

FIELD GUNS

II. THE CASE AGAINST THOSE ORDERED IN GERMANY

WE drew attention on a recent occasion (*THE MONTHLY REVIEW*, December 1901) to the fact that the War Office had placed large orders for field material with a small metallurgic firm in Germany. Orders of this nature (except on an experimental scale) are recognised as unpatriotic, humiliating, and illicit, for any first-class Power, so that it was natural that those responsible for them should have carefully concealed what had been done, and equally natural that comment should follow when the transaction became known.

A question was raised in the German Reichstag as to how far the supply of such material was compatible with neutrality; and in the English House of Commons the Secretary of State for War was asked (December 14, 1900) to explain the circumstances under which the order was given. Mr. Brodrick replied, in substance, that a severe crisis had forced the Government to give large and urgent orders for field material; that the resources of the only two English firms who supply armaments were exhausted, and so the War Office had to give part of the work to Germany; that the Germans had delivered their material while the English were still hopelessly in arrears; and finally that he could give no pledge that further orders would not be placed abroad.