

is no going back on that. Take the year 1914. I have no reason to believe it is the desire of the German Government to postpone or cancel their programme for that year, but, if it be their desire, they have only to make it known. No one builds 'dreadnoughts' for fun, and we can see no practical difficulty in the absence of unforeseen dangers elsewhere in arriving at a good and complete arrangement for that year, not only on behalf of the British Government, but on behalf of the British Empire as a whole. As the year 1914 is one of those years when we shall be building four ships to two, a mutual cessation could clearly be no disadvantage to the relative position of the next strongest naval power.

It is clear, however, that such an arrangement would probably involve other powers besides Great Britain and Germany. The programmes of France and Russia on the one hand, and of Austria and Italy on the other, would have to be taken into consideration. I am sanguine enough not to see any insuperable difficulty in that. The influence of the British and German Governments, acting together for the peace and welfare of the world, is priceless and measureless, and, if an arrangement between them, be it only for one particular year, for the prevention of what can plainly be shown to be a wasteful, purposeless, and futile folly were to acquire a wider international scope and significance, that would be all the more cause for general rejoicing and all the more honour to those who had taken part in bringing it about. Here, again, we are in a very good position to ventilate such ideas and to advance them to the best of our ability, because we have proved in recent years, and are proving, our capacity and resolve as a people and as an empire to maintain and, as I shall presently show, to improve our naval position whatever action may be taken elsewhere. No one can accuse us of wishing to gain by negotiation or by supplication an advantage which we cannot win by sacrifice and effort. At any rate, there is the suggestion renewed again for 1914 or, if 1914 is too near, for 1915.

Addressing a Liberal meeting at Manchester on October 18, 1913, Mr. Churchill, in proposing a naval holiday, said:

The proposal which I put forward in the name of His Majesty's Government is quite simple. Apart from the Canadian ships or their equivalent, apart from anything that may be required by new developments, we should lay down four great ships to Germany's two. Now, we say, while there is plenty of time, in all friendship and sincerity, to our great neighbour, Germany: 'If you postpone beginning your two ships for twelve months, we will postpone beginning our four ships, in absolutely good faith for exactly the same period.'

'That would mean a complete holiday of one year, this holiday to be as far as big ships are concerned, between Great Britain and Germany.'

'That would mean a saving of nearly six millions of pounds to Germany and of nearly twelve millions to Great Britain, while the relative strength of the two countries would be absolutely unchanged.'

And again on November 12, at the Guildhall banquet he said:

The measured and unbroken development of the German navy the simultaneous building by

many powers, great and small, all over the world, of modern and large modern ships of war will undoubtedly require from us expenditure and exertions greater than those we have ever made in time of peace, and next year it will be my duty, if I should be responsible for this important Department of State, to present to Parliament estimates substantially greater than the enormous sum originally voted in the present year. His Majesty's Government will embrace and will work for every opportunity of abating the competition in naval and military armaments, which is the bane and the reproach of modern Europe. But what is necessary has got to be done, and we shall not hesitate for a moment, once we are satisfied of the need, to go to Parliament boldly for those supplies of men and money which the House of Commons, whatever its party complexion, has never refused to vote in living memory for the vital services of the State.

And it is within the memory of hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House that on the 8th day of December last the United States House of Representatives, after a full debate, passed a resolution on the same subject by an almost unanimous vote. That resolution is in the following terms—I shall quote them in full as I think it is desirable that they should be impressed upon the attention of hon. gentlemen of this House and of the people of this country:

Resolved, that in the opinion of the House of Representatives the declaration of the First Lord of the Admiralty of Great Britain, the Right Honourable Winston Churchill, that the Government of the United Kingdom is willing and ready to co-operate with other Governments to secure for one year a suspension of naval construction programmes offers the means of immediately lessening the enormous burdens of the people and avoiding the waste of investment in war material.

That a copy of this resolution be furnished the President, with the request that, so far as he can do so, having due regard for the interests of the United States, he use his influence to consummate the agreement suggested by the Right Honourable Winston Churchill.

That resolution passed the United States House of Representatives by a majority of 317 to 11.

These declarations that have been made by the First Lord of the Admiralty invite a few considerations. No thoughtful person can fail to be impressed by the considerations which Mr. Churchill has set forth so lucidly and so eloquently; and it is most satisfactory to know that his proposals have received pronounced approval in the federal legislature of the great neighbouring nation. It is not only depressing but humiliating to realize that the progress and development of modern civilization have been accompanied by this powerful and incessant tendency of the nations to arm themselves against each other. It is not apparent that in this respect humanity has made much