather damaged us than otherwise"; Jan Combrink "made a regular mess of it." Things improved later; Mr. Sandbrink gave his evidence "very intelligently and honestly"; Mr. Henderson "gave very good evidence"; and Stuurman "gave his evidence well". By 3 April all the Transvaal evidence had been given save that of Kruger and Pretorius, who were expected on the 5th. On the 4th it was learned that Kruger and Pretorius could not be at Rorke's Drift before the 10th, so it was decided

4. Bulwer to Frere, 24 April, 1878, enclosing Message to Cetshwayo, 29 March, 1879, and Fynney's Report, 22 April, 1878 (C.2242, p.80).
5. Message from Cetshwayo, 15 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.114).
6. Shepstone to Bulwer, 28 June, 1878, and a Minute on this despatch by Bulwer n.d. (G.H. 354).

to dispense with their verbal evidence, and word was sent to them not to come. On 6 April the Zulus began giving their evidence. The members of the Zulu Commission had themselves participated in many of the events round which the dispute turned, and they, and the other witnesses they called, were cross-examined by the Transvaal Commission. On 10 April the Zulus declared their evidence complete.

It was only after they had dismissed the Zulus that the Natal Commissioners decided that they and the delegates of the two parties should inspect the disputed territory itself. The Zulus declined to return, however, and P.L. Uys also objected, so the proposal was abandoned. The camps were packed up on the 13th. On the same day Kruger and Pretorius eventually turned up, too late to give their evidence. On the 14th the participants in the enquiry left Rorke's Drift.

"Well, both the Zulus and the Boers swore hard, and we have not yet finished sifting the evidence", wrote Col. Durnford from Pietermaritzburg on 21 April. "I think our road is clear; but I am only one out of three Commissioners."⁷

It was not until 20th June that the Report of the Commissioners was complete; but the reports of the proceedings that filtered out weakened the earlier widespread assumption that the Transvaal claim was bound to be upheld.

"It is rumoured pretty freely here" wrote the Biggarsberg correspondent of The Natal Witness "that as far as the case has gone, it does not look favourable for the Transvaal."⁸

Meanwhile conditions in the disputed area deteriorated. Reports came in to Henrique Shepstone in Utrecht, shortly after the Boundary Commission had completed its sittings, that the Zulus had again commenced damaging and pulling down the houses vacated by the Boers in the disputed territory. On 2 May he, together with Major Tucker,

7. Durnford p.182.

8. Letter from Biggarsberg correspondent, 22 April, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 27 April, 1878. See also, Mail Summary in The Natal Witness, 13 April, 1878, and The Week in The Natal Mercury, 8 April, 1878.

the officer commanding the Utrecht garrison, and Gert Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, set off to investigate these reports. They found that many farmhouses had recently been damaged by parties of Zulus, who had removed doors and windows and other woodwork. Henrique Shepstone therefore sent a message to the head of the Abaqulusi kraal informing him of what had happened and requesting him to take steps to put a stop to it.⁹

A reply was received on the 9th. The head of the kraal had been absent at the Royal Kraal, and the Transvaal messengers had seen only the acting head. The latter stated that the destruction of the border farmers' homesteads had not been done on Cetshwayo's orders, and he stated that he would make enquiries. He added, however, that Cetshwayo had given orders to his people to reoccupy the territory they claimed, and that these orders would shortly be carried out.¹⁰

A message from Cetshwayo received in Pietermaritzburg on 15 May stated:

"Cetywayo and the Zulu people are awaiting with beating hearts what the Lieutenant Governor of Natal will decide about the land, that the Boers have given them, the Zulus, so much trouble about, - for the Zulus wish very much now to occupy the land they never parted with, as it is now the proper season for doing so."¹¹

The Boers also wished to re-occupy their farms, and after the sitting of the Commission a number of them, who had been living in laager at least since December, attempted to do so - possibly on the advice or instructions of Shepstone.¹² They were not permitted to do so by the Zulus, who drove them and their flocks and herds back.¹³ The familiar pattern was then repeated of bands of Zulus traversing the disputed territory and ordering farmers to quit -

9. H.C. Shepstone to A.S.N.A., 16 May 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 606).
10. Rudolph to H.C. Shepstone, 10 May, 1878, enclosure in Ibid.
11. Message from Cetshwayo, 15 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p. 114).
12. Memorial from L. Viljoen and 48 others, 25 April, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 3 June, 1878 (G.H. 353).
13. Rudolph to H.C. Shepstone, 10 May, 1878, enclosure in H.C. Shepstone to A.S.N.A., 16 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/1, No. 606); letter from Utrecht correspondent, 15 May, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 21 May, 1878.

including farmers who had remained on their farms throughout all the troubles in the past. Thus, on 7 May, J.D. Engelbrecht, a Hanoverian missionary of the Luneburg district, was ordered to leave by a party of Zulus who said they were acting on the orders of Cetshwayo. The land, they said, was Chaka's, and the Governor of Natal had given it back to Cetshwayo.¹⁴ What was evidently the same party of Zulus also ordered the German colony at Luneburg to leave, stating that at the next full moon Zulus would be coming to build kraals in the area.¹⁵ Boers further north, on the Assegai river, also received notice to quit.¹⁶ On 15 May two messengers, Umbemba and Nozaza, arrived in Utrecht with a message from Cetshwayo to the effect that, although he knew no decision on the boundary had yet been reached he wished Rudolph to move all the farmers within a strip of territory on the Transvaal side of the Blood river about 10 miles wide and 18 miles deep.¹⁷ This was territory which Cetshwayo had formerly conceded to the Transvaal, and from which no attempt had ever before been made by the Zulus to dislodge the white occupants. Rudolph undertook only to report the message to Shepstone, who reported it to Bulwer.¹⁸ Meanwhile Zulus were erecting kraals in various parts of the disputed territory and as far north as the Assegai river,¹⁹ and it was reported that they had closed the drifts in the disputed territory and were charging tolls on all travellers.²⁰ In the latter half of May a party of about 150 Zulus were busily engaged in cutting wood in the Pongola forest and conveying it to the site of

14. J.D. Engelbrecht to Rudolph, 11 May, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 18 May, 1878 (G.H. 353).
15. Memorial from Rev. Filter and 19 others, 14 May, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 3 June, 1878 (G.H. 353).
16. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 25 May, 1878 (S.S.283, R.1761); letter from Utrecht correspondent, 16 May, 1878, in The Natal Witness, 25 May, 1878.
17. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 15 May, 1878 (S.S. 281, R.1593); Rudolph to R.M. Newcastle, 16 May, 1878, enclosure in R.M. Newcastle to A.S.N.A., 18 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/3/50, No.90).
18. Shepstone to Bulwer, 18 May, 1878 (G.H. 353).
19. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 25 May, 1878 (S.S. 283, R.1761).
20. George Potter to Shepstone, 3 June, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 July, 1878 (C.2220, p.16).

the 'military kraal' of six months earlier, near the homes of two of the German settlers at Luneburg.²¹ On 26 May, while the Luneburgers were in church, they heard a commotion outside, and found that a large party of Zulus had arrived and begun to construct a kraal.²² This caused great alarm, and Rudolph and Major Tucker went, on 30 May, to investigate. They found the Induna in charge of the kraal-building party, Faku, very respectful and civil. Faku stated, reported Rudolph:

"that the kraal was built by order of his king Cetywayo, but not with any hostile intention towards the people or Government of the Transvaal. That it was built simply to have a kraal in that vicinity, where many of Cetywayo's people are residing without a head or kraal representing the king, and that Cetywayo had appointed him to see to the erection and occupation of the kraal."

Cetshwayo, he said, had ordered that neither black nor white subjects of the Transvaal were to be molested or disturbed in the occupation of their land.

This conciliatory attitude had evidently reassured the Luneburgers, for Rudolph reported that the excitement and fear prevalent when the Zulus commenced building the kraal had greatly subsided. Although they had to put up with a Zulu kraal on what they considered their property, there seemed to be no move on the part of the people of Luneburg to abandon their farms.²³

Throughout these border disturbances Shepstone adopted a policy of inaction and non-interference, which might almost be described as sulky. In reply to letters and petitions from his alarmed subjects on the border, he invariably replied to the effect that Zulu matters had been taken out of his hands, and that they should direct their pleas and requests to Bulwer.²⁴ This was a very rigid inter-

21. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 25 May, 1878 (S.S. 283, R.1761).

22. Bohmer to Shepstone, 31 May, 1878, enclosure in Rudolph to Government Secretary, 3 June, 1878 (S.S. 284, R.1877).

23. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 1 June, 1878 (S.S. 286, R.1999).

24. e.g., his reply, dated 1 June, 1878, to the Memorial from Rev. Filter and 19 others of 14 May, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 3 June, 1878 (G.H. 353); also Government Secretary to F.D. Engelbrecht and others, 28 June, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Bulwer, 28 June, 1878 (G.H.354).

pretation of the Secretary of State's despatch of 14 February,²⁵ which had certainly removed from him the responsibility for conducting the negotiations with the Zulus over the disputed boundary, but which had certainly not relieved him of the fundamental duty of any ruler to protect his subjects. It is impossible to repress a suspicion that it was mere pique that prompted him to interpret the instruction in this extreme way. Bulwer did not agree with this interpretation, especially in regard to the activities of the Zulus north of the Pongola (for example at Luneburg), as the Commission which he had appointed had been limited to investigating the dispute over the land south of that river.²⁶ Nevertheless, on hearing that the Zulu King had apparently taken steps to enforce his territorial claims without waiting to hear the decision of the Border Commission, he sent a message to him. He pointed out that the Commission had not yet reported, and stated that reports had reached him that the Zulus apparently considered the matter already settled and were acting accordingly. He urged that there should be no interference in the disputed territory pending the outcome of the Enquiry.²⁷

Cetshwayo's reply was in the form of a letter written by John Dunn. He denied that he had anticipated the outcome of the Enquiry. Rudolph, he said, had done wrong if he had reported to the Natal Government that he, Cetshwayo, had taken any aggressive steps.

"The message sent by Cetshwayo to Mr. Rudolph²⁸ was only a message asking Mr. Rudolph to warn all the Boers that had notice to quit some time ago, not to return, as he 'Cetshwayo' had been informed they were doing, since the meeting of the Commission on the Buffalo River, and as he Cetshwayo had told his people living on the boarder(sic) not to allow them to do so, he was afraid of any disturbance taking place."

"Cetshwayo states, that if Mr. Rudolph was not satisfied with

25. Vide supra, p.296.

26. Minute by Bulwer, n.d., on Shepstone to Bulwer, 28 June, 1878 (G.H. 354).

27. Message to Cetshwayo, 23 May, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.116).

28. The message delivered on 15 May. Vide supra, p.308.

the message sent to him, he ought to have sent a return message to that effect, to Cetshwayo and not to have sent to the Natal Government to try and make mischief."

Cetshwayo added that he was surprised to hear of the talk of war in Natal. He stated that he had no wish for war and wished to live in peace with the English Government.²⁹

Cetshwayo sent a message, also in the form of a letter, dated 14 June, written by John Dunn, and saying much the same thing, to Mr. Rudolph in Utrecht.³⁰ The version of his message of 15 May which Cetshwayo now gave was very different to the message which Rudolph claimed he had received. The messengers who brought Dunn's letter were, as it happened, the same men who had delivered the message of 15 May. Rudolph read his record of that message over to them in the presence of witnesses, and they declared, so he reported, "it is correct as we delivered it, in the same words ('amazwe'). We had no instructions to ask the Landdrost to prevent farmers returning to their farms."³¹ Rudolph's explanation of this puzzle was as follows:

"It is evident, I think, that Cetshwayo is changing his policy, and that he regrets having sent the message of the 15th May last and that he intends, by the present message, to ignore the former one, because I see no grounds to suppose that Umbemba and Nozaza brought a false message."³²

The reply to this later message of Cetshwayo drafted by Shepstone was to the effect that since the day he had accepted arbitration by Natal he had not communicated with him on the subject of the dispute. All complaints about Cetshwayo's conduct, and he had many, he would address to the Governor of Natal, pending the issue of the enquiry. So he had no reply to make, as the time for speaking direct to him on such a subject had not yet arrived.³³

The disturbances on the border following the ending of the

29. Dunn to Bulwer, 14 June, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/1).

30. Dunn to Rudolph, 14 June, 1878, enclosure in Rudolph to S.N.A. (Tvl), 12 July, 1878 (S.S.293, R.2503).

31. Statement by Rudolph and interpreter Richard Roberts, 12 July, 1878, enclosure in Ibid.

32. Rudolph to S.N.A. (Tvl), 12 July, 1878 (S.S. 293, R. 2503).

33. Draft message to Cetshwayo, 19 July, 1878 (S.S. 293).

Boundary Commission's enquiry took place mainly in May. By June the situation was calmer. Zulu kraal building continued, but messages were sent by Cetshwayo countermanding the earlier orders to quit, and it was reported that he had given strict orders against any further destruction of homesteads or molestation of white people.³⁴ These measures produced a greater confidence on the border.³⁵

Meanwhile, back in Pietermaritzburg, the three Commissioners were completing their Report.³⁶ The final draft was dated 20 June, 1878, but was not made public until many months later. As is well known, it decided in favour of the Zulu claim. As we have already discussed the merits of the dispute at some length in Chapter 2, it will not be necessary at this point to examine in any great detail the reconstruction of events set out in the Report. Nevertheless some remarks about the Commissioners' conclusions and how they arrived at them are necessary.

It cannot be said that the Report is a model of clarity and order. It is somewhat repetitious, contains irrelevancies, and does not succeed in making perfectly clear what the deciding factor or factors were that determined the conclusions reached by the Commissioners. This was unfortunate, as it enabled Sir Bartle Frere to represent their decision as being based on purely technical and narrowly legalistic grounds, which in fact was not the case.

The Commissioners began by rejecting the documents submitted by the Transvaal. They could not regard them as reliable and equally binding on the Zulus and the Boers. Nevertheless they did not wish to disregard them altogether.

"These documents, though written by persons interested in the subject matter of what was reduced to writing, and written by them to place their interests in the best light, yet afford some insight into what actually took place, and to some extent

34. Letters from Utrecht correspondent, 6 & 9 June, 1878, (The Natal Witness, 15 June, 1878); 16 June 1878 (Ibid., 25 June, 1878); 25 June, 1878 (Ibid., 2 July, 1878); 30 June, 1878 (Ibid., 20 July, 1878.)

35. Bohmer to Shepstone, 5 July, 1878 (S.S. 291, R.2365).

36. Report of the Boundary Commissioners, 20 June, 1878 (C.2220, p.370)

may be received as evidence of the intention of the Dutch to obtain the land from the Zulu territory, and reflect to some degree upon the acts of the Dutch and their conduct in carrying into effect that intention, and the dealings with the Zulus in that respect, from the year 1854 to the year 1870."

This seems to mean that although the documents could not be accepted as legally binding treaties, they could be used as historical documents. That is, carefully examined in the light of their authorship and the circumstances of their composition, they could help to establish the events of the period of their composition. Frere later accused the Commissioners of regarding these documents as admissible evidence against the Transvaal case, but not for it.³⁷ The Commission did not regard them as legally binding documents, so in that sense they could not be used to the advantage of the Transvaal case. On the other hand, if they are used as historical documents, the fact that they were written by the Boers means that, by an elementary principle of criticism, they could be used much more safely to establish facts to the detriment of the Transvaal case than facts to its advantage. So Frere's charge is perhaps true, but it is not necessarily unjust or biased to use the documents in this way.

The Bulk of the Report is composed of an attempt to reconstruct the events of 1854, 1861 and 1864 which the Boers claimed resulted in the transfer of Zulu territory to the Transvaal.

The Commissioners cast doubt on the validity of the 1854 'cession' by which Mpande was supposed to have ceded a large tract of country in return for 100 cattle. They pointed out that the document was witnessed on the Zulu side only by a messenger of no rank among the Zulus, and that it was highly unlikely that Mpande, who possessed large herds of cattle, should abandon for ever a large and fertile district in return for a mere 100 head of cattle. The Commission favoured the view, claimed by the Zulus, and supported by certain indications in the document itself, that Mpande had intended to grant rights of occupation and use only, and not to

37. Memorandum by Frere, n.d., enclosure 8 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November 1878 (C 222, p. 42)

relinquish his sovereignty over the territory in question.

The Report then deals with the alleged cession of 1861. It describes the Transvaal version of the circumstances of this 'cession',³⁸ of Mpande's supposed ratification of it later in 1861, and of the beacon erection of 1864. It then gives an account of the subsequent history of the dispute down to the time of writing.

The inconsistencies, later interpolations, implausibilities, the one proved case of downright forgery, and the generally totally unsatisfactory nature of the documents upon which the Transvaal based its claim are then revealed.

The Commission therefore considered that the Transvaal had failed to prove its case, and it accepted the Zulu version of the events of 1861 as the correct one. Similarly, the Boers' account of the beacon erection of 1864 was rejected as quite implausible, and the Zulu version preferred.

The Commission accepted that, according to Zulu constitutional customs, the land belonged to the nation, and that the Zulu King, as trustee for the nation, had no power to cede land without the clear assent and sanction of the Zulu people. Had there been any cession, the matter would have been submitted to a Council of the Chiefs; but this was never done. The Commission therefore concluded:

"that no cession of territory was ever made by the Zulu nation, and that even had such cession been made by either King Mpanda, or after him King Cetshwayo, such would have been null and void unless confirmed by the voice of the Chiefs and people, according to the customs of the Zulus."³⁹

It is important to emphasize that the Commission concluded that neither Cetshwayo nor Mpande had ever agreed to cede the territory in dispute; it is not the case (as Frere later tried to represent it as being) that the Commission decided that the cession was invalid only because it was not sanctioned or confirmed by the

38. Vide supra, p.20-2.

39. Boundary Report (C.2220, p.380).

nation.⁴⁰ The Report is somewhat ambiguous on this point, but the Commissioners made their position clear in their reply to a question from Bulwer. Bulwer asked, with reference to the passage from the Report quoted above:

"whether he is to understand that in the opinion of the Commissioners there has been, or there may have been, a cession of land made by the Zulu King Panda, or the present King Cetywayo, but that there having been no confirmation of this by the nation at large, on that account the Commissioners have come to the conclusion that there has been no cession; or whether he is to understand that there has been no cession at all either by the kings past or present, or by the nation."⁴¹

To this, the Commissioners replied that they wished it to be understood "that there has been no cession of land at all by the Zulu kings, past or present, or by the nation."⁴²

Nevertheless, the Commissioners did not award to the Zulus the full extent of territory claimed by them at the Rorke's Drift enquiry. The award recommended by the Commissioners was based on effective occupation, and on the de facto recognition by the one party of the other's authority. On this basis, the Commissioners recommended that the territory 'ceded' in 1854 should go to the Boers, and the remainder of the disputed territory to the Zulus. The 1854 boundary, however, they defined as the line C - C on the map, and not as the line C - D, which the description in the 1854 deed of 'cession' could with equal or greater justice support, and certainly not as the Old Hunting Road which Shepstone was now, with no justification whatever, claiming as the boundary of the land 'ceded' in 1854.

The Boers were indisputably in occupation of the land west of the line C - C, and exercised all the functions of government in it. The deciding factor was that the Zulus had in practice recognized the authority of the Boers in this area. The most striking example of this was in 1861 when Mthonga fled across the Blood

40. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 24 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.47); Frere to Colenso, 6 January, 1879, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 26 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.55).

41. Bulwer to Boundary Commissioners, 6 July, 1878 (C.2220, p.385).

42. Boundary Commissioners to Bulwer, 6 July, 1878 (C.2220, p.386).

river; Cetshwayo had on that occasion respected the territory as Boer territory, and had treated with the Boers for the surrender of his brother. There was also the fact that he had in 1877 restricted his claim to the land east of the Blood river. It was certainly true that the Zulu people had never formally and explicitly sanctioned the cession of the territory; but they had acquiesced in, recognized, and therefore given a tacit sanction to, the Boer sovereignty over the area.

As regards the territory east of the line C - C, the Zulus had never acquiesced in the Boer claims to this part of the disputed territory, but had on the contrary always protested against them. The Commission went further than this and stated that officers of the Transvaal Government had never exercised jurisdiction in this area, and that the Boers had never occupied the territory in the sense of erecting homesteads there, but had only used the land for grazing. This was in fact not so; the Landdrost of Utrecht had exercised jurisdiction and homesteads had been built down to the line of the Old Hunting Road, which had been in practice the effective boundary of the Transvaal. It is true, however, that in the area between the line C - C and the old Hunting Road, there were Zulu kraals over which the Transvaal Government exercised no jurisdiction; an uneasy dual sovereignty in practice prevailed.⁴³ What the Commissioners said of the territory east of the line C - C was in fact true only of the territory on the Zulu side of the Old Hunting Road.⁴⁴ This does not affect the essential justice of the Commissioners' award; the Transvaal had failed to prove the validity of the 'cession' on which it based its full claim, and so was awarded only the territory that had been recognized in practice

43. Vide supra, p. 32.

44. This confusion probably arose as a result of the Transvaal's claim that the Old Hunting Road was the line ceded in 1854. Statements by Rudolph regarding the land on the Zululand side of the "1854 line", meaning the Old Hunting Road, would be interpreted by the Commissioners as meaning the land on the Zululand side of the line C - C.

by the Zulus as belonging to the Boers.

The Commission's terms of reference empowered it to investigate only the border dispute in the territory south of the Pongola. Having recommended the line C - C as the fairest boundary in this area, the Commissioners concluded by urging that a similar line should be settled in the area north of the Pongola.

Bulwer was satisfied with the Report, and saw no reason to differ materially from its main conclusions and recommendations; but he pointed out, as we have done, that the Commissioners' statements about the Boers' non-occupation and non-exercise of sovereignty in the area east of the line C - C were more strictly applicable only to the area on the Zulu side of the Old Hunting Road.⁴⁵

Sir Bartle Frere, however, found the Commissioners' conclusions not at all to his liking. He had assumed that the Zulus would prove to have been the aggressors, and he had based all his plans for dealing with them on this assumption. The Commission's decision in favour of the Zulus upset his plans and forced him radically to re-think his policy.

Sir Bartle Frere will occupy the centre of the stage from now on. It will therefore be convenient at this point to say a little more about him.

Henry Bartle Edward Frere was born in 1815 of an old-established family. In 1834 he left England to join the East India Company. After occupying a number of minor posts he was in 1847 appointed Resident in the native state of Sattara in the Deccan. In 1851 he became Commissioner in Sind, and it was while he occupied this position that the Mutiny broke out, in which he distinguished himself by his energy and courage. He served on the Viceroy's Council from 1859 to 1862, and was then appointed Governor of Bombay. From 1867 to 1877 Frere served on the India Council in London. During this time he also undertook a successful mission

45. Bulwer to Frere, 17 July, 1878 (G.H. 638, No.112).

to put an end to the slave trade in Zanzibar (1872-3), and accompanied the Prince of Wales to India in 1875 and 1876.⁴⁶ In early 1877, he retired from the Council of India "ripe in years, honour and ability".⁴⁷ He has been described as "an English Christian gentleman of a very high type".⁴⁸ He united deep religious convictions with administrative skill and vigour and an ability to win the trust and affection of the native people under his control. In 1877 he could look back on an unblemished career. He had been rewarded with a baronetcy, a G.C.B., and an honorary D.C.L. from Oxford; he was a Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Royal Asiatic Society, and was regarded as an authority on Asian affairs.

In October 1876, Lord Carnarvon wrote to ask him to go to South Africa "nominally as Governor, but really as the statesman.... most capable of carrying my scheme of Confederation into effect," and to become "the first Governor-General of the South African Dominion."⁴⁹ This would seem to be a fitting climax to an illustrious career; in the event, South Africa, the grave-yard of reputations, brought him nothing but obloquy and a premature death.

Frere arrived at Cape Town on 31 March, 1877. Twelve days later Shepstone annexed the Transvaal. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that this spelt the ruin of Frere's policy and of his reputation; for, by antagonizing the Afrikaners, not only of the Transvaal but of all South Africa, it put an end to any hope of confederation; and it made virtually inevitable the Zulu War, for which Frere was censured and eventually recalled. The opposition to British rule in the Transvaal, however, took time to develop. On 8 May, 1877, Frere wrote to Shepstone:

"All here seem to acquiesce in the wisdom and necessity of

46. Worsfold, chapters 1-4.

47. Speech by Lord Carnarvon, 28 February 1877 (Carnarvon, p.242).

48. Brookes & Webb, p.127.

49. Worsfold, p.49.

your proceedings - though, as you may suppose, some regret the necessity. I feel quite sure a vast majority will support you"⁵⁰

Although he told Carnarvon that annexation had "startled and alarmed" many of the Dutch, he also stated that it had "immensely strengthened" the supporters of Confederation.⁵¹

But Frere had little time to make plans for federating South Africa, for within a few months of his arrival war broke out on the Cape eastern frontier, which had previous to this enjoyed 25 years of peace. By November, 1877, the war against Kreli's Galekas appeared to be over; but in the following month they resumed the struggle, joined this time by many kindred tribes living as British subjects to the east of the Kei. By February 1878, the Galekas were virtually defeated, but the rebellious tribes within the Cape Colony were not finally put down until the end of June, 1878. The Transkeian territories were not annexed but the tribes were brought under closer European control. Frere had no wish to preserve the independence of the tribes to the north of the Cape. His Indian experience had taught him that a strong and civilized state was sooner or later driven by circumstances to take over control of a weak and uncivilized neighbour; and he believed that the opportunities for achieving this end by peaceful and mutually beneficial processes should be taken advantage of and not evaded, for such evasion would eventually result only in the inevitable step being taken by means of war.⁵² The policy he favoured, as applied to South Africa, is expressed very clearly in his private letter to Lord Carnarvon of 10 August, 1878.

"You must be master" he wrote, "as representative of the sole sovereign power, up to the Portuguese frontier on both the East and West coasts. There is no escaping from the responsibility which has been already incurred, ever since the English flag was planted on the Castle here.

All our real difficulties have arisen, and still arise, from attempting to evade or shift this responsibility. The attempt

50. Frere to Shepstone, 8 May, 1877 (S.P. Case 15). See also his letters to Shepstone of 15 and 29 May.

51. Private, Frere to Carnarvon, 22 May, 1877 (Worsfold, p.58).

52. Worsfold, p.20.

always ends in, and can have no other result than that of substituting the gun-runners and conteen-keepers for the English magistrate. There is often an interregnum of Missionary influences, but guns and brandy carry the day ultimately, unless there is a civilized magistrate of a settled government to keep peace and enforce order.

I have heard of no difficulty in managing and civilizing native tribes in South Africa, which I cannot trace to some neglect or attempt to evade the clear responsibilities of sovereignty. Nothing is easier, as far as I can see, than to govern the natives here, if you act as master - but if you abdicate the Sovereign position, the abdication has always to be heavily paid for, in both blood and treasure....."⁵³

By the middle of 1878 the war on the eastern frontier of the Cape was over. But it seemed to have served as a signal to tribes in all parts of South Africa. From October, 1877, relations between the British and the Zulus sharply deteriorated and war seemed imminent. In February, 1878, Sekukuni resumed the war against the Transvaal. In April a general rebellion of many tribes broke out in Griqualand West, and there was trouble in East Griqualand, Pondoland, Basutoland, and in the northern Transvaal. It is not surprising that it should seem to Frere, with his memories of the Indian Mutiny, that a general rebellion of black against white was at hand.

Rumours of such an inter-tribal conspiracy had been prevalent ever since the Transvaal's defeat at the hands of Sekukuni.⁵⁴ In November, 1876, Bulwer had reported that he had received information that Cetshwayo had been

"sounding the way with a view to the combination of the different races against the White men. Whether that combination has been effected, or whether it can be effected, we are not in a position yet to form an opinion; but that messages have been passing on the subject between Cetshwayo and the other Native Chiefs there can be little doubt."⁵⁵

Shepstone's principal justification for his annexation of the Transvaal had been the supposed peril in which that country, and the white communities throughout South Africa generally, had been placed by the damage to the prestige of the white man which the

53. Ibid., p.84.

54. Vide supra, p.p.142-3.

55. Confidential, Bulwer to Carnarvon, 2 November, 1876 (G.H. 299, p.65).

war with Sekukuni had caused.⁵⁶ The Sekukuni war, he wrote, had

"sent the thrilling intelligence through all the immense masses of natives between the Zambesi on the north and Cape Colony on the south that the relative positions of the white and black man had become seriously changed; and had prompted the thought that the supremacy of barbarism was no longer hopeless provided only that the effort be well planned and simultaneously executed."⁵⁷

Sir Bartle Frere's background and circumstances made him peculiarly susceptible to theories of this kind, and he soon became the most convinced and eloquent supporter of the belief in a vast inter-tribal conspiracy against the white man. In October, 1877, he wrote to Shepstone:

"Many little facts, trivial in themselves, but pointing in one direction have come to light tending to show that there was a vague idea of a great Kaffir combination against the whites...

I can make out nothing more definite than that messengers have been sent during the past few months in various directions, to live for weeks at the kraals of Tembus, Podos, etc., talking, after their vague fashion, with a view on each side to find out what the other means to do, without committing oneself to anything."⁵⁸

Frere seems to have been referring here only to the tribes on the eastern frontier of the Cape.⁵⁹ But he soon came to believe that the spirit of plotting had infected all the tribes of South Africa. In March, 1878, he wrote to Herbert:

"I do not think I ever expressed to you my conviction which has been gradually and unwillingly growing that Shepstone and others of experience in the country, were right as to the existence of a wish among the great chiefs to make this war a general and simultaneous rising of Kaffirdom against white civilization.

I did not at first believe it, owing to the obvious selfishness and fondness for isolation which characterizes the feelings and actions of all chiefs, great and small, and prevents effectual and continuous combination of any kind for any common purpose.

But the conviction has been forced on me by a hundred little bits of evidence from different quarters, that though they are incapable of combination and compact in our fashion of leagues and treaties for a common object, there was a widespread feeling among them, from Secocoeni to Sandilli, that the time was come for them all to join to resist the flood of new ideas and ways which threatened to sweep away the idle, sensuous elysium of Kaffirdom, such as Gaika and Chaka and Dingaana fought for and enjoyed; that they too had got guns and could shoot as well or better than the white man, and had, besides, numbers

56. Proclamation by Shepstone, 12 April, 1877, enclosure in Shepstone to Carnarvon, 17 April, 1877 (C. 1776, p.157).

57. Copy, Shepstone to Carnarvon, 6 March, 1877 (G.H. 348).

58. Frere to Shepstone, 28 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 15).

59. The term "Kaffirs" was sometimes used at this time to refer only to the eastern frontier tribes, not including the Zulus, etc.

and valour on their side; that all they wanted was union and discipline, etc."

There had lately, he stated, been numerous messages between chiefs in which these ideas had been hinted at.

"Thus a mission comes from the Zulus to the Pondos about a marriage, and in the course of an audience the Zulu envoy observes that Cetywayo's English cow (Shepstone) had neglected her own calf (the Zulus) and was giving milk to a strange calf (the Transvaal Boers). And according to the tone or emphasis of the Pondo Chief's grunts on hearing this news, he will go on and develop his views or drop the subject."⁶⁰

He believed that the war on the eastern frontier was only "a premonitory symptom, appearing a little before its proper time," of this widespread native unrest.⁶¹

Frere communicated his views on this subject to Sir Henry Bulwer,⁶² whose reply deserves to be quoted at length, since it constitutes the wisest and justest comment that can be made on a subject about which definite proof is necessarily difficult or impossible to obtain.

"Your Excellency refers to the recent events which have taken place, to the indications of native feeling which have shown themselves in several parts of South Africa. It is, I believe, beyond question the case, as pointed out in your Despatch, that the acquisition of late years of fire-arms - the weapon of the white-man - has had a considerable influence on the mind of the natives, it having given them a feeling of greater confidence as to their ability to contend with the white-man than they ever formerly possessed. It is the case also, I believe, that the circumstances of the Sikukuni war in 1876, exaggerated and spread abroad over the country, strengthened that feeling of confidence; and these are considerations which cannot be lost sight of in dealing with the questions that arise."

But on the question of the degree of connection between different native populations and events, he wrote:

"Hitherto there has been nothing to show that what has taken place in different parts of the country are portions of any general combination, movement or understanding among the natives. No doubt the events that are passing in one part of the country will be known, more or less correctly, and discussed in other parts of the country. What has been recently passing on the Cape frontier, for instance, will doubtless form the subject of discussion in native kraals from the Kei River to the Zambesi. To some extent there will be direct

60. Frere to Herbert, 18 March, 1877, quoted in Martineau, pp.223-4.

61. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 April, 1878, quoted in Worsfold, p.70.

62. Frere to Bulwer, 7 May, 1878 (G.H.353)

communications passing between tribes immediately concerned and other tribes which are not concerned. Communications also between the various Chiefs will be more frequent in such times than at other times. The Zulu King will probably have his messengers in every country, the bearer of a friendly message of greeting from him asking news, feeling the way, ascertaining the views of the Chief to whom they are sent. To some extent also whatever is passing in one part of the country and with one tribe will affect other tribes in other parts of the country, perhaps unsettling or exciting them, perhaps only interesting them. But there has been nothing as yet to show that what has taken place up to this has arisen from or has been a part of any general combination or movement.

What has hitherto taken place - whether it has been actual disturbance, or an indication of disturbing elements at work - can all, I believe, be traced to local causes and influences, independent of one another."

He detailed as instances, the Cape frontier war, and the disturbances in East Griqualand.

"The conduct of Sikukuni is doubtless, at present, influenced by the condition of things outside his own district, but it dates from his differences with the Government of the Republic in 1876, and was due to the policy and the action of the Republic; while the state of uneasiness and the disturbing influences at work among the Zulus have been entirely due to their disputes with the Republic in its dealings with them, and if they exist now they exist because the disputes themselves still remain unsettled.

In all that has happened, then, the causes can, I think, be clearly traced home to local circumstances; and the fact that notwithstanding the troubles on either side of us the large native population of Natal has remained perfectly quiet and undisturbed is a strong proof that up to this time, no matter what communications may have passed between different Chiefs and different tribes, if there has been an attempt to bring about such a movement it has not yet succeeded."

It was possible that the various elements of disturbance might be brought together in one general movement; this should be avoided by localising every trouble and

"dealing with it separately and distinctly as a separate and distinct matter - and by treating in the usual manner and with the usual confidence all those which are not concerned with it....."63

Frere did not accept Bulwer's point of view.

"Of concerted movement, treaty, or formal combination, we have indeed found no evidence; but everywhere we find proofs of strong sympathy and community of aspirations for a trial of strength with the white man, having in view his expulsion from South Africa.

Mutual jealousies, and the impossibility of trusting each other seem effectually to have prevented, in most cases, unity of action among native tribes; but, in every case where a chief has broken out, we have found clear proof that a rising has

been the subject of secret discussions, and embassies from tribe to tribe, for months previous. The proceedings of the enemy have always been half-hearted, often frivolous, and even childish, when judged by their results; but there is little room for question as to their objects."

The local causes to which Bulwer referred seemed to Frere to be "but the match applied to the train already laid."⁶⁴

Frere stuck consistently to his theory. Even after the Zulu War he was still seeing plots and combinations' everywhere. His theories received a characteristically peremptory dismissal at the hands of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was no doubt influenced by Bulwer. In September, 1879, he wrote to Frere:

"The statement contained in the fifth paragraph of your Excellency's letter that 'the Pondo difficulty is clearly and obviously a branch of the Zulus difficulty', is one which I regret I am in no way able to accept as a correct view of the question. On the contrary, in my opinion - an opinion concurred in by those best acquainted with Zulu affairs - the Pondo troubles, and the war with Ketchwayo, have no connexion whatever one with the other."⁶⁵

At this stage, when Frere was still principally concerned with the war on the eastern frontier, he does not seem to have reached the conclusion he later came to when in Natal, that Cetshwayo was the prime organiser and moving spirit of the great conspiracy against the white man. Nevertheless, it is apparent that almost from the first, he had decided that the independence of Zululand would have to be brought to an end. From his general remarks on the necessity of establishing British sovereignty over savage countries abutting on British colonies⁶⁶ it would be easy to infer what his views concerning the continued independence of Zululand were likely to be; but such a process of inference is unnecessary, as he makes it plain, in many letters and despatches, that he was convinced that Cetshwayo and the Zulu military kingdom were a menace to peace and security and would have to be destroyed.

He had not been long in South Africa before he began receiving, from missionaries and others, representations as to the cruelty and

64. Frere to Bulwer, 25 June, 1878 (G.H. 354).

65. Wolseley to Frere, 10 September, 1879 (C.2482, p.283).

66. Vide supra, pp.319-20.

oppressiveness of Cetshwayo's rule. He wrote to ask Shepstone what he thought of them.⁶⁷ Shepstone replied that he believed that during the preceding twelve months Cetshwayo had been "guilty of some terrible atrocities among his people..." He stated that he attributed "the great change in his conduct to the effect of the Boer defeat by Sikukuni on his vanity." Why his vanity should take the form of practising cruelties upon his own subjects, Shepstone did not explain. Probably what he meant was that formerly Cetshwayo had ruled mildly only out of deference to the British Government. He concluded:

I do not think that there would be much difficulty in establishing British rule in Zululand when we are ready for it and our security will sooner or later demand it but we cannot have too many irons in the fire at once and I have plenty to do here for the present."⁶⁸

As a pious Christian, Frere was affronted by Cetshwayo's low opinion of missionary endeavour, and revolted by the stories of his cruelties. These were internal matters, but Frere was also alarmed at the danger of Zulu aggression. The military nature of the Zulu state seemed to him to make it inevitable. With his customary eloquence he wrote to Shepstone in October, 1877:

"I cannot see how the present state of things there can last. If there is any truth in the pictures drawn by Fynney as well as others, of the Zulu force, its maintenance must be a burden far beyond the power of such a territory and people as the Zulus to support, without a constant succession of foreign wars, and 'eating-up' of the conquered after the orthodox Kaffir fashion. To maintain a standing army of 40,000 unmarried young men, would task the resources of a country as rich as populous and industrious as Belgium, and if Cetywayo can manage it, without a constant succession of conquests, he is fit to be War Minister to any great Military power in Europe."⁶⁹

Shepstone pointed out that Frere's account of the Zulu army was somewhat exaggerated, but he agreed that "the maintenance of the Zulu military force under present circumstances is a burden much too heavy for the Zulu people long to bear."⁷⁰

67. Frere to Shepstone, 31 May, 1877 (S.P. Case 15).

68. Shepstone to Frere, 20 June, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.214).

69. Frere to Shepstone, 28 October, 1877 (S.P. Case 15).

70. Shepstone to Frere, 23 November, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.291).

Frere agreed to Bulwer's arrangements for arbitration in the border dispute, but had no hope of its securing permanent peace as long as Zululand remained independent.

"I cannot say that I see much hope of any permanent peace being attainable by means of intervention at the present stage. I should rather expect, from what you have sent me on the subject, that the Zulu King like many other Military Despots, will be willing to accept an intervention which may give him what he desires without fighting for it; but that he will not accept with equal readiness any decision adverse to his own claims; and he will always be able to avail himself of the pretext that he has already frequently put forward, by saying that though himself anxious for peace, he dare not act counter to the will of his warriors. Unless both Cetywayo and his army and people have been greatly misrepresented, I do not see what reasonable hope we can entertain of their laying aside schemes of Military Conquest, and taking to the ways of peace. Fear of internal discords, or dread of provoking a contest with the British Power, may keep them quiet for a while; but unless Cetywayo were to change his nature, or be superseded by some equally powerful despot of exceptional sagacity, I do not see where the restraining pacific element is to come from; and if Cetywayo were to get all that he demands, without a trial of strength, his subsequently remaining content with what he had got would be a phenomenon which the usual habits of Military despotism, civilized as well as uncivilized, hardly justifies our expecting. Even if immediate hostilities be averted our position must, I fear, long continue to be one of armed observation, ready to defend ourselves against further aggression; but this, in my opinion, only makes it more desirable that, before hostilities commence, there should be no reasonable room for doubt as to the justice of all our claims."⁷¹

On 10 April, 1878, the last day of the sitting of the Border Commission at Rorke's Drift, Frere told Commodore Sullivan, in the words of the latter's report,

"that as it appeared almost certain that serious complications must shortly arise with the Zulu tribe of Kaffirs on the borders of Natal and the Transvaal, which will necessitate active operations, he considered it better that the 'Active' should remain here in order to render such assistance by sea and land as may be practicable, to co-operate with the Lieutenant-General and his forces....."⁷²

Frere's views regarding the future of Zululand were reinforced by Shepstone. In Colenso's ringing phrase, Shepstone, after his rebuff by the Zulus at the meeting on 18 October, "sounds now aloud the tocsin of war against the Zulus, and raises the cry, Delendus

71. Frere to Bulwer, 26 January, 1878 (G.H.352).

72. Commodore Sullivan to the Secretary to the Navy, 12 April, 1878, enclosure in Admiralty to Colonial Office, 22 May, 1878 (C.2144, p.32).

est Cetshwayo."⁷³ Colenso was referring to his public despatches,⁷⁴ but the same theme is heard in his private letters to Frere.

"One thing is quite certain", he wrote on 7 December, 1877, "that if we are forced into hostilities we cannot stop short of breaking down the Zulu power which after all is the root and real strength of all native difficulties in South Africa."⁷⁵

"I am fully satisfied" he wrote a month later, "that no permanent peace can be hoped for until the Zulu power has been broken up."⁷⁶

Between Frere and Bulwer there was considerably less agreement. Frere informed the Governor of Natal in May 1878 of his conviction that Cetshwayo was bent on war - that no possible concession to Zulu demands would "render our Frontier more secure against further unjust aggression by the Zulu Chief and his Allies." He pointed to Cetshwayo's remarks to Fynney, when the latter visited him after the annexation of the Transvaal, as proof of the former's warlike intentions.

"At a time when he had every reason to expect that profound peace and freedom from aggressive wars would be secured by British Supremacy throughout all neighbouring kingdoms and provinces, the Zulu chief plainly indicated his desire to have a 'washing of his young men's spears', in other words, a bloody war, which, as he had no reason to fear one of necessary self-defence, could be only a wanton war of aggression, by his own warriors on some neighbour."

At first it seemed that he intended the Swazis to be his victims. Later events showed that it was the Boers on whom he wished to make a "little raid". Frere thought it very possible that Cetshwayo hoped his allies, the British, would not object to his sharing in what he regarded as the British conquest of the Transvaal, and that they would allow him to gain the territory he claimed by "washing his spears", rather than by peaceful cession. Whatever Cetshwayo's views then, there seemed to Frere "little room for hoping that Cetshwayo has not any other intention than to obtain and hold by force what he has claimed..."⁷⁷

73. Cox, p.455.

74. Vide supra, p.280-282.

75. Shepstone to Frere, 7 December, 1877 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.300).

76. Shepstone to Frere, 8 January, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.319).

77. Frere to Bulwer, 7 May, 1878 (S.P. 257).

Bulwer's reply, though not an unqualified defence of Cetshwayo, put his actions in a more favourable light. He strongly doubted whether Cetshwayo really intended to make good his entire claim by force, or whether he really expected to get all he had formally laid claim to. But for a portion of the land he claimed, there was no doubt that the assertion was something more than empty words. There was no doubt that the relations between the Zulus and the English were not what they were. Until 1876 Cetshwayo was anxious to keep on good terms with the English, as represented by the Natal Government, as an insurance against the encroachments of the Boers. The failure of the Boers against Sekukuni removed the Zulus' fear of the Transvaal. "The necessity for English protection was no longer an argument for deference to English counsels, and the King could take a more independent line." Nevertheless, although he, and his younger warriors, probably desired war with the Transvaal, he was withheld from doing so by the more prudent part of the nation who were indisposed to take action which it was known would be disapproved of by the English.

The Zulus were thus in a state of uneasiness and excitement when the Transvaal was annexed. Frere had suggested that this, by guaranteeing peace, should have set their minds at rest. Bulwer pointed out that, in fact, it was not calculated to do so. At first the Zulus were bewildered, but then saw that their enemies, the Boers, were now under the protection of their friends, the English. This filled the Zulus with surprise and disappointment and disquietude for their own interests, for the report got abroad that Zululand was next to be annexed.

"Moreover the redress which they had so long and, it must be admitted, so patiently waited for, of their alleged grievances against the Transvaal Boers seemed further off and more hopeless than ever, for it had been to the English (through the Natal Government) that they had represented and had been for years representing these grievances, it had been the influence and counsels of the English which had so often held them back from attempting to redress those grievances themselves by force, it was the English to whom they had consequently come to look for their redress, and now it was the English who, as it seemed to them, had actually gone over to the side of the Transvaal and taken the Boers under their protection.

The feeling of surprise, then, was soon followed by feelings of distrust, resentment, and apprehension; and, at the same time, there grew upon the nation a strong determination to resist any attempt to take from (them) the land which they held to be, beyond all dispute, a part of Zulu territory. Add to these the desire of the younger men for war, the unsatisfied vanity of the King who had not, after the manner of Zulu Kings, washed his assegais since his accession, and we cannot fail, I think, to discern some explanation of the recent conduct and bearing of the Zulus."

Bulwer felt that Cetshwayo's former protestations of friendship for the English had been insincere and based on expediency; he admitted that the young men were filled with bombast and that many wanted war; but he maintained that a large part of the Zulu nation would deplore a war with the English, towards whom they were genuinely friendly. Nevertheless, he warned that every man in Zululand would support Cetshwayo over the disputed territory.⁷⁸

But Frere was incapable of seeing any good in Cetshwayo, or of putting any but the worst interpretation on the actions of the Zulus. He remained convinced of the aggressive intentions of the Zulu King. There were, however, other factors which led him to desire the overthrow of Cetshwayo. One of the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm in the Cape for Carnarvon's Confederation scheme, which Frere had been sent out to implement, was the fear that it would result in the Cape's having to shoulder the burden of the defence of the other, weaker, and poorer members of the proposed federation.⁷⁹ Another factor was that the apparent weakness of the British in the face of Zulu bluster and aggression was encouraging the spirit of rebelliousness which Frere was convinced was spreading amongst the black tribes of South Africa. Shepstone had urged that if Cetshwayo were firmly dealt with, the unrest throughout the country would subside. In Frere's view, Cetshwayo was a cruel and oppressive ruler. This in itself was a good reason why a great Christian power should free the Zulu people from his tyranny, and moreover, it rendered it likely that, in the event of

78. Bulwer to Frere, 12 June, 1878 (G.H.638 No.96).

79. Walker: History of South Africa, p.377.

a war with Britain, little fighting would be necessary, and the Zulu state would collapse from within. In this view Frere was also supported by Shepstone. Cetshwayo's, and his young warriors', longing to wash their spears made war in Frere's eyes all but inevitable. He was certain that the Zulus would never accept a decision adverse to their claims in regard to the disputed territory without recourse to war. And it is clear from his correspondence that he expected the Report of the Boundary Commissioners to be adverse to the Zulu claims. When therefore he received Bulwer's despatch of 8 July, 1878, enclosing the Report, his calculations were completely upset.

Frere was aware of the growing disaffection of the Transvaal Boers towards British rule, and of the necessity of reconciling them to it if any hope were to be retained of bringing about confederation. What chance would there be of this if the British authorities handed over to the Zulus cultivated farms, from which, in many instances, the latter had driven the Boers and other settlers by threats of violence? These exasperated farmers might well resist any such attempt, take the law into their own hands and kindle war.

"Even if they trek away they will carry discontent wherever they go. and furnish the Boer Agitators with a convincing proof of their charges of bad faith against our Government. Security against Native aggression, and the integrity of the Transvaal boundary were among the prominent points guaranteed to the Inhabitants of the Transvaal when they were taken over, and it will be difficult to maintain that promises have been kept in the presence of Boers, Missionaries, and other settlers driven away with the loss of all their immovable property from lands which the late Transvaal Government maintained, and the present Transvaal Government believes they were justly entitled to occupy as on Transvaal territory...."⁸⁰

To Bulwer, who was not directly concerned with or responsible for the amiability of the Transvaal Boers, the question of justice towards the Zulus seemed more important. He denied that Britain, having annexed the Transvaal was bound to maintain the line of 1861. They had taken over, not a boundary, but a disputed boundary.⁸¹

80. Frere to Bulwer, 15 July, 1878 (G.H. 354).

81. Bulwer to Frere, 3 August, 1878 (G.H. 870).

The plight of the Utrecht Boers aroused far less sympathy in him. Reports from the border he considered much exaggerated. The recent action of the Zulus had been taken to prevent the Boers returning to their farms from which they had retired in December, 1877 (on the advice of Shepstone) in expectation of an outbreak of war. Their return, before the Commission had reported, was looked on by the Zulus as a disturbance of the status quo, and was resisted as such. In general, the plight of the Utrecht Boers was the result of the Transvaal's aggression against the Zulus:

"and now when the day of settlement has come they may turn round and say that they are the aggrieved and that the Zulus are the aggressors. Nay, it is not difficult for them to persuade themselves now that this is so; but we must, if the action of the Zulus has been of late of an aggressive character, not forget that it is aggression by those who hold themselves to be the aggrieved and that it has been in vindication of Zulu rights suffering injury from alleged Transvaal aggression."⁸²

Frere's first instinct was to overthrow the inconvenient conclusions of the Border Commission. He wrote to Shepstone asking for his opinion and comments on the Report.⁸³ Shepstone replied that, although Bulwer's original programme had been that both he and Cetshwayo should be informed of the Commission's conclusions,⁸⁴ he had heard nothing except that the Report had been sent to Frere.⁸⁵ Frere therefore requested Bulwer to send Shepstone a copy of the Report.⁸⁶ Shepstone received his copy on 31 August, but Cetshwayo was left in suspense until December. Shepstone's preliminary unofficial comments confirmed Frere's fears of the disastrous political effects the publication and implementation of the Report would be likely to have.

"I very much regret", wrote Shepstone, "the tone in which the report is written and fear that, when it is published, it will produce a bad effect upon the minds of the Transvaal people; they will chafe terribly under both the scant courtesy

82. Bulwer to Frere, 12 August, 1878 (G.H. 870, No.125).

83. Frere to Shepstone, 23 July, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

84. Bulwer to Shepstone, 8 January, 1878 (G.H. 637, No.3).

85. Shepstone to Bulwer, 13 August, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 2, p.92).

86. Frere to Shepstone, 27 August, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

with which they are spoken of, and the decision itself."⁸⁷

He promised to send Frere officially his detailed criticisms of the Report later. "I intend to assail it with all my might" he wrote to his son, Henrique⁸⁸; but it was not until November that Frere received his official comments. By that time, Frere had decided on his strategy, and Shepstone's comments were more or less irrelevant.

In the meantime, Frere raised a number of objections to the conclusions of the Commission. He questioned the original rights of the Zulus to the territory. Both the Boers and the Zulus, he stated, were semi-migratory peoples without fixed and definite boundaries.

"I confess", he wrote, "I fail to find in the recorded history of either people, any better claim which either party could advance to the lands they stood on than that of possession, and power to hold and govern..."⁸⁹

This seems to imply that since the Zulu claim to the territory rested only on conquest and occupation, the fact that the Boers had wrested the territory from them should be held to constitute a claim of equal or greater validity. Frere later explicitly stated something very like this in a passage which, for sanctimonious humbug, could hardly be bettered.

"Pure brutal force constituted the sole recognized local title to possession; the Boers had force of their own, and every right of conquest; but they had also what they seriously believed to be a higher title in the old commands they found in parts of their Bible to exterminate the Gentiles and take their land in possession. We may freely admit that they misinterpreted the text, and were utterly mistaken in its application, but they had at least a sincere belief in the divine authority for what they did, and therefore a far higher title than the Zulus could claim for all they acquired."⁹⁰

But eventually Frere was forced to concede the validity of the original Zulu rights to the territory, as even the Transvaal had

87. Shepstone to Frere, 2 September, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.104).

88. Shepstone to H.C. Shepstone, 3 September, 1878 (S.P. Case 29).

89. Minute by Frere, 1 August, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Bulwer, 9 August, 1878 (G.H.355).

90. Minute by Frere, n.d., enclosure 9 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.45).

not disputed this, and indeed had based its claim on an alleged cession by the Zulus of the land in question.

Another point raised by Frere was the rejection by the Commissioners of the documentary evidence put forward by the Transvaal. He recognized that written agreements between literate and illiterate parties were necessarily open to suspicion, but he considered that they should not have been rejected unless it could be shown that the suspicious circumstances could have been obviated by anything the party which produced the documents could have done. But he did not see what more the Transvaal envoys could have done in reducing to writing the terms of a bargain between the Zulus and the Transvaal. "That all these persons belonged to one of the parties to the supposed bargain may expose the document to suspicion but will not necessarily destroy its credibility." He suspected that the Commissioners rejected the documents because they did not trust the Transvaal signatories - but they had not stated sufficient grounds for believing that so many men of repute should have conspired to perpetrate such a fraud.⁹¹

The Commissioners in their reply to this, pointed out that it was not simply the circumstances in which the documents had been drawn up that exposed them to suspicion, but also the nature of the documents themselves. Could any confidence, they asked, be reposed in the authors of a document⁹² dated 16 March which purported to describe events which did not take place until 16 May? The principal document upon which the Transvaal based its claim, that dated 28 and 29 March, 1861,⁹³ though originally handed in as an original, was subsequently admitted to be a copy made on 1 April. The time and date of Cetshwayo's alleged signature were inserted by a man who was not present when Cetshwayo was supposed to have

91. Minute by Frere, 1 August, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Bulwer, 9 August, 1878 (G.H.355).

92. Referred to as Document I in Chapter 2, supra.

93. Referred to as Document II in Chapter 2, supra.

signed it, and the document handed in to the Commissioners was not identical to the copy sent to the Natal Government in 1865. Mpande's alleged ratification of August, 1861,⁹⁴ was not a ratification at all, but a promise to give the "same piece of ground that was asked from Cetywayo, as Cetywayo had no power to give it, as far as the Captains point it out." But, commented the Commissioners, no evidence was adduced "that any land was pointed out by Panda's captains, or subsequently granted, whether in writing or verbally, by Panda to the Land Commission appointed by the Transvaal, or any other persons on behalf of that Government."

These considerations, together with those we have put forward in Chapter II above, show that the documents relied on by the Transvaal, far from being, as Frere claimed, as free from suspicion as the circumstances permitted, were as irregular and unsatisfactory as they could well have been.

Nevertheless the Commission had admitted these documents as evidence, but as historical rather than as legal documents - "as a written narrative on the part of the Dutch relative to these land transactions rather than as binding treaties."⁹⁵ To this, Frere replied that while the documents had not been accepted as evidence for the Transvaal claims "they appear to have been allowed considerable weight in various ways in evidence against them. This course appears to me as of doubtful equity."⁹⁶

Frere remained convinced that Cetshwayo had promised land to the Boers in 1861 in order to regain the possession of his two brothers and rivals for the succession.

"Here was a strong motive why Cetywayo should make a cession, which at other times he would have refused; there appears no doubt that he did make some cession and got possession of the Princes of the Royal House."

94. Referred to as Document III in Chapter 2, supra.

95. Replies by the Border Commissioners, 27 September, 1878, to Frere's Minute of 1 August, 1878, enclosure 7 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.38).

96. Memorandum by Frere, n.d., enclosure 8 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.42)

He added that Mpande "subsequently repudiated the cession, and that Cetywayo acquiesced and now acquiesces in the repudiation...."⁹⁷

The most he would admit was that the documentary evidence was imperfect, or that there were legal technicalities which rendered the cession invalid. There was a good deal of correspondence and argument on the question of whether the Zulu King had the right to cede land without the concurrence of the Zulu nation as a whole, as expressed by some form of National Council. This was really irrelevant, as the Commission had decided that neither Cetywayo nor Mpande had ever promised, even informally, to cede land to the Boers. But Frere persistently represented the Commission as having decided against the Transvaal on this purely technical ground alone. Thus, in a despatch to the Secretary of State he wrote:

"There was no doubt a promise of cession of territory to the Boers made by Cetywayo and acquiesced in by Panda. But the enquiries of the Rorke's Drift Boundary Commission show, I think, clearly that Panda endeavoured to retract his consent when he became aware of the extent of the cession; that Cetywayo endeavoured to evade performance of his promises as soon as he had got the price paid for them in the surrender of his rivals to the succession; and that, between them, the father and son contrived to avoid completing either the deed of gift, or de facto delivery of possession, and were successful up to the annexation of the Transvaal to the British Empire in evading the performance of their promises."⁹⁸

In a Memorandum setting out the official causes of the war, which he forwarded to Bulwer for distribution and publicity on 13 January, 1879 (at this stage the Commissioners' Report itself had not been published), he wrote:

"The Commission ultimately decided that Cetywayo's cession of a tract of land, relied on by the Transvaal claim, was promised when he was only Heir Apparent, and that the cession had not been subsequently formally ratified by his father, Panda, nor by the Great Council of the Zulu nation."⁹⁹

Frere eventually abandoned any pretence of accepting the Commissioners' conclusions. In June, 1879, he wrote to the Secretary of State:

97. Ibid., pp.43-4.

98. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 2 December, 1877 (C.2222, p.130).

99. Memorandum by Frere, n.d., (G.H.359).

"The Commissioners had taken what appeared to me to be a far from impartial view of the merits of the case as gathered from the evidence the Commission recorded.

I say this without for a moment impugning the good faith, ability or just intentions of the Commissioners; but they seemed to me from their report (and my opinion was confirmed by subsequent personal observation) to be subject to strong prejudice in favour of the Zulus and against the Transvaal claims, prejudices which, however unavoidable and even fitting in an advocate chosen by the Zulus to represent them, would quite incapacitate the Commissioners from being impartial judges."¹⁰⁰

The arguments between Frere, Bulwer and the Commissioners were conducted over many months, at first by letter, and when Frere arrived in Natal, by personal discussion. Frere evidently argued with terrier-like persistence. A friend of Colonel Durnford's (one of the Commissioners) wrote at this time:

"I met him coming out of Government House one afternoon, looking tired to death; he said he had been 'fighting hard' for his report since early morning, and that some hours' close argument alone with Sir Bartle Frere was fatiguing, or words to that effect."¹⁰¹

Frere continued to urge Shepstone to send his comments on the Border Report with the least possible delay, but it was not until November that he received them. In the meantime, Shepstone continued to assure Frere of the disastrous effects the Commissioners' decision would have in the Transvaal.

"I quite agree with you", he wrote, "in your estimate of the magnitude of the difficulty which the Report of the Boundary Commissioners has created, the fact that it is adverse is difficulty enough; but the worst part of it is its insulting tone and the cynical language towards the Transvaal people which pervade it from beginning to end; and the effect upon the latter of its publication will be most unfortunate."

He stated that ex-President Pretorius had been to see him.

"He had somehow heard", he reported, "that the Report of the Boundary Commission was adverse to the Transvaal and was very indignant about it, he said that the short time he had had opportunity of witnessing the proceedings at Rorke's Drift had convinced him that their decision would be adverse and he had expressed that opinion at the time. The fact is he said they were resolved to carry out the prejudice of Natal against the Transvaal, but we will never submit to it. What he will think when he reads the document is evident."¹⁰²

100. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 June, 1879 (C.2454, p.130).

101. Durnford, p.194.

102. Shepstone to Frere, 12 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, pp.130-1).

It must have been the manner in which the Commissioners took down their tents and stowed them on their wagons that convinced Pretorius of their antipathy towards the Transvaal case, for Henrique Shepstone's diary reveals that he arrived at Rorke's Drift only after the proceedings had ended, when the participants were packing up to go.¹⁰³

Although Frere was dissatisfied with the conclusions of the Commission, and convinced of the disastrous political effects they would have, he came to the conclusion that, being unable to show clearly and conclusively that they were false, he would have, in the circumstances, to go through the form of accepting them. The fact that a British colony, the Transvaal, was a party to the dispute, made it impossible for the British High Commissioner to set aside a decision reached by British judges.

"I have been working hard on the subject since I came here" (to Natal), he wrote to Shepstone on 7 October, "and have got many things which before were obscure cleared up. But I confess I do not feel more inclined than I was, at first, to concur with the Commission in the view they have taken.

But our own judges appointed by ourselves have affirmed (on what seems to me very insufficient evidence) that our rights are limited to a certain line, and I do not see how, in the face of such a decision, we can, without **serious** loss of character for justice, set aside their verdict and adopt another line to which our own Judges have said we have no right as heir of the T.V. Republic.

It seems to me that however inconvenient the consequences may be we must abide by them, and make the best of it."¹⁰⁴

It is clear that he decided to "make the best of it" by accepting the decision in principle, and nullifying it in practice. He hoped to achieve this by awarding the Zulus only the sovereignty of the disputed territory, and reserving to the Boer settlers in it their full rights of private property.

"It is intended" he wrote in a Memorandum published on 20 December, "that in that district individual rights of property which were obtained under the Transvaal Government shall be respected and maintained, so that any Transvaal farmers, who obtained rights from the Government of the Republic, and who may now elect to remain on the territory, may possess, under British guarantee, the same rights they would have possessed had they been grantees holding from the Zulu King, under the

103. Entry for 13 April, 1878 (S.P. Case 27).

104. Frere to Shepstone, 7 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

guarantee of the Great Zulu Council."¹⁰⁵

Bishop Colenso protested against the obvious injustice of restoring to Cetshwayo only a nominal sovereignty over the territory while denying the Zulus the use of the land which it had been decided was rightfully theirs.¹⁰⁶

Frere replied that during the long period of Transvaal occupation civilized rights had grown up in the disputed territory which it would be unjust to disregard or abolish. In the strictest possible legal view the British Government could claim no right, as representatives of the late Transvaal Government, to make over to Cetshwayo more than it itself possessed - namely, the sovereign rights over the land. The private property rights it was bound to secure to those who had enjoyed them.

"They would have been secured, as a matter of course, had the land been ceded to any civilized power by cession after conquest, or by any other of the most absolute means of asserting sovereignty."

"It is quite possible", added Frere, "that this is not what Cetshwayo expected, or that with which he would be content. But I hold we are bound to deal with him according to our notions of justice and morality and not according to his. It would, according to our principles, be an unjust and immoral act to eject a bona fide settler who had bought and improved his property in the belief that the Transvaal Government had a perfect right to grant it to his predecessor; nor do I think it would be less unjust and immoral were we to make the English or Transvaal taxpayer pay compensation for clearing away the settler....."¹⁰⁷

Frere, of course, was begging the question throughout by referring to "rights" of private property. Colenso replied that he did not understand how any private rights could have grown up under a wrongful appropriation, except the right of compensation by the land occupiers from the Government which made the wrongful appropriation, or from the Government that had taken over its liabilities.¹⁰⁸

105. Memorandum on the Appointment of a Resident in Zululand, by Frere, 27 November, 1878, published in The Natal Mercury, 20 December, 1878.

106. Colenso to Frere, 27 December, 1878, enclosure 1 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 26 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.52).

107. Frere to Colenso, 6 January, 1879, enclosure 2 in Ibid.

108. Colenso to Frere, 14 January, 1879, enclosure 3 in Ibid.

Colenso's view of the case was confirmed by Sir Henry de Villiers, the Chief Justice at the Cape, to whom Frere referred his correspondence with Colenso. The Zulu King, he pointed out, was vested with the private as well as the sovereign rights to land in his country. So before the alleged cession of the disputed territory to the Transvaal, he was the private owner of it as well as the sovereign over it. If, as the Commissioners decided, the alleged cession was invalid, this must still be the case, unless something else had rendered it not the case.

"The simple question then arises, whether the intermediate acts of the Transvaal Government, such as subdividing and granting the land, and the acts of its subjects, such as the occupation and sale of the land, divest Cetshwayo of his prior right. Taking the strictly legal view of the matter, the question would appear to require a negative answer."

Frere was right, continued de Villiers, in saying that in ceding a slice of land to France or Germany only sovereign rights would be conferred, "not rights of private property which happened to have been already established in the land." But the question remained, what rights had been established in the land?

"It cannot be said that the grants made by the ceding power have established any private right in the land, for the acknowledgement that the ceding power had no right to the land carries with it the further acknowledgement that it could convey no valid title to the land."¹⁰⁹

This might seem hard on the settlers in the disputed territory. It could very well be argued that they had a right to compensation from the Transvaal Government which had exacted money from them for, and permitted and encouraged them to spend money, time and labour on the improvement of, something which was not, in fact, in its power to give. But they had no right to retain, in the face of the claims of its rightful owner, the possession of land made over to them by a Government which had no legal authority to so make it over.

Frere however, was immune to all such reasoning. He finally resorted, in his correspondence with Colenso, to asserting that Cetshwayo had in fact promised the land to the Transvaal; that he had "promised and made delivery of land for a valuable consider-

109. Memorandum by Sir Henry de Villiers, C.J., 29 March, 1879, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 21 April, 1879 (C.O. 276).

ation, contriving to invalidate the legal completion of the grant..
...."¹¹⁰

In this case, it might be said, why was Cetshwayo awarded even the nominal sovereignty of the land? But further argument is futile. Frere was not interested in justice for the Zulus, but in conciliating the Boers. He could not bring himself to set aside the Commissioners' decision openly, so he decided to do it surreptitiously.

But even this would not be enough. To put a large community of Boers under even the nominal sovereignty of the Zulu King was unlikely to work in practice, and was even more unlikely to be palatable to the Boers themselves. All the Boers would see was that a portion of the Transvaal, the territorial integrity of which Britain had sworn to protect when she had annexed it, had been detached and handed over to the barbarians. As Frere explained to the Secretary of State on 5 January, 1879 (in reply to a private letter explaining that the British Government was "most anxious not to have a Zulu war on our hands just now"):

"It would take months to convey to the Boers the devices by which I hoped the Commissioners' disregard of private rights might possibly be mitigated and corrected. Meantime it is probable the Boer discontent would have exploded in some form or other...."¹¹¹

Something more drastic was needed. The only satisfactory solution to the whole problem was the overthrow of Cetshwayo and the annexation of Zululand. Then the Boers could keep their farms under a British Government, whether the disputed territory was incorporated in the Colony in Zululand or remained in the Transvaal Colony. The British Government would have finally made good its guarantee to protect the Boers from the Zulus. If this did not reconcile the Transvaal Boers to British rule, the sight of Britain dealing forcefully with its enemies might damp their rebelli-

110. Frere to Colenso, 22 January, 1879, enclosure 4 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 26 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.62).

111. Worsfold, p.139.

ous ardour. The overthrow of Cetshwayo would put an end to the other native chiefs' dreams of expelling the white man from South Africa. It would end the danger of Zulu aggression. It would liberate the Zulu people from the yoke of a tyrant. It would free the way for the spread of the Christian religion in Zululand. It would reconcile the Cape to the responsibilities which Confederation would place upon it. In every way Cetshwayo stood between Frere and the realisation of his plans. But the most urgent necessity was to reconcile the Transvaal Boers to British rule. In his letters and despatches supporting or justifying his Zulu policy Frere usually put forward three main considerations: the danger of a Zulu invasion of Natal, the danger of an inter-tribal revolt led by Cetshwayo against the authority of the white man, and the need to conciliate the Boers and secure their acquiescence in British rule. Many people could not see that the first two dangers existed at all. Even if they did, it is far from obvious that they urgently and imperatively required the invasion of Zululand. But there was no doubt at all that the discontent of the Boers was growing rapidly and was likely to erupt into rebellion when Kruger and Joubert returned empty-handed in December, 1878, from their mission to England. Frere gave somewhat greater prominence to the first two considerations in his letters and despatches - understandably so, as they were morally the more respectable in appearance. But I have no doubt that his most pressing and urgent motive for pushing forward to a war with the Zulus, without the delay of referring to the Home Government, was the urgent need to conciliate the Boers by taking a firm hand with the Zulus, and nullifying the Commissioners' border decision. When censured for not referring home, he specifically pointed to the imminent danger of Boer rebellion as a justification.

"A reference to Her Majesty's Government would have involved a delay of at least two months, and I felt perfectly convinced that it was useless to expect three months to pass without some fresh manifestation of Zulu impatience, or without an outbreak of discontent in the Transvaal or elsewhere. For whatever might be the chances of Zulu acquiescence in the

award and its accompaniments there was no question of the bitter anger with which it was received in the Transvaal."

He added that "the risks of native risings in sympathy with the Zulus, or of Boer rebellion at a time when our forces were elsewhere employed, were important factors in the calculation" whether to refer home or go ahead.¹¹²

"I felt... quite certain", he wrote in a private letter to the Secretary of State in April, 1879, "that, even if I could postpone for a few weeks or even months the inevitable Zulu War, it would be impossible to avoid a Boer rebellion. You will, I think, agree with me when you read my recent despatches about the Transvaal, and reflect how much the danger we have so narrowly escaped here would have been aggravated had the malcontent Boers been able to point to Piet Uys and his gallant band, driven from their homes to make them over to the Zulus."¹¹³

In attempting to elucidate Frere's motives for the policy he pursued, we have temporarily ignored the claims of chronology. We must now return to August, 1878, when Frere was still in the Cape, and trace the steps by which war with the Zulus was brought about. Frere wished to visit the Transvaal in order to attempt to settle its disordered affairs, but at this stage he was still undecided whether to go via Kimberley or via Natal. On 18 August he wrote to Shepstone that he intended travelling to the Transvaal via Kimberley,¹¹⁴ but by 27 August he had decided to go first to Natal, where there was "so much to be decided".¹¹⁵ Bulwer had urged him to come to Natal to make a final settlement of the border dispute.¹¹⁶ Lieut-General Thesiger (Lord Chelmsford) had been sent to Natal in July to prepare his plans for the invasion of Zululand. He had run in disagreement with Bulwer, who was opposed to a military build-up in Natal pending a settlement of the border dispute. Bulwer was still hopeful of a peaceful settlement, and feared that an accession of military strength in Natal might breed suspicion and be interpreted by the Zulus as showing the intention of the

112. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 1 March, 1879 (C.2316, p.17).

113. Martineau, p.324.

114. Frere to Shepstone, 18 August, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

115. Frere to Shepstone, 27 August, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

116. Private, Bulwer to Shepstone, 12 August, 1878 (G.H.649).

English to settle the dispute by force.¹¹⁷ Chelmsford therefore also wished Frere to come to Natal, in order to support him in his disagreement with the civil authorities. There was no doubt that Frere would take his side. He had convinced himself that Natal was in serious danger of Zulu attack. In a letter to Herbert of 3 September, he enclosed a letter from Chelmsford, and commented:

"His account of the great unwillingness of Sir Henry Bulwer to believe in dangers which seem so obvious to all but a few officials would be more intelligible to me if the secret official despatches gave the slightest ground for confidence in the Zulus' wish for a peaceful solution of all difficulties."¹¹⁸

A week later he wrote to Hicks-Beach:

"Everything I read and hear confirms my belief that the Natal believers in Cetywayo's peaceful intentions are dreaming, and that those who, believing that our making preparations might lead to a collision, forbear to prepare, entirely mistake the way of inducing gentlemen like Cetywayo to keep the peace."¹¹⁹

Frere therefore decided he must go to Natal. Before he left, he requested reinforcements of troops from the Home Government. Although everything in the Cape was now quiet, he wrote,

"it is clear that along the whole border of Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange River border, wherever the Zulu influence is felt, the 'war fever', as it has been appropriately termed, has not been allayed, and that it must be mitigated and subdued before we can hope for a condition of permanent peace."

Another reason for wanting reinforcements was the fact that it was essential that any concessions to the disaffected Boers of the Transvaal should be made from a position of strength, and should not be capable of being attributed to a sense of weakness.¹²⁰

Frere eventually left Cape Town by ship on 18 September, and reached Natal on the 23rd.

117. Bulwer to Frere, 18 July, 1878 (G.H. 870, No.113).

118. Worsfold, p.88.

119. Ibid., p.89.

120. Frere to Secretary of State, 10 September, 1877 (C.2220, p.232).

SIR BARTLE FRERE AND THE ZULU WAR.

The Sirayo incident - the military build-up in Natal raised Zulu fears - the Smith and Deighton incident - Frere's first report from Natal - Bulwer's views - Mbelini's raids - Frere decides on his policy - further increase in tension - Frere urges that reinforcements be sent - Shepstone's comments on the Boundary Commission Report - the Home Government refuses reinforcements and opposes war - Frere's reply - lack of support for Frere in Natal - peaceful demeanour of the Zulus - Frere's determination on war - Shepstone's support for Frere's policy - his argument that Britain had the right to interfere in Zululand - the ultimatum is drawn up - delivered to the Zulu envoys - the reaction of the Zulus to it - their non-compliance, and the outbreak of war.

Before Frere arrived in Natal certain events took place on the Zulu border which aggravated the already tense situation, and played into Frere's hand. The first was what is commonly known as the Sirayo incident.

On about 24 July two wives of Sirayo, a Zulu chief resident near the Buffalo river, fled, with two Zulu men, into Natal and took refuge in two native kraals, one in the Umsinga Division, and the other in the Newcastle Division. On 26 July an armed band of Zulus, led by certain sons of Sirayo, crossed the Buffalo, seized the Newcastle woman by force, dragged her back to Zululand, and there put her to death. On 28 July the same fate overtook the Umsinga woman. No British subjects were harmed.¹ These events were reported to the Government, and Bulwer sent a message to Cetshwayo reporting the occurrences, and requesting him to send the ringleaders, the sons of Sirayo, to be tried in Natal.²

Cetshwayo did not take the incident as seriously as Bulwer. What Sirayo's sons had done, he could "only attribute to a rash act of boys, who in the zeal for their father's house, did not think of what they were doing."³ He offered £50 in compensation,

1. R.M. Newcastle to A.S.N.A., 3 August, 1878 (This report, marked N181/78, I found in G.H. 362, clearly wrongly filed.)
2. Messages to Cetshwayo, 1 & 16 August, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, pp.124 & 125).
3. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 24 August, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.126).

and stated that he would not have taken any notice of a similar case the other way round. He added that there had been cases of delinquents from Natal being followed into Zululand and removed from it by Natal policemen without the permission of the Zulu authorities, and that no notice had ever been taken of such acts.⁴ This was in fact perfectly true.⁵ Another reason why Cetshwayo was not inclined to take the affair too seriously was probably that when an exactly similar event to the Sirayo incident had occurred in November, 1876, Cetshwayo had merely been informed of it by the Natal Government; neither the surrender of the offenders nor a fine had been demanded, and the information had not even been accompanied by a remonstrance.⁶ This had been on the advice of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who had not wished to risk any further difficulty with the Zulus on the eve of the annexation of the Transvaal.⁷

Left to themselves, Bulwer and Cetshwayo would in all probability have been able to come to some amicable settlement. The incident was really of no political significance, and there is no reason whatever to suppose that Cetshwayo had anything to do with it. Frere, however, saw it as a symptom of Cetshwayo's aggressive designs. It looked, he told Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, "very much like what school boys would call 'trying it on'".⁸ He used the incident as one of the main counts in his indictment of Cetshwayo. *accuse*

Despite Bulwer's objections, large numbers of troops had come into Natal, and there had been a great deal of loud and loose talk in the newspapers and elsewhere of an impending war with the Zulus. There was little that went on in Natal that Cetshwayo did not hear of, and his messages to the Natal Government show that he *imminent*

4. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 12 October, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.140).

5. A.R.M. Newcastle to A.S.N.A., 30 November, 1877 (S.N.A. 1/1/29, No.955).

6. Message to Cetshwayo, 26 December, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.19).

7. Minute by Shepstone, 10 December, 1876, on A.R.M. Umvoti to A.S.N.A., 4 December, 1876 (S.N.A. 1/3/26, No.994).

8. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 20 August, 1878, quoted in Worsfold, p.87.

had become alarmed at the apparent danger of an English attack. In early September a large Zulu force assembled near the lower reaches of the Tugela, and conducted what was ostensibly a hunt, but which was widely believed to be a counter-demonstration of force.⁹ There were also reports of regiments assembling at the Royal kraal.¹⁰ (To reassure the population near the Zulu border, troops were ordered to Greytown and Verulam.) In an attempt to forestall the alarm that this would otherwise cause in Zululand, Bulwer sent, on 12 September, a message to Cetshwayo informing him of this move, and explaining that it had been decided on in order to allay the feeling of uneasiness that the assembling of the Zulu force near the Tugela had caused.¹¹

But there was little Bulwer was able to say that could calm the fears instilled into Cetshwayo by the combination of the prolonged silence on the issue of the boundary enquiry, the military build-up in Natal, and the rumours of war that were flying about.

"Cetshwayo says", wrote Dunn on his behalf, on 30 August, "that he is getting suspicious that the Boers have talked the Natal Government over to their side and are going to throw him over and believe all the false reports that are blowing about as the wind and leaving the dust at his door. Is it that, because the Zulu Nation is black, that what other black nations do he should be blamed for? Would the English be blamed for what the Boers did because they were white?"

Cetshwayo says, that it appears to him that the Natal Government wish to throw a blanket over his head whilst the ox is being skinned so that when the blanket is taken off all the best pieces will have gone."¹²

In reply to Bulwer's message of 12 September, Cetshwayo stated that he knew nothing of the hunt near the lower Tugela.

"Cetshwayo states that he also hears all kind of reports, at which he is not alarmed, as he knows that he has given the English Government no cause to quarrell (sic) with him. He hears of troops being got ready to come and take his country and some of his people living on the coast, reported to him that some vessels were seen close to the land, as if they were looking for a drift to land."

9. Bulwer to Frere, 12 September, 1878 (G.H. 638, No. 136).

10. Confidential, A. & B.A., Lower Tugela, to A.S.N.A., 14 September, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2, No. 40); Confidential, R.M. Umsinga, to A.S.N.A., 18 September, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2).

11. Message to Cetshwayo, 12 September, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p. 127).

12. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 30 August, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p. 131).

He had heard that the Natal Government had paid the Portuguese not to supply him with any more guns and ammunition, and he could not see why it should do this.

"Cetswayo also hears that troops are sent all round him, and to the Transvaal boundary, also that arrangements have been made with the Amaswazi to hem him in, this looks much as if the English wish(sic) for his blood, for what reason he cannot say, still he has no fear, as he knows he had done nothing to give cause for this."

He denied the stories that he had sent messages to the Pondos and to Sekukuni to stir them up against the English.

"Cetswayo is sure that Her Majesty the Queen across the Sea does not know what is being done, and what steps are being taken against him, why not tell him plainly what wrong he has done to the English.

Cetswayo states that he always thought that the English were a just race, and friends of the Zulus, and that if he got into a quarrel with any other race he could go to them for protection and help.

Cetswayo says that he sees that his Excellency is hiding from him the answer that has returned from across the sea, about the land boundary question with the Transvaal, and only making an excuse for taking time so as to surprise him....."¹³

The Zulus took to keeping a day and night watch on the Natal border;¹⁴ a Natal chief reported that Zulus were sleeping at night near the Tugela to keep watch on a road to the drift below Fort Buckingham, which had been built by Sir Garnet Wolseley.¹⁵ Towards the end of September, Mr. Smith, a surveyor in the Colonial Engineer's department was sent to this drift to report on its condition and on "what would be necessary to be done to make the drift passable by wagons, etc."¹⁶ He was accompanied by a friend, Mr. Deighton, a trader living at Fort Buckingham. The river bed was dry except for one channel of water on the Zulu side of the bed. The two men walked across the bed as far as this channel, but did not cross it. Suddenly they were set upon by a party of about

13. Dunn to A.S.N.A. 20 September, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.174).
14. Confidential, R.M. Umsinga to A.S.N.A., 18 September, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2, No.43).
15. Confidential, R.M. Umsinga to A.S.N.A., 23 September 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2, No.48).
16. Minute, 9 October, 1878 (G.H.356).

15 Zulus, who shouted at them and threatened them with guns and assegais. They were questioned about their activities and asked what they were doing there, on land belonging to Cetshwayo. After 1½ hours they were released, the Zulus having helped themselves to some matches and tobacco they found in their pockets.¹⁷ Mr. Smith did not report the incident to Pietermaritzburg, and the Government only heard of it when Mr. Deighton, hearing that Smith had not reported it, took it upon himself to do so.

His complaints met with little sympathy from Bulwer. Having heard also from Smith, he commented:

"The Zulus have always looked upon this new road with great suspicion; and it is no wonder that, when they hear of troops arriving in Natal by sea and by land, when they hear of the open talk indulged in throughout the Colony to the effect that these Troops are intended for the invasion of the Zulu Country, when they see officers coming down to inspect a road and a drift which can only lead to the Zulu Country, that they should more than suspect our intentions towards them.

This occurrence is much to be regretted. I do not see very well what we can say to the Zulus regarding it. Mr. Smith's account is a temperate account, and shows that the Zulus did not do them any injury. Of course, the Zulus had, strictly speaking, no right to interfere; but I must say that, under the circumstances, when they see people inspecting the drift which leads into their country, at a time when the invasion of their country is being so freely talked about, it is not to be wondered at."¹⁸

The Zulus, of course, considered that the white men, being nearer the Zulu bank than the Natal bank, were in Zulu territory; Smith and Deighton, not having crossed the only stream of water in the river bed, considered themselves to be in Natal. A nice point; but Sir Bartle Frere had no doubt about the matter - he described the incident as an "outrageous insult"¹⁹ and, in his ultimatum to Cetshwayo, demanded 100 cattle in reparation.

On 30 September Frere sent his first report from Natal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.²⁰ He stated that he found the state of affairs "far more critical even than I expected." There was strong evidence that the Zulu "war feeling" was "intensely

17. Smith to Colonial Secretary, 8 October, 1878 (G.H. 356).

18. Minute by Bulwer, 10 October, 1878 (G.H. 356).

19. Minute by Frere, 12 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 12 December, 1878 (C.2220, p.278).

20. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 September, 1878 (C.2220, p.278).

excited". The evidence he quoted - the 'hunts' near the border, the guarding of drifts, Zulus' hastily fetching their cattle grazing in Natal, the alarm in Zululand at seeing ships near the coast and so on - seemed rather to indicate a fear on the part of the Zulus of an attack by the English.

The reports of the Sirayo incident, wrote Frere, had been confirmed in every particular. Sirayo was well-known as "extremely anti-English in his feelings", and had been appointed to represent Cetshwayo at the proceedings of the Boundary Commission partly on account of his "known antipathy to Europeans." Cetshwayo's reply to Bulwer's very temperate demand for redress in the Sirayo matter had not been reassuring, and Frere found little reason to expect that satisfactory redress would be made. Nevertheless the incident was

"an insult and a violation of British territory which cannot be passed over, and unless apologized and atoned for by compliance with the Lieutenant-Governor's demands that the leaders of the murderous gangs shall be given up to justice, it will be necessary to send to the Zulu King an ultimatum which must put an end to pacific relations with our neighbours."

Frere had learned from conversations with missionaries that Cetshwayo had gradually realised that missionary teaching was fatal to the power he desired to build up. He had started killing converts, at first rarely and apparently reluctantly and secretly, "latterly more frequently, openly and as an avowed part of a general policy for re-establishing the system of Chaka and Dingaan in Kafirland."

Frere's words imply that Cetshwayo killed a great number of converts. In fact the total number of converts (one a lapsed convert) killed was three.²¹ The evidence does not support the belief that those killings were part of a "policy for re-establishing the system of Chaka and Dingaan", and Cetshwayo certainly never 'avowed' this.

21. Memorandum by Bulwer, 18 November, 1878, enclosure 1 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 7 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.172).

Opinion among the colonists in Natal, continued Frere, was divided as to whether the Zulus wanted war or peace. Many gentlemen had expressed alarm, and, wrote Frere, "if grounds of their alarm are often vague, and their inferences somewhat illogical, their opinions, I am bound to say, have impressed me as entitled to respectful attention." He admitted that several men of high position and great experience in Durban had scouted the idea of there being any cause for alarm, saying that there had never been a war before and that Cetshwayo was too clever to risk losing English good-will. Frere, however, was not disposed to give much weight to their views.

"On a review of the whole situation and from the best evidence I have met with, I am bound to state as my own opinion that it would be impossible to imagine a more precarious state of peace. It seems to me that the preservation of peace in Natal depends simply on the sufferance of the Zulu Chief, that while he professes a desire for peace every act is indicative of an intention to bring about war, and that this intention is shared, as far as it is possible to judge in such a despotism, by the majority of his people.

I have anxiously scanned the political horizon, as far as I can see it, without discerning any ground for hope that there is any intention on the part of the Zulu nation or its King to keep the peace longer than is necessary to put the English in the wrong by making them, if possible, strike the first blow."

He concluded by referring to the supposed inter-tribal conspiracy against the white man.

"There can be no doubt", he wrote, "that this design is now in process of attempted execution.

Mutual jealousies and mistrust among our enemies, with many other unlooked for advantages and auxiliaries have hitherto aided us; but the most difficult part of the task is that just now before us in Zululand, and I feel confident that Her Majesty's Government will not withhold from General Theisiger the very moderate amount of further aid he asks for as the means of securing future peace and safety between this Colony and the Portuguese frontier of Delagoa Bay."

He reinforced this despatch with a private letter to Hicks-Beach. Again he wrote that the state of things in Natal was "far more serious than I had supposed possible."

"The Zulus are now quite out of hand, and the maintenance of peace depends on their forbearance."

He found the people in Natal curiously unperturbed by their perilous situation.

"The people here seem slumbering on a volcano, and I much

fear you will not be able to send out the reinforcements we have asked for, in time to prevent an explosion."

But he felt that even an 'explosion' was better than the continuance of the present situation.

"I speak with a deep sense of responsibility for what I say, when I assure you that the peace of South Africa for many years to come, seems to me to depend on your taking steps to put a final end to Zulu pretensions to dictate to H.M. Government what they may or may not do to protect H.M. Colonies in South Africa, and that unless you settle with the Zulus you will find it difficult, if not impossible, to govern the Transvaal without a considerable standing force of H.M. troops"

He admitted that there were wide disagreements between himself and Bulwer.

"He has never had much to do with military affairs", he explained, "and many things which are burnt into one after a few years dealing with Natives in India have to be explained to him, and he is not facile in altering opinions once formed."²²

Bulwer was indeed not at all convinced that the Zulus were bent on war. There was, he conceded, a 'war party' in Zululand, and certain events, such as the Transvaal's aggressive actions, and the rumours of a British annexation of Zululand following the annexation of the Transvaal, had caused its views to come to the fore. But a war feeling had never established any hold over the nation at large. If in the preceding two or three months this war feeling had gained ground, Bulwer believed that this was due to increased Zulu uncertainty as to the intentions of the English towards them.

"So long as the disputed boundary question remained unsettled I was apprehensive that any unusual gathering or movement of troops in this Colony would tend to excite the distrust of the King in our good faith in respect to that question. I did not indeed foresee, what has happened, that the arrival of troops and the transfer of the head-quarters staff here would be followed by such grave apprehensions on the part of the Zulus as has been the case; but it is a matter of fact that the arrival by land and by sea, during the past three months, of reinforcements of troops has been attended with all manner of rumours and reports and loud talk as to an invasion of Zululand, for which object it was said, and largely believed, the reinforcements had been sent."

For thirty years Natal had lived in peace with the Zulus, and a considerable part of the Zulus regarded the English with friendly

feelings. Such people would resist any attack on Zululand, but would be disinclined to support Cetshwayo in any aggressive attack on Natal, and would regard an Anglo-Zulu war as a great calamity. Cetshwayo was aware of these feelings and knew he could not disregard them. In any case, considered Bulwer, Cetshwayo had no wish to attack Natal; any attack by Zulus would be a result of a belief on their part that it was the intention of the English to attack Zululand as soon as it suited them.²³

Meanwhile there were further disturbances on the Transvaal-Zulu border. Towards the end of September, Faku, the induna of the local military kraal, told the German settlers at Luneburg to leave, as the land was required for grazing the King's cattle. The Landdrost of Utrecht reported that the Germans would go unless assistance were given to them.²⁴ Frere, through Bulwer, sent a message to Cetshwayo remonstrating with him, and pointing out that the white people across the Pongola were British subjects.²⁵

On 6 October Mbelini, the exiled claimant to the Swazi throne, attacked a kraal of refugee Swazis near Luneburg, reportedly killing over 40 of them and taking all their cattle. On the 8th he attacked a Swazi kraal near the Assegai river; this was less successful, and only four were killed, and no cattle were captured.²⁶ These events caused great excitement in Swaziland, and uneasiness amongst the whites in the border area. The reason for the attacks remained obscure, but was no doubt connected with Mbelini's regal aspirations. The fact remained that Mbelini was nominally a Zulu subject and his victims were nominally British subjects. Rudolph reported that it was generally believed that Mbelini acted under orders from Cetshwayo, and added that he himself was inclined to think the

23. Memorandum by Bulwer, 25 October, 1878, on Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 September, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 8 November, 1878 (C.2367, p.113).

24. Rudolph to Government Secretary, 27 September, 1878, (S.S.306, R.3466).

25. Message to Cetshwayo, 8 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.139).

26. The Natal Witness, 22 October, 1878.

occurrence was "a feeler, and of great significance." He feared t
that a repetition of such an attack but on a much larger scale would
take place.²⁷

There were, however, no further such attacks. Cetshwayo stated that Mbeini had left Zululand with the avowed object of wresting the Swazi chieftainship from his brother; and he added that if he returned to Zululand he would kill him.²⁸ Cetshwayo stated that he did not know that the white people at Luneburg were British subjects, and also stated that he knew nothing of Faku's ordering them to leave.²⁹ It may be doubted whether Faku, who does not seem to have been in the least hot-headed, would have taken such a step without the King's instructions; and indeed in a later message to the Transvaal Government (Faku being one of the messengers) Cetshwayo admitted that he had ordered them to leave, claiming again that he had not known them to be British subjects.³⁰

Frere wrote to Rudolph to tell him that he had no intention of leaving the Luneburg settlers to their fate, and that as soon as Chelmsford could spare the troops, they would be supported. On the receipt of this letter, Col. Wood, officer commanding the troops at Utrecht, without waiting to obtain orders from Chelmsford, sent, on 16 October, two companies to protect the settlers at Luneburg.³¹

By the first week in October, Frere had decided what his Zulu policy was going to be. In the same letter in which he told Shepstone that they were bound to accept the decision of the Border Commission "and make the best of it", he added that it was desirable that

"Cetewayo and his Councillors should understand the decision about the land before we call him to account for the many violent and hostile acts he has been guilty of during the past 12 months - and tell him, as we ought to do most distinctly,

27. Rudolph to S.N.A. (Tvl), 12 October, 1878 (S.N. 1, No.242).
28. Message from Cetshwayo, 29 October, 1873 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.143).
29. Message from Cetshwayo, 29 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.142).
30. Rudolph to S.N.A. (Tvl.), 25 November, 1878 (S.N. I, No.310).
31. Worsfold, p.96.

what are to be our relations with him and his people in future."

He asked Shepstone to send him his views "as to the form and substance of the Ultimatum we ought to send to Cetewayo."

"We should of course", he continued, "enumerate late acts of violence, such as the forcible seizure in British territory and subsequent murder of 2 fugitive women, the seizure of Mr. Smith the Surveyor etc. and reiterate the demand for redress - but how far should we insist on his fulfilling the promises made to his people and to you at his Coronation? What were the promises, and in what has he violated them, and what ought we to ask in the way of fulfilment or security for the future?"³²

He did not expect that such an ultimatum would be complied with, nor, therefore, that war would be avoided. In a private letter of 7 October to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach he wrote that Bulwer still hoped that the Zulus would be content with the border decision, and would "give redress for their hostile demonstration and outrages during the past few months, with reasonable security for the future"; but "after the most anxious consideration" Frere could not "share those hopes" - it would, he wrote, be to him "a most agreeable and unexpected surprise" if they succeeded in "avoiding a collision". He concluded by urging, once again, that reinforcements of troops should be sent without delay.³³

Chelmsford had by mid-September completed his military plans for the invasion of Zululand. It should be made clear that his plans were not for repelling the Zulu invasion of Natal that Frere claimed to believe was imminent, but for a British invasion of Zulu territory. His memorandum stated:

"In the event of an invasion of Zululand being decided upon, I am of opinion that it will be necessary to operate on the five following lines, viz:-",

Then follow details of the five columns that were to invade.

An accompanying map shows the five columns converging on the Royal kraal, Ulundi.³⁴

The movement of troops to Luneburg, coupled with rumours

32. Frere to Shepstone, 7 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

33. Worsfold, p.96.

34. Memorandum by Thesiger, n.d., enclosure in Thesiger to Secretary of State for War, 14 September, 1878 (C.2234, p.3).

from Natal induced in Cetshwayo a fear that British invasion was imminent. He therefore ordered all his regiments to assemble, with strict orders to travel night and day.³⁵ John Dunn reported from Zululand on 20 October:

"I found the Zulu King in a very excited state today, he said that rumours had reached him from Natal that the Natal Government had taken steps to completely surround him if they could to seize Cetshwayo as a message had come from the Queen across the water, to ask if it was true, if Cetshwayo had said that he was equal to Her Majesty, and if so he was to be bound and brought to confront her, and that I was only blinding him as regards the movements of the Natal Government and that he intended taking steps to protect himself as he could not be taken as a child, he has consequently ordered all his men up, he is quite correct about the reports that reach him as regards the movements on the Natal side, raised I am sure by a lot of inconsiderate whites, for the sake of mischief.... one report is that a large troop of mounted men have gone to take possession of the disputed land on the Pongola where the Kraal was built." ³⁶

Bulwer regarded the situation as very critical. Cetshwayo, he felt, might have resolved that if he were to be attacked, he would strike the first blow.

"The movement of troops to Lunenburg is evidently looked upon by the Zulu King both as part of a scheme for surrounding him and as being connected also with the unsettled boundary question. It will be represented to the Nation as such, and as an aggression on our part; and there is the danger that a contest begun now will find the Zulu nation united against us in the belief that we are aggressors against them, and that we are not keeping faith with them about the boundary question."³⁷

The dilemma was that if troops were moved to the frontier to defend the Colony against a Zulu invasion, this move, by apparently confirming Cetshwayo's fears, would make a Zulu invasion more likely. Eventually it was decided to move the troops, but to tell Cetshwayo (in the form of a reply to the message he had sent to the Border Agent and the Resident Magistrate at the Lower Tugela informing them of his call-up of the army, and his reasons for it)³⁸

35. A. & B.A. Lower Tugela to A.S.N.A., 23 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/1/31, No. 1390).

36. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 20 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/6/11).

37. Minute by Bulwer, 28 October, 1878 (G.H.357).

38. A. & B.A. Lower Tugela to A.S.N.A., 25 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2, No.61); R.M. Lower Tugela to Colonial Secretary, 25 October, 1878 (C.S.O. 1925, No.123).

that the British had no intention of surrounding and capturing him as he feared, and that the troops had been moved to protect the border districts as a result of his summoning of his army.³⁹

Shortly afterwards, another letter came from Dunn reporting that Cetshwayo had realised that the report which had so alarmed him was false, and that he had ordered his army to disperse.⁴⁰

Frere reported all these events to the Secretary of State and concluded from them that while hostilities might be delayed, "a final peaceful solution seems to be more hopeless than ever."

"The continued preservation of peace depends no longer on what the servants of the British Government here may do or abstain from doing, but simply on the caprice of an ignorant and bloodthirsty despot, with a most overweening idea of his own importance and prowess, and an organised force of at least 40,000 armed men at his absolute command, ready and eager at any moment to execute, in their ancient fashion of extermination, whatever the caprice or anger of the despot may dictate."⁴¹

Frere continued to urge Shepstone to send his comments on the Border Report. He made it clear that there was no possibility of the Commissioners' decision being set aside, but he was reluctant to proceed until he had a formal statement of Shepstone's views.

"Here we are at a standstill", he wrote, "till we get your remarks on the Commission's proceedings, after considering which an award must be given and communicated to Cetywayo and his great Council, to be followed by an ultimatum, which he must accept, and put our relations on a safe and satisfactory footing for the future, or decline."

He repeated his wish to have Shepstone's advice regarding the terms of such an ultimatum.

"I should like to know what you should say to him about his Coronation engagements, and his breaches of them - his expulsion of Missionaries - his action last year about the disputed territory - his military preparations and the like? We must speak to him on behalf of his people as well as of ourselves and what shall we say to him? I shall be very glad to know your views on these and similar points as speedily as possible."⁴²

On 4 November Frere received a telegram⁴³ from the Secretary

39. Message to Cetshwayo, 30 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.145).

40. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 28 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/6/11).

41. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 28 October, 1878 (C.2220, p.356).

42. Frere to Shepstone, 26 October, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

43. At this time there was a telegraphic connection only between London and Cape St. Vincent. Telegrams were conveyed as letters the remainder of the distance. By the end of November, a telegraph line between Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg was in operation.

of State, in reply to his frequent requests for reinforcements. He stated that he felt "some doubts whether more troops can be spared" and suggested that the police and the volunteers would be sufficient for the Cape and that all the Imperial troops in that Colony should be moved to Natal and the Transvaal.

Frere replied the next day by telegram - "troops asked for urgently necessary to prevent war of races." "On the other side of fordable river Zulu army, forty to sixty thousand strong, well-armed, unconquered, insolent; burning to clear out white men."⁴⁴

He followed this up by a despatch of the same date. In it, he stated that even with the addition of the two regiments in the Cape, Natal was far from being as well provided with means of defence as Sir Garnet Wolseley had considered it should be three years earlier. Since that time the Zulu army had increased its store of arms; and the feeling of the King and the warlike part of the nation towards the English had changed for the worse. This was the result of the annexation of the Transvaal, which had put an end to the Zulu policy of seeking Natal's support against the Transvaal, and generally playing off one country against the other. Another factor was that the recent postponement of operations against Sekukuni would be attributed by the Zulus to weakness on the part of the British.

"All these things concur in increasing the present risk of collision with the Zulus, whilst they render it more desirable than ever for the future peace of the country, that if the Zulus do venture to break the peace our success should be sharp and decisive."

He did not fear a disgraceful disaster even with the present forces, but victory might be less speedy.

Although Frere did not state openly and explicitly the course of action he proposed taking with regard to the Zulus,⁴⁵ the

44. Worsfold, pp.105-6.

45. It was not until his despatch of 16 November, 1878 (received in London on 19 December) that Frere definitely informed the Secretary of State of his intention to present Cetshwayo "with a statement of the demands of the British Government for reparation for the past and security for the future." The precise terms of the Ultimatum did not reach the Secretary of State until 25 January, 1879, when he received Frere's

arguments he put forward in urging that reinforcements should be sent were not confined to the supposed danger of Zulu aggression. He wrote that it might occur to the British Government that a settlement of the Zulu question might be deferred to a more convenient time; but he did not think that this could safely be done. Cetshwayo's character was such that only fear could cause him to refrain from bloody aggression.

"As long as a large force is maintained in Natal, it is possible that fear may continue to preponderate over cupidity, pride or passion; but with Chaka as his avowed model, we can never have any better security for peace than an armed truce whilst he rules Zululand.

But even if there were any hope of real peace by deferring a settlement with the Zulus, it is quite impossible to hope for a solution of our difficulties in the Transvaal till the people of that country are assured that we have some better reason for abstaining from coercing the Zulus than a sense of our own inferiority and weakness."

Britain claimed to have annexed the Transvaal in order to save it from the Zulus.

"This, of course, is a sound argument if we do really protect the Transvaal; but it will cease to secure acquiescence in our rule unless we can show that we have the power to ensure protection. At the present moment one of the few grounds on which we can expect the willing submission of the Transvaal population, is that we are able to give them real security against Zulu or other native aggressions. If we defer doing this we must also defer expecting acquiescence in our rule from the white population in the Transvaal. Are we then forcibly to coerce the Zulus in order to secure the allegiance of the Transvaal? Certainly not, if any one can show us reasonable grounds for expecting that the Zulus will be content to remain in peace within their own borders."

But this was not the case. Cetshwayo's words and deeds showed that he sought "conquest and aggression of the bloodiest and most barbarous kind."

"But it is not the Transvaal only that looks to the solution of the Zulu question as deciding the issues of war or peace. From every part of South Africa during the past two years we have had the same symptoms of unrest, and a growing disposition on the part of the natives to try, by more or less decided wager of battle, whether the white man still retains his supremacy or whether it has not now passed, with the white man's weapons, into the hands of the more numerous native races."

All over South Africa "the influence of the Zulu King has been found at work, fostering and directing this spirit..... I cannot see how it is possible that the danger should pass away as long as any considerable section of the native races retain their present conviction that the day of English supremacy in South Africa has passed."

There should be no delay in demonstrating the futility of Zulu attempts to restore their old supremacy. Frere ended by appealing again for extra troops to settle the Zulu difficulty promptly and effectually.⁴⁶

On 7 November Frere at length received Shepstone's comments on the Border Report. The latter complained again, as he had already done in private letters to Frere, of the tone of the Report.

"The depreciatory tone in which everything Transvaal is spoken of in this report, the disregard which it discloses of all evidence adduced in support of Transvaal claims, the ascribing, as I cannot but think unnecessarily, of unworthy motives, and the scant courtesy with which the Boers, and everything connected with them or their proceedings are alluded to throughout its paragraphs will fail, I fear, when the report is published, to assure the people of the Transvaal that their side of the question in the dispute has received its fair share of consideration at the hands of the Commissioners. Such an assurance is especially grateful to the losing party in any dispute, and it is one which those clothed with the functions of judge or arbitrator are usually careful to convey."

It must be said that this complaint was not altogether without substance. The Commissioners were not always tactful in the language they used about the Boers. Thus, regarding the Land Commission set up in 1860, they wrote: "It may be reasonably assumed that the aforesaid commission were to endeavour, if possible, to bribe Cetywayo with the bait of a kingdom, and in return obtain a land cession, or if they failed, to obtain it by other means....."⁴⁷ And commenting on the obscurity of the definition of the line alleged to have been ceded in 1854, they wrote: "It seems probable that this boundary was purposely left obscure, to facilitate future land extension."⁴⁸ This might well have been true, but in the absence of any proof, it would have been wiser to have left it unsaid.

Shepstone also objected to the Commission's adopting 1843, the year of the treaty between Mpande and Cloete, when all the land east of the Tugela and Buffalo belonged definitely to the Zulus, as the

46. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 5 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.3).

47. C.2220, p.378.

48. Ibid., p.371.

starting point of their enquiries. Why had it not adopted as its starting point the Boer Proclamation of 1840 which was made after the defeat of Dingaan and the installation of Mpande, and which declared all the land south of the Black Mfolozi to be Boer territory? Mpande had always recognized his obligations to the Boers, and had considered that he and his country, in some sense, belonged to the Boers. Shepstone admitted that the Boer Government of Natal, which had issued the Proclamation, had been succeeded by a British Government of Natal, which had disregarded the 1840 Proclamation and replaced it by the 1843 treaty. To this might be added the obvious consideration that the Transvaal, by basing its claims on alleged cessions by the Zulus, had already admitted the prior right of the Zulus to the land. But the point Shepstone was trying to make was more complicated than a simple claim to the disputed territory (and, indeed, to all Zululand south of the Black Mfolozi) on the strength of the 1840 Proclamation. Instead he stated, with characteristic vagueness and obscurity, that

"the events of 1840 which I have described cannot, I think, be ignored in adjudicating on this matter, they shed a light upon all the subsequent phases that present themselves in it, and the people of the Transvaal are, as appears to me, entitled to such considerations, political or moral, as are suggested by them."

An example he offered was the cession by Mpande in 1854 of a large tract of territory in return for 100 cattle. The Commissioners had cast doubt on the plausibility of this. But viewed in the light of 1840, Shepstone considered, it was quite plausible. The 100 cattle was not the price of the land, but had been given in acknowledgement of the cession, which had been made by Mpande, presumably, out of a sense of his obligation to the Boers.⁴⁹

It would be tedious to go into all the detailed objections to the Report put forward by Shepstone. We have (in Chapter 2) already established that the Commissioners' conclusions, whatever their

49. Observations on the Report of the Border Commissioners, by Shepstone, 17 October, 1878, enclosure in Shepstone to Frere, 31 October, 1878 (C.2222, p.53).

imperfections in matters of detail, were substantially correct. And Frere had already indicated that, whatever Shepstone said, he felt obliged to accept, in form at any rate, the verdict of the Commission. On Shepstone's Observations, he commented that "the facts regarding which Sir T. Shepstone differs from the Commissioners belong to the class which should, I consider, be left to the Commissioners as jurors, and on which we are bound to accept their verdict rather than our own opinion."⁵⁰ He commented, too, on the very great difference between Shepstone's earlier interpretation of the Zulus' dealings with their neighbours, and the interpretation of those same events which he now put forward. A re-reading of his minute of 26 June, 1876⁵¹, written when he was still Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, stated Frere, would show "how materially different may be the impression conveyed regarding the relations of two parties, according as the chain of events is viewed from the standpoint of the one or the other party."⁵²

Even before he sent Frere his Observations on the Report, Shepstone knew that they would not be accepted, but he hoped that the fact that he had objected so strenuously to the Commissioners' decision would go some way to reconciling the Boers to his rule.⁵³

On 10 November Frere received unwelcome news. It was a telegram containing the Secretary of State's despatch of 17 October. It stated that in view of the serious state of affairs in Europe and on the Indian frontier, Britain could not afford to send out more troops.

"H.M. Government are not prepared to comply with a request for a reinforcement of troops. All the information which has hitherto reached them with respect to the position of affairs

50. Memorandum on Ibid., by Frere, n.d., enclosure 11 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.63).

51. C.1961, p.1

52. Vide footnote 50 (C.2222, p.62).

53. Shepstone to Frere, 16 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3. p.172).

in Zululand appears to them to justify the confident hope that by the exercise of prudence and by meeting the Zulus in a spirit of forbearance and reasonable compromise, it will be possible to avert the very serious evil of a war with Cetywayo."⁵⁴

This was as clear an indication as was possible that the British Government was completely opposed to a Zulu War, except one forced upon Frere by a Zulu attack; completely opposed, that is, to the policy which Frere had decided upon.

Frere immediately wrote privately to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. It is a curious letter. He still apparently could not bring himself to state clearly and openly that he intended the conquest of Zululand, or the sending of an ultimatum that would almost inevitably lead to war. Instead, he only hinted at this, mixing up his hints with statements about the danger of a Zulu attack on Natal. In the following passage from the letter I have underlined these hints, and it will be seen how curiously they contrast with, or contradict, other statements in the passage.

"Anyone who knows anything of South Africa during the last five years, will tell you that the Zulu question is the key of everything relating to peace and war in these parts. People often fancied that because they wished any collision with the Zulus put off, and because it had been staved off for years, that it could be put off ad libitum.⁵⁵ But even the most blind of optimists out here are now seeing the truth - and realizing the fact, that if after repeatedly insulting us, and refusing reasonable demands for redress, Cetywayo cannot quite make up his mind to attack, we owe our immunity to his want of resolution, or fears of internal revolution, and to no want of settled determination on his part to get rid of all his white neighbours.

However I have done my duty in laying the very serious state of the case before you - and hope to do the best which the means at my command will permit, as long as I remain in the country, but I ought not to conceal from you the very serious risk of every course save that of employing an adequate force to settle all questions with the Zulus promptly and decidedly. The time for taking action no longer rests with us. Immediate action with insufficient forces may mean disaster, and must involve additional lives of men, and incomplete results. Deferred action means prolonged expenditure for observation and defense and deferred peace. Meantime it tests, not with you, nor with us here, but with a conceited savage to say whether he will have peace or war. The only safe course is immediate action, to secure the earliest and most assured peace possible."

54. Martineau, p.262.

55. This is italicised in the version printed by Basil Worsfold, and so was presumably underlined in the original.

Frere added his usual stock-in-trade about the inter-tribal conspiracy against the white man, and the need to conciliate the Boers at the expense of the Zulus. He stated that the interests of all South Africa, and not just Natal, were at stake.

"Till we have settled whether H.M. Government or Cetywayo are to be supreme, there can be no peace or assured quiet from Algoa Bay to the Limpopo. Kreli's outbreak last year, and Sandilli's consequent rebellion were, as I told you at the time and as everything since has proved, simply premature explosions of a combination in which Cetywayo was the moving spirit.....no man here, unless besotted by ignorance or prejudice, fails to see that, in dealing with Kreli and Sandilli, we were trying to cure the symptoms, and that the real seat of the disease is here, in Zululand, where we have allowed to revive a typical Kaffir 'Head Centre' of the old aggressive exterminating type.

But the necessity for removing this danger is still greater in the Transvaal. I am assured by many reasonable Dutchmen that their countrymen will very generally accept the annexation as the inevitable result of their own weakness and disunion, if they have reasonable assurance for peace, protection, and good government for the future. But with what face can I talk to them of such things whilst the Zulus, to whose chief the Emigrant Boers dictated peace forty years ago, are able to behave to us with impunity, as they have done during the past twelve months? Put yourself in their case, and I am sure you would hesitate to trust the Englishman's promise of protection."⁵⁶

To Herbert he wrote the same day:

"I wish H.M. Government could see as plainly as I do, how everything in South Africa hangs on this Zulu question - Transvaal contentment and Transvaal finance, and all chance of Confederation depend on its being settled, to say nothing of the peace of this border."

With Herbert he was more open regarding his plans, and, indeed, about the fact that he intended putting them into effect in spite of the opposition of the Home Government.

"I hope", he wrote, "if he (Cetshwayo) resists our just demands, we shall be able to enforce them with the troops now at Lord Chelmsford's disposal."⁵⁷

Frere continued to hope that when they received his despatch of 30 September, his first written in Natal, the Home Government would be sufficiently alarmed to decide to send out troops. These hopes were dashed on 30 November when he received a telegram from Cape Town on the newly completed telegraph line summarising a

56. Worsfold, pp. 110-111.

57. Ibid., p. 112.

private letter of 7 November from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. In this letter Hicks-Beach stated that he had submitted Frere's despatch of 30 September to the cabinet, but that their decision remained the same.

"The fact is that matters in Eastern Europe and in India of which you have by this time heard, wear so serious an aspect that we cannot now have a Zulu war in addition to other greater and too possible troubles."

He urged Frere, therefore, to "redouble the exertions which I am sure you have already employed to avoid the outbreak of any such war."⁵⁸

Not only was the Home Government clearly opposed to Frere's policy, but he found little support for it even in Natal. Bulwer, although he had no high opinion of Cetshwayo, was opposed to anything that resembled unjust aggression. The subordinate officials in Natal gave Frere even less support. He found them "very obstinate, ill-informed, short-sighted and reluctant...."

"They are very half-hearted, feel we are fighting the battle of the Transvaal, which they despise and hate; that we are departing from their old policy of playing off Zulu against Dutchman, and between dread of Cetshwayo and a sort of feeling for even a monster they have long patted on the back, they only half like his being coerced, and think we are over-persuaded by the Boers and the advocates of responsible government here (who are equally anathema to a genuine Natalian official) - and that some half-measure, they know now what, may as in old times stave off the difficulty for this time...."⁵⁹

One might expect that the colonists, whose lives, families, property and future were involved in the security of Natal, would have been unanimously raving for the destruction of the Zulu military kingdom. But even here, Frere did not get the support he expected.

"I do not think", he wrote to Shepstone, "that even with all your knowledge of Natal you fully recognize the difficulties we are in with our countrymen here. You doubtless know how imperfectly your own difficulties and public services in keeping the peace with the Zulus for so many years are appreciated by many of your fellow colonists here, but I do not think you can be aware how half-hearted is the support we get not only from gunrunners and pseudo-philanthropists, but

58. Ibid., pp.127-8.

59. Frere to Herbert, 10 November, 1878, quoted in Worsfold, p.113.

from a mass of half-informed and prejudiced people, who to much contempt and ill-will towards the T.V. Boers, add a curious sort of sympathy for Cetywayo, such as one might feel for a wolf or hyena one had petted. Then there are many who, from habit, mistrust all we do, because it is done by government or by what they call 'imperial' and not by Colonial people. The net result is that our own countrymen hereabouts are only half of them heartily with us, in all we do, and our difficulties are as much from our own people as from Cetywayo."⁶⁰

Cetshwayo, too, was most unsatisfactory in the role allotted to him by Frere of the insolent bloodthirsty savage burning to lay Natal waste. On the contrary, his messages were supplicatory in tone, and eloquent in their pleas for peace and friendship. Messengers from Zululand reported on 5 November, 1878, that "the King wishes to sit down and rest and be peaceful, that he has always paid attention to his father Somtseu's advice, that it is better for a great people to remain quiet."⁶¹

A letter from John Dunn received about a fortnight later stated:

"Cetywayo hereby swears in the presence of Oham, Nmyamana, Tzingwayo, and all his other chiefs that he has no intention, or wish to quarrel with the English."⁶²

A message from Cetshwayo received by the Border Agent at the Lower Tugela at the end of November asked:

"Is not the Zulu Country and Natal one land? Was I not born in the Great House? Did not my father Utyaka (Shaka) also consider himself as belonging to the same house, and send his Chief Sotobe to that house and he became a son in it?

When Dingaan came into power did he not find his relationship with the house of England already established by his brother Utyaka?

Did not my father Umpande, also find that house his own, through his brother Utyaka, and when I myself grew up, was it not through the care of the great house? Was it not that house placed clothing upon me, when I was naked; took care of me in my childhood, and made me King? Am I not this day a king through that house, and does not the power belong to it? What whistling of the wind is this, which would destroy the relationship then; and bring trouble between me and the house to which I owe my birth, when there is really no quarrel?

What is the single word even, between myself, and the house of my fathers about which we need dispute? If there is one word, can it not be talked over, in the house, and be heard as to what it really is?

60. Frere to Shepstone, 3 December, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

61. Message from Cetshwayo, 5 November, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.148).

62. Dunn to Lieut-Governor, 10 November, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.157)

I hear the whistling of the winds - I hear, that soldiers of the Great House are upon the river banks, and I cannot sleep. I ask myself continually what can I have done? I heard the whistling of the winds and called up the people. Had I not done so the Zulu Nation would have blamed me, as being the one who had raised a quarrel with their house - but when I knew the words I heard were but the whistling wind, I sent the people to their homes."

Cetshwayo's brother, Uhamu, even while secretly informing the Landdrost of Utrecht of his intention to defect to the British in the event of war, stated that Cetshwayo had called up his troops, not for any aggressive purpose, but only to defend his country against the feared British invasion.⁶³

The principal chiefs of Zululand, too, evinced no desire for war. A message from the 'Prime Minister' Mnyamana, Sirayo, and other great men of the country asked:

"What has happened, what is the matter? Did not the Great House place our King Cetywayo over us and promise when doing so that he should live to pluck the grey hairs from his head, and live to be fed again with milk?"⁶⁴

Despite the boisterous talk of the young regiments, the common people of Zululand also appear to have had no wish for war with the English.

"I am repeatedly assured", reported the Border Agent on the Lower Tugela, "both by our own natives just out from the Zulu country, and by Zulus who visit their friends in Natal that the desire of the Nation is lasting peace with the English and that any other policy on the part of the Zulu King would not receive general support."⁶⁵

Frere's private letters betray his concern at this peaceful demeanour of the Zulus. He doubtless realised that the British Government and public opinion generally would not fail to notice the discrepancy between his descriptions of the Zulus and their actual behaviour. He assured the Secretary of State that Cetshwayo's obstinate refusal to attack was the result only of his "want of

63. Message from Uhamu, 6 November, 1878, enclosure in Rudolph to S.N.A. (Tvl.), 7 November, 1878 (S.N. I, No.281).

64. Message from Zulu chiefs, 13 November, 1878, enclosure in A. & B.A. Lower Tugela to A.S.N.A., 13 November, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/4/2, No. 79).

65. A & B.A. Lower Tugela to A.S.N.A., 7 October, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/1/2 No 56)

resolution", or "fears of internal revolution."⁶⁶ Frere's principal fear was that Cetshwayo would meekly accept the terms of the ultimatum sent to him.

"I am at a loss to know", he wrote to Shepstone, "what security I can get, or demand from Cetywayo should he profess an intention to do as we require, and offer to repeat his broken Coronation promises?"

There is, as you know, a great disposition among many persons in Natal, to be satisfied with such promises of amendment - a fatal error as I think - but what security can we demand likely to bind so faithless a tyrant?"⁶⁷

If only Cetshwayo would have abandoned his desire for peace and launched an attack on Natal, all Frere's problems would have been solved. But this the Zulu King obstinately refused to do.

"If some of Cetywayo's young Regiments would try their strength against one of H.M.'s, I should have no fear of the result and the way would be clear. But if, as is very possible, he tries to gain time, and to wait for a more favourable opportunity, when we are not so well prepared - what should be our course to bring him to a clear issue?"⁶⁸

Nevertheless Frere does not seem to have ever contemplated abandoning his plans for the overthrow of the Zulu Kingdom. If the alleged danger of Zulu aggression, either direct, or by the incitement of other tribes, had been the only consideration, the conquest of Zululand could well have been delayed, even if the interim had been nothing more satisfactory than a period of 'armed truce'. The key consideration concerned the Transvaal. Frere was convinced that only the overthrow of Cetshwayo could prevent a Boer rebellion in the Transvaal. The destruction of the Zulu kingdom would demonstrate Britain's firmness in dealing with her enemies, would make good her promises to the Transvaal of protection against the Zulus, and would enable the award of the Boundary Commission to be nullified. But time was limited. Kruger and Joubert were expected back from England in December. Their empty-handed return would probably be the signal for revolt. Delay in

66. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 10 November, 1878, quoted on Worsfold, p.110.

67. Frere to Shepstone, 15 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

68. Frere to Shepstone, 20 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

settling with the Zulus was therefore impossible, and Frere pressed forward with his plans. He no doubt calculated that a swift and successful conquest would cause the Home Government to overlook his technical disobedience. This calculation would probably have proved correct, had it not been for the disaster at Isandhlwana.⁶⁹

He continued to press Shepstone for advice concerning the terms of the proposed ultimatum.⁷⁰ Shepstone, though his reputation was a little tarnished of late, was still regarded as the man who knew the most about the Zulus, and some written expression of support for Frere's policy from him would be very valuable in its defence.

"I confess", wrote Frere to Shepstone, "I am disappointed at not getting from you any expression of your own views as to what we should demand from Cetuyayo, as an ultimatum, or of the terms we should impose on the nation, should he provoke a war.

No one has seen the crisis now coming more clearly than you have. No one knows better what Zulus will or can do. But neither from you nor from any one in authority here have I got any clear or complete account of what we have to complain of, or what we ought to demand.

Something of the kind ought to have been on paper long ago, and if war broke out, without anything of the kind being recorded, H.M. Govt. will take us all to task."⁷¹

Shepstone told Frere that he was completing a paper on British-Zulu relations, but that he was working rather in the dark, as he did not know "your own personal views as to the risk you are prepared to incur."⁷²

"You say you wish you knew my own personal views as to the risk I am prepared to incur", replied Frere. "I can only say I know of no risk greater than letting things continue as they are. Even those who think least of national position, dignity, or even honour - or those who estimate most highly the chance of Cetuyayo proving just or reasonable, must admit that to leave the Zulus armed and prepared as they are - in the estimation of the native races, the greatest power in S. Africa - and at the same time to insure the safety of Natal, and the subordination to our flag of the Transvaal - will take a larger force than we can keep in S. Africa; and will, even if we are safe ourselves, perpetuate a state of things utterly disgraceful to us in Zululand. No risk we can incur in drawing the monster's teeth and claws seems to me so great as that of leaving him able to spring on us, whenever he pleases.

69. Vide Hicks-Beach's Letter to Disraeli of 13 January, 1879. quoted in Worsfold, p.175.

70. Frere to Shepstone, 7 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

71. Frere to Shepstone, 15 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

72. Shepstone to Frere, 16 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.173).

Our own safety and the good government of Zululand seem to me inseparably connected - we can be safe only if we can compel Cetywayo to perform his coronation promises to his own people - or, if he refuses to do so, we must assist his people to replace him, with some form of governt. which will do what we promised them Cetywayo should do, and enable them, as well as our Natal and Transvaal subjects, to sleep in peace, and enjoy the fruits of their own labours."⁷³

This was a clear statement that Frere did not wish to limit his demands to those which there was a reasonable chance of Cetshwayo's accepting, but was quite prepared for war. Shepstone enthusiastically agreed.

"I must say", he replied, "I was much relieved at what you say in your last private letter on the subject of the terrible risk we shall be incurring by leaving Zulu matters as they are; I most cordially agree with every word you have written on that point and think that the whole of South Africa is to be congratulated, Zululand itself included, that you hold that view."⁷⁴

A week earlier, before he had received Frere's last-quoted letter, Shepstone had written:

"I am satisfied that if the present state of affairs is patched up by the acceptance of mere promises we shall in a few years have not only the Zulus on our hands but the Natal natives also. Our existence is not worth having if we are not respected."⁷⁵

Shepstone did not fear a Zulu war, for he believed that the Zulu state would collapse from within when touched:

"It is like a huge ball of sand with no larger base than a ball would have, and with only cohesion enough to keep its shape while undisturbed."⁷⁶

On 23 November Frere received Shepstone's Memorandum on the relations between Britain and Zululand. The object of the Memorandum was to show, in Shepstone's words

"that the British Government has a legal right to interfere in the domestic matters of Zululand, and that the necessity for such interference has become imperative, not only in the interests of the Zulus themselves, but in those which involve civilization and right, and the very existence of our position in South Africa."

- 73. Frere to Shepstone, 20 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).
- 74. Shepstone to Frere, 30 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, pp.183-4).
- 75. Shepstone to Frere, 23 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.176).
- 76. Shepstone to Frere, 30 November, 1878 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.185).

Shepstone began with a survey of Zulu history. When the Boers overthrew Dingane in 1840, he stated, they proclaimed Zululand as theirs, but permitted Mpande and his people to occupy it as feudatories of the Boer Government of Natal. The annexation of Natal by Britain did not alter this relationship. The deed of submission dated 15 July, 1842, provided that "the existing administration and civil institutions, under acknowledgement of Her Majesty's supremacy shall not be interfered with till the pleasure of Her Majesty shall be known," The treaty between Cloete and Mpande of 5 October, 1843, Shepstone represents as merely arranging "that the occupation of Natal should remain as it then was, i.e., the whites to the Tugela and Buffalo Rivers and the Zulus to the North and Eastward of these rivers."

"This agreement", wrote Shepstone, "did not profess to change the relative position then existing between Panda and the Government of Natal; and the Government of Natal was still the Boer administration 'under acknowledgement of Her Majesty's supremacy'; nor has any subsequent agreement abrogated those positions."

Mpande, and Cetshwayo too in the earlier years of his reign, both recognized their feudatory or dependent position; they

"looked upon and acted towards Her Majesty's Government in Natal as inferiors to a superior would naturally act. They reported serious events; requested permission to take important steps; asked for advice or assistance in political difficulty; reported officially the death of the Chief, a special act and sign of feudal duty, and requested the Government of Natal not only to nominate in 1861 who Panda's successor should be, but begged it to install the successor thus nominated in 1873."

Shepstone had to admit that Cloete's treaty with Mpande implied "equality in respect of independence between the parties to it"; and that "the British Government in Natal has always ignored the sovereign right acquired for us by the Boers in 1840; treated both Panda and Cetywayo as independent and as if we had inherited no claim to the Zulu country." This "with Mr. Cloete's Treaty might form a strong moral consideration to oppose to the strictly legal view of the case." Nevertheless, Shepstone evidently considered that this consideration was outweighed by the fact that Mpande had always recognized his dependent position, and that Cetshwayo had done the same for many years. It was not until November, 1876,

"that any sign was made by Cetshwayo that he considered himself to be and intended to act as if he were an independent sovereign." The reply he had sent to the Lieutenant-Governor's remonstrance about killing of girls (the so-called "formidable message") was "a distinct declaration of independence made for the first time by either Panda or Cetywayo since Natal became a British Colony."

Shepstone's argument that the British Government in Natal, as the heir of the Boer Republic of Natalia, was the legal suzerain of Zululand, cannot be accepted as valid. There can be no doubt that Cloete's treaty of 1843 tacitly released Mpande from the condition of vassalage to which the Republic had reduced him. He and Cetshwayo had always been treated by the Natal Government, which means in effect by Shepstone himself, as independent sovereigns, whatever dependent postures the circumstances of the Zulu kings might have prompted them to adopt. In reply to an enquiry from the Transvaal Government in 1875 as to what position Cetshwayo stood in relation to Her Majesty's Government, Shepstone had said nothing of formal, legal dependence, but had replied:

"Our intercourse with the Zulus is regulated by a sort of tacit understanding which has grown out of our relative positions and the circumstances which from time to time have arisen out of them.

This intercourse has in the nature of things been frequent and intimate ever since the establishment of Natal as a British Colony now thirty years ago, and has been effectual in maintaining peace and good will between this Government and the Zulus.

It will be seen therefore that no technical diplomatic relations exist between us...."⁷⁷

No claim had ever before been made on behalf of the British Government to suzerainty or a protectorate over Zululand. Indeed one of the principal grounds on which Lord Carnarvon had opposed the installation of Cetshwayo by the Natal Government in 1873 had been the danger that it "pledges us to a protectorate or something very like it."⁷⁸

77. Draft reply to the Transvaal Government, by Shepstone, 17 November, 1875 (G.H.345).

78. Minute by Carnarvon, 20 June, 1874, on No.81, Pine to Secretary of State, 13 April, 1874 (C.O. 179/114, Natal 5791)

Finally, it should be pointed out that only four weeks earlier Shepstone had made a half-hearted claim to the disputed territory on behalf of the Transvaal Government (as representing 'the Boers') on the basis of the same 1840 Proclamation by means of which he was now trying to claim the Zulus as vassals of the Natal Government (as heir to the Boer administration of Natal). 'Half-hearted', because he admitted at the same time that the British Government of Natal had disregarded the 1840 Proclamation, and had replaced it by the 1843 treaty. In this earlier paper Shepstone had written that by Cloete's treaty to 1843, Natal 'may have abandoned that portion of those rights which were outside the present boundaries of Natal, and so allowed Panda to become what he had not been before, an independent Chief.'⁷⁹

Having proved to his own satisfaction, at least, and no doubt to Frere's, that Britain had the legal right to interfere in the domestic affairs of Zululand, Shepstone went on to discuss the grounds on which Britain ought to interfere. First, there was the breach of his coronation oaths. Cetshwayo had entered into special obligations at his coronation; as a civilised and Christian Government Britain was interested in the fulfilment of these obligations, both for the good of the Zulus, and because revolution and disturbances in Zululand affected the peace and security of British territory. In a later despatch Shepstone amplified this by stating that the installation of Cetshwayo by himself, not in his personal capacity, but as representing Her Majesty's Government, constituted

"a tacit pledge to the Zulu people that if the stipulations were broken by Cetshwayo, upon which we enabled him to become the head of the Zulu nation, we should exercise the right on their behalf which we then acquired of insisting upon their observance."⁸⁰

79. Observations on the Report of the Border Commissioners, by Shepstone, 17 October, 1878 (C.2222, p.53).

80. Shepstone to Frere, 30 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.178). Shepstone's claim that the Natal Government stipulated that the coronation promises were to be accepted as a condition of its installing Cetshwayo is false; and it is belied by his own report on the Coronation; vide supra, p.69

The obligations entered into by Cetshwayo at his coronation had, none of them, been discharged:

"The indiscriminate shedding, by Cetywayo, of the blood of his people, has been resumed, and every point that was agreed upon at the time of his installation to guard against this, has been as a rule, ignored by him".

Another count against Cetshwayo was the killing of converts without trial, which had driven the missionaries out of the country, destroyed centres of improvement, and caused loss of property to Missionary societies.

The Zulu military kingdom was a danger to peace. Cetshwayo had diligently armed his warriors with guns, and no foe but the white man could be the object of his arming. Apart from this, the nature of the state was menacing in itself.

"At this moment the Zulu power is a perpetual menace to the peace of South Africa; and the influence which it has already exercised, and is now exercising is hostile and aggressive; and what other result can be looked for from a savage people, whose men are all trained from their youth to look upon working for wages and the ordinary labour necessary to advance the progress of a peaceful country to be degrading; and to consider the taking of human life as the most fitting occupation of a man?

Elements such as these, so antagonistic to civilization and Christianity, cannot long look each other so closely in the face without eventually creating great danger, and this danger will increase as those elements are allowed the more fully to develop their ultimate results."

Shepstone then dealt with the nature of the intervention that should be made. The acceptance of further promises from Cetshwayo was not enough. What was needed was a radical change in the government of the country. Such a change, he warned, would not readily be submitted to by Cetshwayo:

"but half measures will be useless, and we must resolve to do what is necessary to be done, thoroughly and at any risk and cost, or be content with our present uncertain tenure of a state of peace."

The changes that it was necessary to make were a change in the military organization, the prohibition of any enlargement of the Zulu army, the granting of permission to the Zulu warriors to marry, the disarmament of the Zulus in respect of firearms, the appointment of British Residents in Zululand to see to the fulfilment of the Coronation promises, the prohibition of executions without the

sanction of the Residents, and the restoration of the missionaries. These measures would make the Zulus safe neighbours and an improving community.

"But", warned Shepstone, "they involve the extinction of the Zulu power as it now is, and the attempt to adopt them must, if decided upon, be made with the knowledge that the Zulu Chief will oppose them, whatever course the headmen and common people may adopt."⁸¹

It will be seen that Shepstone fully supported Frere's policy even with the knowledge that it would lead to war. But he did not believe that a Zulu War would be a very serious affair. He expected that it would cause a great rupture between Cetshwayo and many of his subjects, and that only the young regiments would fight. He told Frere that he believed the Zulu power was "likely to fall to pieces when touched."⁸²

Frere had already drawn up the ultimatum before receiving Shepstone's memorandum, which only confirmed what he had already decided. But no doubt he was glad to receive Shepstone's support. Frere, too, seems to have believed that many of Cetshwayo's chiefs would not support him in the event of war.⁸³

On 16 November a message was sent to Cetshwayo requesting him to send envoys to the Lower Tugela drift to receive the boundary award and the further communication to be made to him.⁸⁴

On 4 December John Shepstone, accompanied by Charles Brownlee (Commissioner for Native Affairs, Cape Colony) and other officials set out for the Lower Tugela drift, bearing the Award and the Ultimatum.⁸⁵ Both were signed by Bulwer. This seems strange when we consider that he was quite out of sympathy with Frere's Zulu policy. Colenso's account of the circumstances of his signing it is of interest.

81. Memorandum on the political position occupied by the British Government towards the Zulu King, by Shepstone, 18 November, 1878, enclosure in Confidential, Shepstone to Frere, 18 November, 1878 (G.H. 358).

82. Shepstone to Frere, 30 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.178).

83. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 25 November, 1878 (C.2222, p.107).

84. Message to Cetshwayo, 16 November, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.149).

85. Frere to Shepstone, 4 December, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

"I have heard on very good authority", he wrote in May, 1880, "that Sir Bartle Frere's despatch requesting Sir H. Bulwer to sign the ultimatum remained for some days unanswered; that at last, as the two Governors were hardly on speaking terms, our Colonial Secretary, Colonel Mitchell, urged Sir H. Bulwer to sign it for the sake of peace (!) ; and that Sir H. Bulwer, when he sat down to sign it, hesitated for a while, then signed and dashed it from him, saying 'That's, I fear, the worst thing I ever did in my life'"⁸⁶

We must remember, too, that Bulwer had little sympathy for Cetshwayo personally, and fully believed him to be a cruel tyrant; his concern throughout was only that Britain should act justly. It seems that he was persuaded that, having with strict justice given Cetshwayo what he claimed in regard to the disputed territory (even though he knew Frere planned to allow the Boers to keep their farms in it), Britain was justified in making these further demands on him. Frere described the process of persuading Bulwer as "often tedious and somewhat laborious".⁸⁷ When we consider Frere's intelligence, eloquence, energy and persistence, the likelihood is that for Bulwer the process was utterly exhausting. If the truth were known, it would probably be that Bulwer was verbally battered into submission.

It should be noted that Colenso himself (before he knew that the Award was to be nullified in practice by allowing the Boers to keep their farms in the disputed territory) expressed to Frere his

"cordial assent to the main points of the message, viz, those requiring the disbanding of the military force, and an entire change in the marriage system, as being, though measures of coercion, yet such as a great Christian power had the right and duty of enforcing upon a neighbouring savage nation like the Zulus, brought into close relations with itself, whose King had been installed at their own request by the representative of the Natal Government, and to whom a signal proof of generosity and good faith had been given in the award, as was set forth emphatically in the forefront of the message itself."⁸⁸

The meeting between the British and Zulu representatives took place on 11 December, 1878, under what is now known as the Ultimatum Tree, on the Natal bank of the Tugela. The Acting Secretary

86. Colenso to Chesson, 23 May, 1880, quoted in Cox, Vol.II, p.544.

87. Frere to Hicks-Beach, 8 December, 1878, quoted in Martineau, p.251.

88. Colenso to Frere, 27 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 26 January, 1879 (C.2252, p.52).

for Native Affairs, John Shepstone, the brother of Sir Theophilus, headed the British delegation. The Zulus were represented by three principal chiefs and eleven subordinate chiefs. John Dunn was also present.⁸⁹ At 11 a.m. John Shepstone read the first document, the Award. This named the boundary decided on, and stated that a mixed commission would mark off the line, ascertain how many whites and Zulus lived on the wrong side of it, and report on the amount of compensation to be given to any person wishing to move. Those who did not move would remain subject to the laws of the country in which they found themselves. Cetshwayo was not to attempt to exercise sovereignty north of the Pongola. Any claim to land in this area would have to be submitted to the British Government.⁹⁰

The Zulus replied that the award was not the full extent of the Zulu claim. Shepstone reminded them that any claim to the land north of the Pongola would have to be submitted to the British Government. The Zulus appeared to be satisfied with this.

Business was then suspended for lunch. At 2.30 p.m. John Shepstone began to read the Ultimatum. This document stated that the Boundary Award showed the British Government's regard for the rights and interests of the Zulus, but that the British Government had an equal regard for the rights and interests of its own subjects. The various demands were then made. The first three related to the recent disturbances on the border.

- (1) Sirayo. The ringleaders were to be surrendered and a fine of 500 cattle paid.
- (2) Smith and Deighton. A fine of 100 cattle was to be paid.
- (3) Mbelini The offenders were to be given up to the Transvaal to be tried in the Transvaal courts.

All these demands were to be met within 20 days.

89. Binns, p.109.

90. Enclosure 1 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 13 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.201).

The remaining demands related to the state of the government in Zululand as affecting the condition of the Zulu people and the peace and safety of the Queen's dominions adjacent to Zululand.

(1) Demands relating to the army. The Zulu military system was a menace to its neighbours and oppressive in its effects on the Zulu people. The present military system was therefore to be abolished, and replaced by military regulations to be decided on after consultation between the Zulus and representatives of the British Government. The army was to be disbanded and the men allowed to return to their homes and live in peace. The obligation to come to the defence of his country was to remain on every able-bodied man, but the regiments were not to be assembled for war or for any other purpose without the consent of the British Government. Every man was to be free to marry without the King's permission.

(2) Demands relating to the Coronation promises.

"These laws for the well-being of the Zulu people were the conditions required by the British Government in return for the countenance and support given by it to the new Zulu King by the presence of its representative, and by his taking part in the King's coronation; and once spoken as they were, they cannot be broken without compromising the dignity, the good faith, and the honour of the British Government."

But these promises had not been kept. Hundreds of Zulus had been killed without trial. This disregard of the Coronation promises could be tolerated no longer. Rules were therefore to be laid down for the open and fair trial before properly appointed Indunas of all accused of crimes. There was to be the right of appeal to the King, and no executions were to be carried out without the King's consent. There was to be a British Resident living in or on the borders of Zululand to act as the means of communication between the British and the Zulus, and to see that the rules regarding the trials of Zulus, and the military regulations, were observed.

(3) Demands relating to Missionaries. All missionaries formerly in Zululand and their converts were to be permitted to return.

No obstacle was to be put in the way of Zulus wishing to become

Christians.⁹¹

The Zulu King and his advisers were required to "give their answer" regarding these conditions within 30 days. It is no-where stated in the Ultimatum that if the demands were not accepted, Zululand would be invaded. There is no evidence to suggest that John Shepstone or any other British official verbally informed the Zulus of this.

The Ultimatum was heard by the Zulu deputies "with the utmost attention" and "with marked indications of concern and anxiety."⁹² They stated that they could not understand why the disbandment of the Zulu army was required, as it was an ancient institution of the country. Shepstone replied that the army could only be used for attacking British subjects as there was now no-one else around Zululand; and that the Zulus knew that there was no danger from the British Government. One of the Zulus, Gebula, pointed to the British troops present and asked "what are these?" Shepstone replied that they were for defence, and that it had been the action of Cetshwayo that had brought them there. The Zulus also denied that the Coronation promises had been broken. "All the laws then proclaimed have been carried out in full, none have been disregarded, who has complained that they have not? Have the Zulu people?" But Shepstone refused to enter into a discussion on the question.

The Zulus then asked that someone from Natal should go into Zululand and be present when the words were delivered to the King. Shepstone surmised that the Zulus wished to be relieved of the disagreeable task of conveying to the King words likely to be so unpalatable to him. He stated that he had no authority to allow this.

The Zulus asked for an extension of time, and gave as their

91. Enclosure 2 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 13 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.203).

92. Brownlee to Littleton, 16 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 20 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.216).

opinion that on so important an issue no time limit should have been set. But Shepstone had no power to agree to this.⁹³ The meeting then broke up. John Shepstone emphasised that the conduct of the Zulu emissaries had been completely courteous.

"What they said was spoken calmly, and deliberately, and not a word approaching to defiance or disrespect escaped their lips."⁹⁴

The reaction of Cetshwayo, the Zulu chiefs and the Zulu people to the demands of the Ultimatum is not a subject on which we have any detailed or reliable information. There is some doubt as to how much of the Ultimatum actually reached the Zulu King.⁹⁵ We have seen that the Zulu envoys at the Lower Tugela seemed reluctant to convey their unwelcome news to Cetshwayo. John Dunn sent his own messengers to the Zulu King, but did not go himself although the written document was left with him. The Ultimatum was a document of over 5,000 words, and the oral version received by Cetshwayo may well have been garbled, watered-down or unduly abbreviated. Certainly, public discussion in Zululand seems to have centred almost entirely on the question of the surrender of Sirayo's sons, to the exclusion of Frere's other demands.⁹⁶ The general impression seemed to be that if this demand were met, the others would not be insisted on.⁹⁷ Information received from Zululand suggested that the principal chiefs of the country were in favour of handing Sirayo's sons over, but that Cetshwayo himself, supported by the younger regiments, was extremely reluctant to do so.⁹⁸

93. Report on Mission to Lower Tugela, by John Shepstone, 19 December, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/12, p.36); Brownlee to Frere, 12 December, 1878, enclosure 3 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 13 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.209).

94. Report on Mission To Lower Tugela, by John Shepstone, 19 December, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/12, p.36).

95. Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 12 January, 1879 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 250/1879.)

96. B.A. Buffalo River to Colonial Secretary, 25 December, 1878 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 4994/1878.)

97. Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 8 January, 1879 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 6/1879.)

98. Ibid.; Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 15 January, 1879 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 372/1879).

Some attempt was made to collect the cattle for the fine,⁹⁹ but insufficient importance appears to have been attached to the time limit.¹⁰⁰ Cetshwayo seems never to have been really convinced that the British would conquer his country and depose him. There are several reports that he gave instructions that the passage of the British troops, if they invaded, was not to be resisted, unless they took hostile action first; that the British were to be allowed to march to Ulundi, where, apparently, he hoped to discuss the whole matter with them.¹⁰¹

The first public response of the Zulu King to the Ultimatum came in the form of a letter from John Dunn. Dunn reported that the runners he had sent to the King had returned with a message requesting him, Dunn, to write that he agreed to give up Sirayo's sons and pay the fines of cattle, and would submit the other demands to his indunas. Cetshwayo begged that, should the twenty days expire before the arrival of the cattle and the wanted men, Frere would take no action, as the recent heavy rains had made communications in Zululand difficult.¹⁰²

But Frere would not allow the Zulus any extension of time. If the cattle and prisoners were not given up within 20 days, the troops would advance. His only concession was that the troops should halt at convenient posts within the Zulu border and there await the expiry of the term of thirty days.¹⁰³ Bulwer urged that Frere should wait the full thirty days before taking any action. If British troops invaded after twenty days Cetshwayo might be able

99. Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 22 December, 1878 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 187/1878); B.A. Buffalo River to Colonial Secretary, 27 December, 1878 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 6/1879).
100. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 24 December, 1878, enclosure 6 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 1 January, 1879 (C.2242, p.10).
101. Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 19 November, 1878 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 171/1878); Special B.A. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 1 January, 1879 (C.S.O. 1925, No. 40/1879); R.M. Umvoti to Colonial Secretary, 10 January, 1879 (C.S.O. 1925-70 212/1879).
102. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 18 December, 1878, enclosure in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 27 December, 1878 (C.2222, p.227).
103. Memorandum by Frere, 24 December, 1878, enclosure 2 in Ibid.

to say that twenty days had not been long enough, and that the expiration of the thirty day term was not even waited for.

"By waiting the 30 days we shall certainly put him in the wrong if he intends wrong; whilst by not waiting the 30 days it is doubtful if he can be proved to be in the wrong however wrongly he may intend."¹⁰⁴

Frere replied that Cetshwayo should not be allowed the extra time, as it would enable him to invade Natal or strengthen the garrison at his capital. His request through Dunn was simply playing for time. If he did not comply with the first set of demands, it was very unlikely that he would comply with the second, more distasteful set of demands. And in any case about six days would elapse after the expiry of the twenty day time limit before troops could actually cross the Tugela.¹⁰⁵

Frere was still keeping an anxious eye on the Boers as well as on the Zulus. Kruger and Joubert were to report on their unsuccessful mission at a great meeting on 10 January. This was, Frere observed,

"the same date on which the time given to Cetywayo will expire. and, unless he has completely given in, Ld. Chelmsford will take the matter in hand, and his preparations are so complete that I have every hope of his speedy success. I hope the discontented Boers will understand this and see what the Zulus can do, before they decide on their own future proceedings."¹⁰⁶

Frere did not think it likely that Cetshwayo would "completely give in", that is, accept the terms of the ultimatum, or even that it was politically possible for him to do so. He wrote to Hicks-Beach on 23 December:

"My own impression is that it is quite impossible for Cetywayo to submit, without calling in our aid to coerce.... his regular regiments."¹⁰⁷

Shortly afterwards another letter, dated 24 December, came from Dunn. He stated that although cattle were still being collected, Cetshwayo evidently did not attach sufficient importance to

104. Memorandum by Bulwer, 26 December, 1878, enclosure 3 in Ibid.

105. Memorandum by Frere, 28 December, 1878, enclosure 4 in Ibid.

106. Frere to Shepstone, 19 December, 1878 (S.P. Case 15).

107. Hicks-Beach, p.108.

to the time limit "and it will be impossible now for them to be up in time." He was therefore making arrangements to cross over into Natal.¹⁰⁸

On 26 December a message was received by the Border Agent at the Lower Tugela. The messengers conveyed a request from Cetshwayo for more time, and stated:

"He agrees to pay the number of cattle demanded by the Government, but the cattle are not all in one place, they are scattered over Zululand and the Country is broad. Why does the Government name days, and count them out to him? He cannot get all the cattle together within the days mentioned, as the land is great and he has to seek them."¹⁰⁹

△ War was now inevitable. Neither the cattle nor Sirayo's sons were handed over by 31 December. No assent to the other demands had been received by 10 January. On the 11th the British forces crossed the Tugela. The Zulu War had begun.

108. Dunn to A.S.N.A., 24 December, 1878, enclosure 6 in Frere to Hicks-Beach, 1 January, 1879 (C.2242, p.10).

109. Message from Cetshwayo, 26 December, 1878 (S.N.A. 1/7/13, p.165).

EPILOGUE

The events of the war - its effect on the Transvaal Boers - Frere's censure and eventual recall - Shepstone's retirement - Wolseley's settlement of Zululand - Cetshwayo's restoration, defeat and death - the ruin of Zululand - conclusion.

✓ The Zulu War was made memorable by the disaster at Isandhlwana, the heroic defence of Rorke's Drift, and the death of the Prince Imperial. What Frere had hoped would be a war of a few weeks was protracted for six months as a result of Isandhlwana, probably the worst defeat ever inflicted on a British army by an uncivilized enemy. Nevertheless, except for the attack on the post at Rorke's Drift, there was no Zulu invasion of Natal. At the time, this fact was attributed to the check received by the Zulus at Rorke's Drift. Possibly if the Zulus had overwhelmed this outpost, they might have gone on to ravage part of Natal. But there is persuasive evidence that Cetshwayo had issued strict orders that the Zulus were to fight a defensive war only, and that British territory was not to be invaded. It is said that the attack at Rorke's Drift itself was made in defiance of this order.¹ Even during the war Cetshwayo continued to send messages appealing for peace.² But the loss of life at Isandhlwana, as well as the death of the Prince Imperial, made it inevitable that only a crushing defeat of the Zulus would vindicate the reputation of Lord Chelmsford and the British Army. The end came on 4 July, 1879, when the Zulu Army was utterly defeated at the battle of Ulundi. No further resistance was offered by the Zulus, though Cetshwayo himself was not captured until 28 August.

Frere's belief that the destruction of the Zulu military kingdom would please and conciliate the Boers proved an utter miscalculation. Far from rejoicing at the overthrow of their old

1. Reminiscences of the Past, by J.W. Shepstone, p.110 (S.P. Case 4).
2. E.G., Message from Cetshwayo to Bishop Schreuder, written by C. Vijn, dated 'Beginning of August 1879' (S.P. Case 21).

opponents, the majority of Boers appear to have sympathised with them as fellow-victims of British aggression. Even before the outbreak of war, there were some Boers who spoke of joining the Zulus against the British in the event of war.³ After Isandhlwana there is strong evidence that messengers were sent by Cetshwayo to Kruger and Pretorius, urging them to join in the struggle; or alternatively to remain neutral and so avoid any molestation of Boers by the Zulus.⁴ The Boer leaders evidently chose the second alternative, but some Boers assisted the Zulus in other ways. There were cases of armed bands of Boers capturing looted Zulu cattle bought by whites at Government sales, and restoring them to their Zulu owners.⁵ Joubert was reported to have said, with a bloodthirsty piety worthy of the Roundheads, that "if the Zulus enter Natal and kill every Englishman, woman and child, I shall say that the Lord is righteous!"⁶ This is hearsay, but there is no doubt that the initial defeats of the British army were regarded with satisfaction and even rejoicing by a great many Boers. Shortly after Isandhlwana (in which his son George was killed) Shepstone left Utrecht for Standerton, where he hoped to raise a force of mounted men:

"But judge of my surprise" he wrote to his son, Offy, "when I found not only a disinclination to face the Zulus but an open sympathy with their success, and exultation at our defeat! They declare that now providence has put into their hands the chance they have been looking for to take back their country by force!"⁷

✓ They did not take this opportunity; but it is very likely that the removal of the Zulu danger was a factor in the Boers' calculation to rebel in 1881. The Zulu War did nothing to reconcile

3. Filter To Wood, 18 November, 1878 (S.S. 314, R.4191); (?) to Wood, n.d., (S.N. I, No.46).
4. Confidential, Shepstone to Frere, 2 February 1879 (Letter-book 3, Administrator to High Commissioner, T.A.).
5. Private, Shepstone to Wood, 5 February, 1879 (Ibid); Shepstone to Frere, 30 January, 1879 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.223); Osborn to Shepstone, 17 February, 1879 (S.P. Case 18).
6. Shepstone to Rowlands, 1 February, 1879 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 3, p.227).
7. Shepstone to Theophilus Shepstone, Jr., 6 February, 1879 (S.P. Case 20).

the Boers to British rule, or facilitate the policy of Confederation, but rather the reverse.

The disaster of Isandhlwana ensured the ruin of Frere's career and reputation. If the Zulus had been defeated in a swift sharp campaign of a few weeks, Frere's disobedience would probably have been winked at. But the disaster, the delay it caused, and the necessity it entailed of sending out still more troops that could ill be spared, all these, made it impossible for the British Government not to issue some sort of reprimand. The letter of censure is dated 19 March, 1879. It stated that Her Majesty's Government

"cannot but think that the forces at your disposal were adequate to protect Natal from any serious Zulu inroad, and to provide for any other emergency that could have arisen, during the interval necessary for consulting Her Majesty's Government upon the terms that Cetshwayo should be called upon to accept; and they have been unable to find in the documents you have placed before them that evidence of urgent necessity for immediate action which alone could justify you in taking, without their full knowledge and sanction, a course almost certain to result in a war, which, as I had previously impressed upon you, every effort should have been used to avoid."⁸

Frere refused to accept that he had done anything wrong. In despatch after despatch he continued to argue the point, his language growing ever wilder and more violent. One of his arguments was the urgent necessity for conciliating the Boers, which he had convinced himself, wrongly as we have seen, could only be achieved by the speedy destruction of the Zulus. But he also argued that his action had been urgently necessary in order to save Natal from a Zulu invasion.

"I would confidently put to any competent military critic whether, given the actual force on both sides and the actual physical circumstances of the positions, there was any safe mode of defending Natal save that system of active defence, by taking up positions in Zululand, which was adopted? The theatre of war was thus transferred to the enemy's country. The Colony was practically secured from being made the scene of a Zulu war."⁹

Pausing only to wonder at an invasion of a neighbouring

8.Hicks-Beach to Frere, 19 March 1879 (C.2260, p.109).

9.Frere to Hicks-Beach, 30 June, 1879 (C.2454, p.139).

ment on a constitution for the Transvaal, but actually as a means of removing him from the post which he had filled so unsuccessfully. He sailed from Durban on 27 May, 1879.¹⁴ On 26 June he had an interview with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Sir Michael told him that had he come home earlier he would have offered him the Governorship of Western Australia; but that he had been obliged to fill the post. He then said that he would have to ask him to return to Natal to assume the Government of that Colony, as Bulwer would soon be coming home. Hicks-Beach assumed that Bulwer would not wish to stay on in Natal in a position subordinate to Sir Garnet Wolseley. This assumption proved false, however, as Bulwer expressed his willingness to stay. When, therefore, Shepstone saw the Secretary for the Colonies again on 21 August, the latter told him that Natal was not vacant after all, and that he had nothing else to offer at that time. Shepstone stated that he did not want any Government, particularly not the Natal Government, and asked to be pensioned, although the fact that he had not served a full three years in the Transvaal meant that his pension would be a very moderate amount.¹⁵

"I gathered from what Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said to me", he wrote to Herbert, "that he is anxious to get rid of me as soon as possible. So be it, if so it must be. I do not suppose that you wish me to write a long chapter setting forth my view of my own services; I therefore have not written one.

I have had starvation allowance to live on all my life up to the last three years; but as I did not expect to be so soon recalled the good of those years of comparative plenty was wasted in 'riotous living' and in expenditure that turns out to have been useless.

If I must revert to my normal experience of years of scarcity, of course I must; but I shall be sure that it will not be because you wish it, and I willingly leave the matter in your hands."¹⁶

To his son Henrique he wrote:

14. Diary for 1879 (S.P. Case 9).
15. Diary for 1879 (S.P. Case 9); Shepstone to Henrique Shepstone, 28 August, 1879 (S.P. Case 29).; Shepstone to William Shepstone, 1 September, 1879 (S.P. Case 20).
16. Draft, Shepstone to Herbert, 28 August, 1879 (S.P. Case 16).

"The reason for my going in for a pension is that I am sick of all the intrigues and petty jealousies which I see going on and am heartily desirous of being for a few years at least, what I have never been all my life, my own master. I can't help feeling too that so long as I continue in active service in Africa and I don't care for it any where else, I am more or less in your way, all of you; for on account of the jealousy that will be kept alive by remaining in the service, the name is against you but when once I have retired it will be the reverse."¹⁷

Shepstone retired in Natal. He evidently found his exclusion from power very difficult to accept.¹⁸ In June, 1881, he wrote to his son, Henrique:

"I am myself in great doubt what it would be best for me to do, whether to remain in Natal or leave it; I see no good that I can do by staying; everything seems out of joint, and it grieves me to be here and see things go as I do see them go wrong, without being able to help set them right. I feel as I would rather be out of sight, than be a looker on and contribute nothing to the wellbeing of the Country. Zululand is in a very unsatisfactory condition, and our own natives are growing very dissatisfied with the way in which they are governed. It is doubly difficult for me to say anything on the latter subject because it is sure to be thought that I am prejudiced in favour of my own system and therefore not a reliable guide."¹⁹

Shepstone emerged briefly from retirement in 1883 when he supervised the reinstallation of Cetshwayo in Zululand. It is to the fate of Cetshwayo and his country that we must now, in conclusion, turn.

Cetshwayo, with only a few personal attendants, was found and captured on 28 August, 1879. He was taken from Zululand by ship to Cape Town, and imprisoned in the Castle. On Wolseley fell the task of settling the political future of Zululand. With its former system of Government destroyed, the only practicable solution was direct British rule. But the British Government, no doubt influenced by the agitation against the war in Britain, and by its own censure of Frere for starting it, had decided against annexation. Wolseley therefore divided the country amongst six (the number later being increased to 13) kinglets, who were as

17. Shepstone to Henrique Shepstone, 28 August 1879 (S.P. Case 29).

18. Shepstone to Henrique Shepstone, 7 June, 1880 (Shepstone Papers, File F, K.C.)

19. Shepstone to Henrique, 6 June, 1881 (S.P. Case 29).

far as possible descendants of the chiefs of the clans that Shaka had welded together into one nation. The major exception to this rule was John Dunn, who was given the largest portion of Zululand, from the Buffalo river to the sea, for his services against his former patron. Shepstone had left Natal before Wolseley arrived, and reached England after Wolseley had left it, so little of this plan can be attributed to him. In fact, he was sharply critical of it. He opposed the appointment of John Dunn, who had trafficked in arms, which had "tended more than any circumstances to bring about the Zulu War."²⁰ He was in favour of direct rule, and considered the chiefs who were now to rule Zululand in no way preferable to the deposed King.

"I cannot", he wrote to his son, Henriqué, "...approve of the kind of settlement which Sir Garnet has made of the Zulu country. It should in my opinion have been based upon the principle of actual active control and not upon that of giving the Zulu people in whose cause we pretended to go (to) war six tyrants instead of one."²¹

He elaborated on this theme in an official memorandum. By the settlement, he wrote,

"we shall have delivered the people from the tyranny of Cetshwayo certainly but we shall have handed them over bound hand and foot to the tender mercies of a number of rapacious savages who have all along been not only the instruments of the tyranny which we complained of in the King but those who instigated and incited it."²²

Wolseley's settlement was no more successful in preserving peace than it was in guaranteeing liberty. The "Kilkenny cats", as the 13 chiefs were nicknamed, were soon at each other's throats, and the British Resident was powerless to stop the ensuing wars and massacres. Many deputations came to Pietermaritzburg, pleading for the restoration of Cetshwayo. "It is most remarkable, how faithfully Zulus still feel attached to the royal family" wrote Bishop Schreuder in July, 1881;²³ though other fac-

20. Memorandum on the Settlement of Zululand, by Shepstone, 23 August, 1879 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 4, p.25).

21. Shepstone to Henriqué Shepstone, 24 September, 1879 (Shepstone Papers, File F, K.C.).

22. Memorandum by Shepstone, n.d., enclosure in Shepstone to Herbert, 14 October, 1879 (S.P. Case 7, Letter-book 4, p.35).

23. Schreuder to Shepstone, 1 July, 1881 (S.P. Case 19).

tions had also meanwhile arisen. But the chaos in Zululand, the advent of a Liberal administration in England, and the favourable impression made by Cetshwayo personally on all who met him, all united to strengthen the movement for his restoration to Zululand.

In 1882 Cetshwayo's request to be permitted to visit England to lay his case before the Queen was granted. He arrived in England on 5 August, 1882. His visit aroused much interest, and his appearances in public invariably drew large crowds of eager and curious onlookers. He was granted an audience of the Queen, and had three interviews with Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The latter told him that the British Government were prepared to restore him to his kingdom on three conditions:

(1) Only a portion of Zululand should be placed under his rule, the remainder to be a Reserve ruled by Britain, and available as a place of residence for those Zulus who did not wish to be under Cetshwayo;

(2) A Resident was to be appointed to advise him and report to Her Majesty's Government.

(3) He was to rule "justly and peacefully" under the same conditions as had been required of the 13 kinglets.

Cetshwayo was quite prepared to accept the second and third conditions, but objected to any more land being taken from him. He would be left "like one living on the top of a rock", he complained.²⁴ But Kimberley would not alter this condition.

He returned to the Cape in September, but it was not until January, 1883 that he again set foot on his native soil. By this time it had been decided that the Reserve should consist of John

24. Brookes & Webb, p.150. Sir Garnet Wolseley had summarily settled the border dispute after the Zulu War by deciding on the following rivers as the boundary between Zululand and the Transvaal; Blood - Lynspruit - Pemvaan - Pevaans - Pong. This gave the Zulus considerably less than the Boundary Commission had recommended that they should get. Wolseley to Hicks-Beach, 3 September, 1879 (C.2454, p.258).

Dunn's and Hlubi's territories, a third of Zululand, and that Zibebu, Cetshwayo's most dangerous enemy, should retain his independent sovereignty.

Cetshwayo was landed at Port Durnford, in Zululand, on 10 January, 1883. He was met by Shepstone and an escort of British troops, but by very few of his own people, for they had not been notified of his arrival. He was installed as King by Shepstone at Emtongjaneni on 29 January. His second reign was short and disastrous. Many of Cetshwayo's most fervid supporters lived within the boundaries of Zibebu's domain. War soon broke out between the two Zulu chiefs, and Cetshwayo was defeated. For the second time the royal kraal of Ulundi was burned, this time by Zibebu's Zulus. Cetshwayo fled to the Reserve. On 8 February, 1884, at a kraal near Eshowe, he suddenly died. The cause of death was officially stated to have been heart disease, but there is a possibility that he was poisoned.

Cetshwayo was the last Zulu King. His heir was his son, Dinizulu. To rid Zululand of Zibebu, Dinizulu decided on a remedy which proved worse than the disease. He accepted the assistance of a group of Boers living across the border in the Transvaal to drive him out. They defeated Zibebu, but claimed in return over 4,000 square miles of land, over half (and the best half) of Zululand outside the Reserve. Britain intervened, and succeeded in reducing the amount of land taken by the Boers. What remained of Zululand was then annexed by Britain. A revolt in Zululand was suppressed, and Dinizulu was deported for ten years to St. Helena.²⁵

Thus the miserable aftermath of the Zulu War came to an end. Britain's invasion of 1879 and its subsequent refusal to accept the responsibility for the vacuum of political power it had caused, resulted in what Frances Colenso aptly termed "The Ruin of Zululand."

We have seen that Frere deliberately brought on the Zulu War.

25. Vide R.L. Cope: The British Annexation of Zululand, 1887.

But it may be argued that the war was inevitable. The military kingdom of the Zulus was becoming increasingly an anachronism in the circumstances of the time. It had to come to an end sometime, and was unlikely to have gone into voluntary liquidation. The case against Frere, however, is not that he failed to avert war, but that he did not try to avert war, but on the contrary, deliberately provoked it.

There would never have been a war between England and the Zulus, Cetshwayo is reported to have said, had it not been for "That little grey-headed man, Frere."²⁶ Nevertheless there is no doubt that the figure on the British side that loomed largest in the Zulu consciousness was Shepstone. To the Zulus it seemed that it was the quarrel between Shepstone and Cetshwayo that had led to the invasion of their country. It was Shepstone who had sent in the armies, destroyed the country, and captured the King.

Shepstone had been regarded by the Zulus as their especial friend and protector; but he had turned against them. Cetshwayo felt himself betrayed; even today, an attitude of distrust and resentment is said to prevail amongst the members of the Zulu Royal Family towards the Shepstone family.²⁷ One can easily understand why there should have been this feeling of betrayal. When he was in Natal Shepstone had always been most friendly towards the Zulus and towards Cetshwayo in particular. It was he who had ensured Cetshwayo's succession; it was he who had presided over his coronation; he had been accorded the rank of Shaka, the highest possible in Zululand; he was officially the 'father' of the Zulu King; and he had always supported the Zulus in their long dispute with the Boers, and had restrained the encroachments of the latter. When he became ruler of the Transvaal, however, he changed his face towards the Zulus. He supported the Boers' territorial encroachments in Zululand and advocated war against the Zulus.

26. Binns, p.188.

27. Information from Dr. E.H. Brookes.

Naturally the Zulus regarded him as faithless, a renegade, a betrayer of trust. I have attempted, in this work, to show how it was that Shepstone took the course of action that he did. A few general remarks might be added.

The Zulus saw the relationship between Shepstone and Cetshwayo in a much more personal light than Shepstone himself did. Shepstone is conventionally represented as the typical Great White Chief. Frere described him as an 'Africander',²⁸ while Sir William Butler described him as a "white Zulu".²⁹ His earlier ambition to set himself up as the autocratic ruler of a native state to the south of Natal lends support to this interpretation of his character. Yet reading his diary and letters for the period covered by this thesis leaves one with a different impression. He saw himself not as an 'Africander' nor as a Great White Chief, but rather as an English gentleman and a loyal servant of the Crown. He himself wrote that he had a profound and religious veneration for Her Majesty's Government,³⁰ and he attached great importance to even the trappings of British power, trappings which a thorough-going 'Africander' would perhaps have despised.

His dealings with Zululand, in my judgement, were motivated by his loyalty to the Crown and attachment to the British Government, rather than by any proprietorial or fatherly interest in the Zulus. He regarded Cetshwayo, not as a fellow African, nor as his 'son' whom he was under a solemn duty to protect, but as the savage ruler of territory abutting on a British Colony, the peace and safety of which was his chief concern. He wished to preserve Zululand as a British sphere of influence, and was alarmed at the serious consequences for Natal that a successful Boer encroachment into Zululand would have. It was for these reasons that he supported the Zulus against the Boers. In his official minutes and

28. Brookes & Webb, p.57.

29. Butler, Autobiography, p.185.

30. Young, p.278.

private letters his attitude towards Cetshwayo was that of a British proconsul towards a savage king, not that of a father towards a son. His position as Cetshwayo's 'father' was useful as a means of protecting British interests. But his K.C.M.G. meant much more to him personally.

His views led him to support Zulu independence against the aggression of the Transvaal. But he had no wish to preserve Zululand's independence for its own sake, and in fact always considered that Zululand's eventual destiny would inevitably be to come under British rule when the time was ripe. The arming of the Zulus, and the apparently increasing intransigence of their King led him to believe that the time for a British annexation of Zululand was near. When he became the ruler of the Transvaal the circumstances by which he was surrounded led him to advocate this step more warmly. His main concern was to gain the loyalty of the Boers and so to preserve British rule in the Transvaal. His duty to the Crown, which had once led him to oppose the Boer claims in Zululand, now led him to support them. It was necessary for the security of British dominion in the whole of southern Africa that the savage military kingdom of the Zulus should be brought to an end. This was how Shepstone saw it. But to Cetshwayo it seemed that his 'father' had betrayed him, had 'cast him off'.

We have seen that the reasons Shepstone gave for changing his mind over the merits of the border dispute were scanty and unsatisfying.³¹ He never really examined the question with any thoroughness, but merely found it convenient, when in Natal, to assume that the Zulus were in the right, and convenient, when in the Transvaal, to assume the opposite. While he may have been justified in thinking that his loyalty to the Crown, as a servant of the British Government, overrode his duty to the Zulus, as the 'father' of their King, nothing can excuse the injustice involved in his

31. Vide supra, pp. 247-251.

expedient and uncritical acceptance of the validity of the Boers' territorial claims in Zululand.

As well as the heavy loss of life on both sides, and the wretched post-war history of Zululand, the Zulu War was a tragedy for another reason. It was not the culmination of long history of distrust and dislike between the Zulus and the British. The relations between Natal and Zululand had always been peaceful and friendly, and Cetshwayo had trusted and respected the British Government. He had relied on it to protect him against the aggression and encroachments of the Transvaal Boers. Yet it was not the Boers against whom the Zulus fought, but the British.

In a sense, the Zulu War was the outcome of the long-festering border dispute between Zululand and the Transvaal. Had it not been for the restraining influence on both sides of Britain, as represented by the Natal Government, and by Shepstone in particular, there is little doubt that this dispute would have ended in war much sooner. By Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal, he and the British Government became parties to the dispute; there was no longer any restraining influence; and the border dispute between the Zulus and the Boers ended in a war, not between the Zulus and the Boers, but between the Zulus and the British.

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NOTE: The G.H. and S.N.A. material in the Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg have been re-arranged since I worked on it, so the volume numbers quoted by me may no longer apply.

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1. Official

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- (b) Colonial Secretary's Records.
- (c) Secretary for Native Affairs' Records.

2. Unofficial.

- (a) In the Government House Records.
- (b) The Shepstone Papers.

B Transvaal Archives, Pretoria.

- (a) Administrator's Records.
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- (d) Landdrost of Utrecht's Records.

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D The Killie Campbell Collection of Africana, Durban.

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I. UNPUBLISHED

A. Natal Archives

1. Official

(a) Government House Records

(i) Despatches, Secretary of State to Lt.-Governor of Natal.

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered.</u>
21	-	1873
22	-	1874
23	-	1875
24	-	Jan. - July, 1876
25	-	July - Dec., 1876
26	-	Jan. - June, 1877
27	-	June - Dec., 1877
28	-	Jan. - May, 1878
29	-	May - Nov., 1878
30	-	Nov. 1878 - Feb. 1879

(ii) Confidential Despatches, Secretary of State to Lt.-Governor of Natal.

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157	-	1867 - Sept. 1878
158	-	Sept. 1878 - Feb. 1880

(iii) Despatches, Lt.-Governor of Natal to Secretary of State.

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered.</u>
279	-	Nov. 1871 - Dec. 1874
280	-	1875 - Dec. 1875
281	-	Dec. 1876 - April, 1879

(iv) Confidential Despatches, Lt.-Governor of Natal to Secretary of State.

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered.</u>
299	-	1871 - 1895

(v) Despatches, High Commissioner to Lt.-Governor of Natal.

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
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(vi) Despatches and Letters received by the Lt.-Governor of Natal from all South African sources (including, after 1875, the High Commissioner).

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
338	-	1859 - 1863
342	-	1872 - 1873
343	-	1874
344	-	Jan. - Oct. 1875
345	-	Oct. - Dec. 1875
346	-	Jan. - Sept. 1876
347	-	Sept.- Dec. 1876
348	-	Jan. - March 1877
349	-	April- July 1877
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351	-	Oct. - Dec. 1877

<u>G.H. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
353	-	April - June 1878
354	-	June - July 1878
355	-	August 1878
356	-	September 1878
357	-	Oct. - Nov. 1878
358	-	December 1878
359	-	Jan. - Feb. 1879
360	-	Feb. - April 1879
361	-	May - June 1879
362	-	July - Oct. 1879

(vii) Despatches, Lt.-Governor of Natal to others in South Africa

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637	-	1870 - 1878
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(viii) Letters and Reports received by Sir Garnet Wolseley from South African sources.

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(b) Colonial Secretary's Office Records.

(i) Reports of Border Agents

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(ii) Confidential Minute Papers

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2552	-	1877 - 1878
2553	-	1878 - 1879

(c) Secretary for Native Affairs' Records

(i) Letters Received (and also some Reports and Draft outward letters).

<u>S.N.A. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
1/1/20	-	1870
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1/1/24	-	1874
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(iii) Confidential Correspondence.

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1/4/1	-	1876 - Sept. 1878
1/4/2	-	Sept. - Nov. 1878

(iv) Messages from Tribes, especially the Swazis.

<u>S.N.A. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
1/6/1	-	1866 - 1869

(v) Papers relating to Mpande, the Swazis, etc.

<u>S.N.A. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
1/6/2	-	1857 - 1874

(vi) Papers relating to Cetshwayo.

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(vii) Reports on Border Disturbances, etc.

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(viii) Papers relating to the Zulu War.

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(ix) Messages to and from the Zulus, etc.

<u>S.N.A. No.</u>		<u>Period Covered</u>
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1/7/4	-	1859 - 1865
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(x) Reports by the Secretary for Native Affairs.

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1/7/12	-	1878

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(a) In the Government House Records

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4	-	" "
5	-	" "
7	-	Letter-books, 1850- 1880
8	-	Diaries, 1872 - 1874
9	-	Diaries, 1875 - 1883
12	-	Letters received, A & B
13	-	Letters received from Bulwer.
14	-	Letters received, C.
15	-	" " D, E & F.
16	-	" " G & H.
17	-	" " I, J, K & L.
18	-	" " M, N, O & P.
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25	-	Correspondence on Zululand 1876 - 1879.

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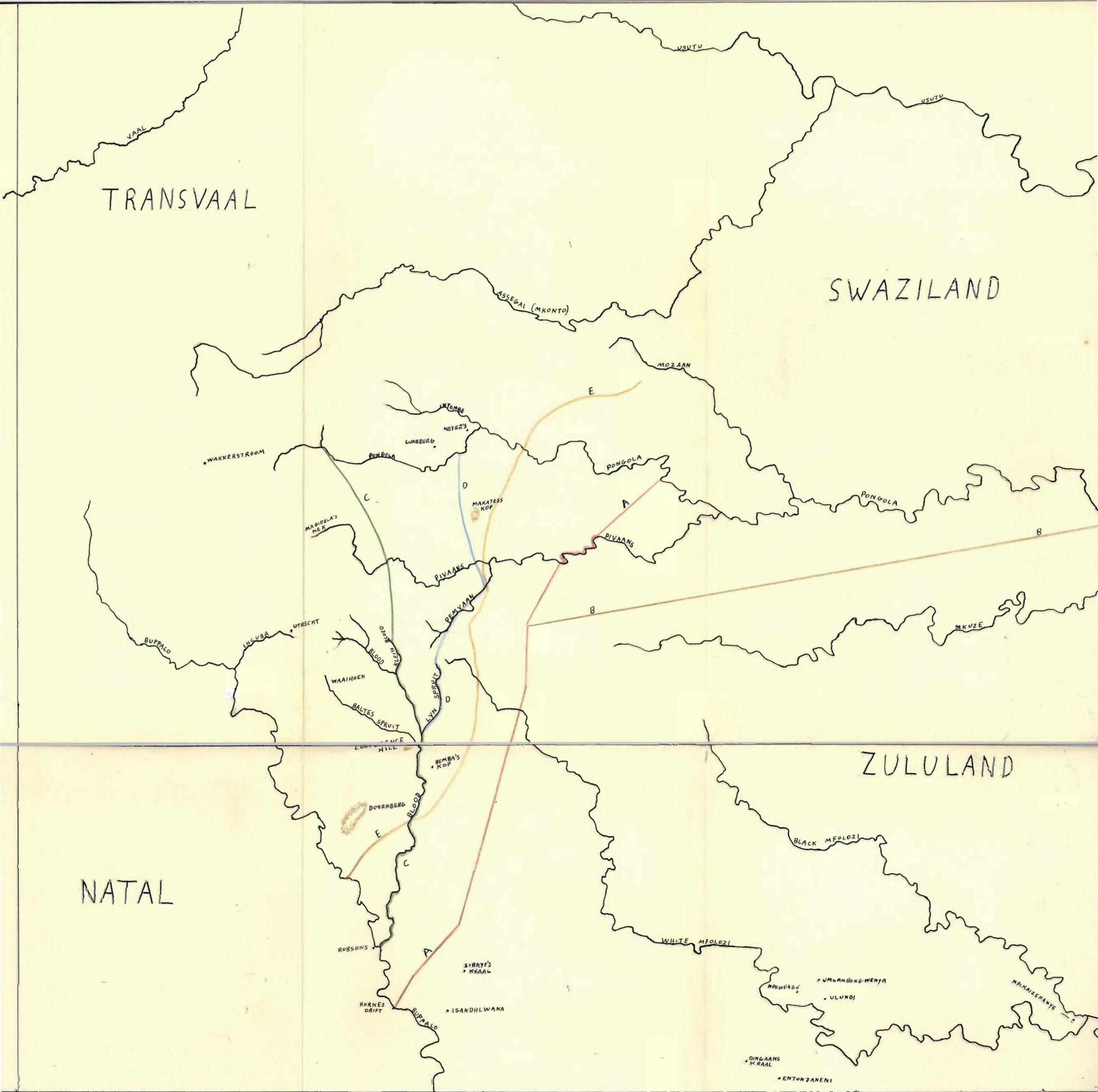
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1861 LINE, BEACONED OFF IN 1864	A — A
ENCROACHMENT BY 1875 PROCLAMATION	B — B
1854 LINE AS INTERPRETED BY THE NATAL COMMISSION	C — C
1854 LINE AS CLAIMED BY THE TRANSVAAL	D — D
OLD HUNTING ROAD	E — E