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Lord Stanley's contribution:

'The noble Lord has improved the occasion for the purpose of advertising his missionary society. I do not object to that, for if the accounts we have are correct, it stands in considerable need of some such support. But that is not my reason for rising. I think my right hon. Friend (Mr. Adderley) has done good service in bringing this subject before the House; and I do not at all regret that that other and larger question, the African squadron, is not at least in form made part of the inquiry. I do not believe it is possible altogether to leave that out of the question. I do not believe it is possible to go into one part of the subject, of our relations with the West Coast of Africa, without dealing also with the rest. But it is quite large enough for a separate investigation; and as we have borne with that remarkable English enterprise for so many years, we may, I think, very well endure it for some time longer. For my own part, I do not wish to conceal my opinion that if the people of this country knew what has been and what is the waste, I do not say of money merely but of what is much more important, valuable lives on that coast, that African squadron would very shortly be numbered with the things of the past. I do not believe there is a year or even a month that passes in which the service on that coast does not put an end to some life among our officers, which, measured by any rational standard of comparison, is worth more than the merely animal existence of a whole African tribe. But that matter may very well stand over.

What I wish to urge on the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Caldwell) is not simply that he should sanction this inquiry, which I believe he is prepared to do, but to allow the order of reference to be made wide enough to cover that which is the real question at issue. If we are merely to go into the question of civil and military expenditure to see whether it be possible to keep up these establishments at somewhat less cost than we incur at present, that is altogether an insignificant matter. The real question is whether there are not some at least among these settlements which involve us in great outlay and risk, and the maintenance of which serves no useful purpose. When I say they serve no useful purpose, I mean that they do not answer the end of promoting our trade; because I suppose 551 nobody imagines that we increase our political influence or our military power by retaining them. No enemy is likely to attack our settlements on the African coast; and if he did he would soon find that the attempt brought its own punishment, he would be likely to lose his army from disease and to take nothing from his conquest. And as to that other point raised by the noble Lord who preceded me—that which I may call the philanthropic part of the question—I think we are in that respect acting in some degree under a delusion. Whenever that matter is discussed, either in the press, in this House, or at public meetings, it is constantly assumed that in some way or other we are responsible for the fortunes and destiny of the African race. Now I confess I do not see that that is in any manner the case. I can quite understand how an impression of that kind should have existed. The feelings of this country thirty years ago may well be excused. Every great movement gives rise to strong feelings; and it is quite

natural that the men who put an end to the slave trade, and had just succeeded in abolishing slavery, and who had the evils of those two systems strongly impressed upon their minds, should have felt that some reparation, some compensation, was due to those whom we had injured. But, after all, we must look at the case as it really is. The slave trade was not created by England or by any European country. You may carry back its existence in Africa, I believe, to a period anterior to any recorded history. We do not know of any time when it did not exist in the interior of Africa. Englishmen found it there and used it; and I do not deny that they aggravated its evils. But they did not originate it, they only took it up as it stood. And now, thirty years after the extinction of slavery, and sixty years after the legal extinction of the slave trade, I think we may fairly hold that whatever debt we owed to the people of Africa has by this time been paid off. If we talk of civilizing the Africans I am afraid we had better first look at home. We have not to go five miles from the place in which we are sitting to find plenty of persons who stand as much in need of civilizing and who have as little done for them as the negro. Therefore, I say, we ought to view this simply as a matter of trade; and then the question is very much narrowed. We have only, or at least mainly, to consider whether the trade that is carried on at these various points [552](#) which we occupy is increasing or diminishing, and whether there is any reason to think that at any point it would be greater or less if our occupation were to cease.

I have looked at the statistical returns, and although the returns of the revenue and those of imports and exports do not precisely agree as to the inference which they suggest, and although there may be an increase of trade at Sierra Leone and the Gambia River, yet in one place at least—at the Gold Coast—there is a very considerable falling off. We have to ascertain whether that falling off is likely to be temporary or permanent; we shall also do well to compare the amount of trade at the ports occupied by the British Government with the immensely increased trade which has taken place along the coast generally; and upon that comparison it will be for the Committee to express its opinion as to whether the English occupation has really created or fostered commerce. As to morality, I apprehend that there is no evidence to show that, at Sierra Leone at least, the oldest, the longest occupied, and the most important of these settlements, we have attained any great success in that particular. On the contrary, it might be found that we had produced a race the most worthless of any in the world. One word only upon the question of the expense of these settlements. I have no doubt we shall hear whatever is to be said in their defence; and it may be stated that, as far as civil government goes, they cost very little, and that even their military expenses are not very considerable.

As to civil government, I would point out that, with the exception of the Imperial forces, which stand in a different class, these are the only colonies which entail on us any charge whatever for their civil government, excepting, perhaps, one or two of the smaller West India Islands. With respect to military expenditure, in the first place the defence of these establishments is mainly naval, and it is difficult to estimate what is the particular amount of naval force you are maintaining on the coast for that special object. In the next place, their military cost is not to be measured by the extent of the force you keep up there. The real burden is the responsibility you have undertaken, and the limit of which you do not know and nobody knows. Recollect how the matter stands. You cannot afford to send out as governors or persons in authority [553](#) in these colonies, in any sense, your best men. No man will go out to Africa who can find employment elsewhere. I do not speak with reference to

the present occupants of these offices—I do not know who they are; but you must take, not the men whom you would choose for such situations, but the men whom you can get. Communication, although improved, is not very frequent, the distance is considerable, and in the hands of these men, placed there with no influence brought to bear upon them such as a large British population can always bring to bear on those who govern—in the hands of men chosen as I have mentioned, surrounded by negroes, having everything their own way about them, you are compelled, to a great extent, to leave the power of peace and war, and an authority the exercise of which may at any moment involve the sacrifice of thousands of lives and many millions of money. I do not wish it to be inferred, from what I have said, that I am ready to commit myself at once to the absolute abandonment of these posts. But I think there is a *prima facie* case made out for inquiry as to whether they are worth retaining. And holding that opinion to some extent with regard to them all, I think it does more particularly apply to that one of which we know the least, and with which the business we do appears to be decreasing, the Gold Coast, where, in a country extending over some 300 miles, you are surrounded on all sides by utterly savage and warlike tribes, and have constituted yourselves, so to speak, the head of a confederacy over which you have very little material power. That settlement is in so peculiar and so anomalous a position that I think it might deserve to be made a special subject of inquiry.'

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