

said "that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree, just for a word—'neutrality', a word which in war time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen. I protested strongly against that statement and said that in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of 'life and death' for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could anyone have in engagements made by Great Britain in the future? The Chancellor said, 'But at what price will that compact have been kept. Has the British Government thought of that?' I hinted to His Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements." (G.) The Chancellor had already committed himself in public by the speech which he made to the