

influence especially of our own country at Amiens and Cambrai, at Lens, and at Mons.

Now another practical consideration, which I think gives strong supplemental support to my main contention, that the Government might easily have avoided this situation at the present time! Against whom are we going to fight in the immediate future? In answer to that question, when it has been discussed before, the only suggestion I have heard was that we might have a war between Japan and America. Well, that could not possibly implicate the British Empire, because Japan is our Ally, and I do not think myself that a war of anything like the dimensions of the last or which is at all likely to implicate Canada, can take place in the near future. Sir, it is not only of moral importance, because the people are fed up with war, it is of economic importance. I repeat, it is of economic importance. Where would you get your munitions, where would you get your food supplies? We have so impoverished ourselves, so impoverished our supplies, that our difficulty now,—I speak of all the nations that were implicated in the war—is not to supply huge armies abroad, but to feed the ordinary run of our population at home. In the face of that fact, am I not justified in claiming that in the immediate future a war that would implicate Canada is almost unthinkable, and certainly it is unthinkable to my mind before the Imperial Conference of 1921. Under those circumstances, would it not have been wise for the Government to give us a breathing space and to have asked the Imperial Government to give us a breathing space? Would it not have been wise to have been influenced by these considerations?

Sir, there is another consideration that comes to me here. This expenditure is not only useless, it is much worse than that, for it commits us to a wrong line of policy and at the same time it does not, in all probability, provide the means which would be of the slightest use to us if we did unfortunately find ourselves at war. Why, I have a recollection of Canada beginning a navy before, Sir, and as a Canadian I was ashamed to see our newspapers printing cartoons and writing about our small beginnings in that direction. I was ashamed to see things, and felt humiliated to the ground; and I contemplate that before a year or two is over, we will have the same kind of literature and the same kind of cartoons with respect to the ves-

sels which are being given by the Admiralty—probably because they are nearly obsolete vessels already—and given to us that we might embark on an expenditure of two and a half millions for their upkeep.

Mr. BALLANTYNE: Would my hon. friend allow me a question?

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer): We are in committee and I propose to finish my remarks, if the hon. minister will be so good. I was going to say what will probably satisfy him on the point he was raising. If the vessels were up-to-date at the present moment—and I concede all that to him—they certainly will be obsolete in five years. That is my answer to the point my hon. friend was going to put, and he can put it as strongly as he likes. Well, as we are not likely, in my judgment,—and I am following from point to point as quickly as I can—to have a war within that time in which we will be implicated at sea, if those vessels will be obsolete in three years—and we know the brevity of life of these vessels; this was all discussed at length years ago in this House—then more than ever I contend that we are committing ourselves to a useless expenditure at a moment when it could be avoided by the exercise of ordinary foresight and of ordinary political strategy in dealing with the Mother Country.

Not only does the question arise in one's mind as to what will be the use of these vessels, but if we are thinking in terms of war—and I suppose we have to as long as we discuss these matters—then we have to have other considerations in our minds. Mr. Chairman, I do not readily think with those people who say that in a thousand years you will have wars in the world just as you have always had them. After all, Sir, the world does improve. Less than a hundred years ago in my native county of Northumberland, two members of the nobility fought an electoral contest and used language which was not exactly pleasant to one another. After the contest they went down to the seashore and fought a duel. The law of the land allowed that sort of thing at that time. But duelling is not allowed in Great Britain now, nor in Canada, nor in any other part of the British Empire. So that the world does improve. And I am one of those who hold that if the best influences of the best men in the civilized nations of the world will take up the League of Nations idea and work for peace, they will do a great deal to promote better ideas among the nations of the world and