

story to one who has studied British naval history. Not long ago I had the opportunity of reading a book entitled 'The Naval Progress of the Nineteenth Century', in which a whole chapter was taken up with pointing out the fact that for the last seventy-five years a naval panic had occurred about every five years. In 1850, Sir Francis Head published a book called 'The Defenceless State of Britain', in which he gave a description of the capture of London by a French fleet. In 1859, under the government of Lord Derby, a committee sat to consider the state of the navy, it being represented that the naval force of the country was far inferior to what it ought to be in comparison with other powers. In the old days, France was the bugaboo; in our times Germany is the scare. In 1874, the navy was said to be in a shameful condition. Sir Edward Reid said that the government had practically abandoned the naval position of the country in Europe. In 1886 another panic was on, and the charge was made that the navy was allowed to fall away below that of France. In 1901, only nine years ago, the London 'Times', the Thunderer—which is not averse to playing politics when necessary—published an article entitled 'The National Danger' in which it used the time-honored expression about Nero fiddling while Rome burned. That was the last scare before the present one. From time to time we have had panics on this subject. There was a panic because England's wooden sailing ships were of an inferior type; another because the sailing ships had become useless and steam vessels were required; another because vessels were built of wood and should be armour-plated; then these were not good enough and should be built of iron; then, there was the change from iron to steel. 'The Blue-sea School', of which my hon. friend the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden) spoke the other day, are liable to get up a scare on this subject at any time. And how did this feeling arise? In 1904, when the Unionist government went out of power, Great Britain had a budget of £13,000,000 for the navy, Germany's budget naval at that time being £4,000,000. The Radical government let that budget drop year by year, until, in 1908, it had gone down to £3,000,000, while Germany's had been going up, so that in that year, Germany's naval expenditure was as much as that of Great Britain. The result was that what might be called the Conservative wing—or, rather, the old Whig wing—of the Radical party, men like Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith, and Sir Edward Grey, realized that something would have to be done to bring their followers up to the point of supporting a strong naval policy and enabling them to get a budget out

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of which they could spend on the navy the amount that England had been accustomed to spend and they spoke strongly and sternly about the effect of a reduced contribution. These are the facts; any one who reads English politics knows them to be the facts. And what was the position of Mr. Balfour in the last campaign. Mr. Balfour did not say that England's prestige was menaced. What he said was that this Radical government had neglected the defence of the country, and had not kept the naval expenditure up to the figure at which it should be kept, and his object was to condemn them for that neglect and to compel them to change their course or retire. Mr. Balfour absolutely disclaimed, upon many platforms in the last campaign, the idea that Germany had any notion of going to war with England. These are facts known to every student of current English politics.

The secretary of the admiralty, speaking on January 13, last, pointed out that:

In April, 1912, the so-called point of danger, we should have 20 Dreadnoughts to Germany's 13; 40 pre-Dreadnoughts to Germany's 20; 35 cruisers to Germany's 8; 16 docks for Dreadnoughts to Germany's 9.

In other words, in 1912, Britain would have a fighting force of 95 vessels against Germany's 41. So, when these hon. gentlemen attempt to raise a scare in this country about Britain's naval position, they are simply imposing on people who do not sit down and study the facts as they actually are in England. I venture to say that any one who would attempt to raise a scare about the empire being in peril from this cause would be laughed off any platform in Great Britain. Let us see what the British ministers say about the situation. Hon. gentlemen opposite talk about a 'tin pot navy'. Well, Mr. Haldane, the secretary for war, speaks about the contribution which Canada is making as 'a splendid scheme of imperial co-ordination for imperial defence'. Speaking three weeks ago in Scotland:

He said he had served on the confidential committee of the cabinet on imperial defence. They had inquired into the question whether the admiralty had kept up the navy to the proper standard or whether, as was alleged by Lord Charles Beresford, they had let it down.

That is, whether Sir John Fisher was building too many Dreadnoughts and too few cruisers.

They went into every detail, had everything before them, and they were satisfied, not only that the fleet had not been let down, but that it was stronger than it had ever been before. (Cheers.) If any of them would take the trouble to look at the navy list, and if they compared what was called the home fleet with what the home fleet used to be, they would see