

**FOREIGN & COLONIAL
SPEECHES**

BY

THE RIGHT HON. J. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.





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Speeches

By the Right Hon.
Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.

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Preface

WHEN Lord Salisbury was called upon to form a Government in the summer of 1895, and when it was known that it was to be strengthened by the inclusion of the Liberal Unionist leaders, there was much speculation as to the office which Mr. Chamberlain would be invited to occupy. To his own immediate friends it was well understood that he had a decided preference for the Colonial Office, but to "the man in the street" the appointment came as a surprise.

By a curious but common misapprehension, this great Department, charged with so many interests vitally affecting the future of the British Empire, had come to be regarded as an office of secondary importance; and it was a surprise to many that the post should be deliberately chosen by a statesman of the reputation and energy of the member for West Birmingham. Those, however, who had more closely

watched the political career of Mr. Chamberlain recognised the fitness of the choice, which gave him an opportunity of carrying into practical effect the ideas and the policy which had long been present to his mind.

There is an undefined impression that in his earlier days Mr. Chamberlain was dominated in regard to foreign policy by the views of the "Manchester school" and the "peace-at-any-price" party. Never was there a greater mistake. Although he has never shown any sympathy with the noisy "jingoism" of the music-halls, he has always been an Imperialist in his conceptions. As President of the Board of Trade, from 1880 to 1885, he was precluded from taking any very active part in foreign and colonial affairs; but, even at this time, Mr. Bright is reported to have said that "the junior member for Birmingham was the only 'Jingo' in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet"; and it is certainly true that in all his public speeches, whether as a youth in the Birmingham and Edgbaston Debating Society, in Parliament, or outside, Mr. Chamberlain has given evidence of his strong sense both of the advantages and the obligations of empire.

Between "Little Englandism" and Imperialism it seems to us that there is, no half-way house, and

no room for the *laissez faire* policy which too long regulated the attitude of this country towards her colonies and dependencies. Either we must relinquish our possessions abroad, and leave the colonies to themselves, in order that the mother country may avoid all causes of complication with foreign Powers; or we must boldly recognise our responsibilities to our kinsmen beyond the seas and to the native races who own the sway of Her Majesty.

This is the text which has been the subject of so many of Mr. Chamberlain's addresses. This is the lesson which he has been enforcing upon his fellow-countrymen—that the democracy of the British Empire have the greatest possible interest in the conduct of its foreign and colonial affairs—that their comfort, happiness, and very existence, depend upon a wise, a far-sighted, and spirited policy.

Recognising, as he has long done, the gravity of the problem with which the United Kingdom is confronted, with its limited area and ever-increasing population, Mr. Chamberlain has constantly insisted, as no other statesman has insisted before, upon the supreme importance of maintaining the integrity of the Empire, of developing the "Imperial estate," of extending the dominions of the Queen, and of pre-

serving and extending friendly relations between the mother-country and all her colonies and dependencies.

This policy, and the methods by which it may be carried into effect, are fully set forth in the following speeches, and are now presented for the consideration of those who share Mr. Chamberlain's belief in the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race and the future of the British Empire.

THE EDITOR.

LONDON, *June 1, 1897.*

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