

with prearranged plans. These last can be put into force rapidly and are of such a nature that they can be deferred until war seems inevitable. Steps have also been taken under the powers conferred by the House last week to safeguard the position in regard to stocks of commodities of various kinds.

The thoughts of many of us must at this moment inevitably be turning back to 1914 and to a comparison of our position now with that which existed then. How do we stand this time? The answer is that all three Services are ready, and that the situation in all directions is far more favourable and reassuring than in 1914, while beside the fighting Services we have built up a vast organization of civil defence under our scheme of Air Raid Precautions. As regards the immediate man power requirements, the Royal Navy, the Army, and the Royal Air Force, are in the fortunate position of having almost as many men as they can conveniently handle at this moment. There are, however, certain categories of service in which men are immediately required, both for military and civil defence. These will be announced in detail through the press and the B.B.C. The main and most satisfactory point to observe is that there is to-day no need to make an appeal in a general way for recruits, such as was issued by Lord Kitchener 25 years ago. That appeal has been anticipated by many months and the men are already available. So much for the immediate present. Now we must look to the future. It is essential, in the face of the tremendous task which confronts us, more especially in view of our past experience in this matter, to organize our man power this time upon as methodical, equitable, and economical a basis as possible. We therefore propose immediately to introduce legislation directed to that end. A Bill will be laid before you which, for all practical purposes, will amount to an expansion of the military training act. Under its operation all men between the age of 18 and 41 will be rendered liable to military service if and when called upon. It is not intended at the outset that any considerable number of men other than those already liable shall be called up, and steps will be taken to ensure that the manpower essentially required by industry shall not be taken away. There is one other allusion which I should like to make before I end my speech and that is to record my satisfaction and the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government that, throughout the last days of crisis, Signor Mussolini also has been doing his best to reach a solution. It now only remains for us to set our teeth and to enter upon this struggle, which we ourselves earnestly endeavoured to avoid, with determination to see it through to the end. We shall enter it with a clear conscience with the support of the Dominions and the British Empire, and the moral approval of the greater part of the world. We have no quarrel with the German people except that they allow themselves to be governed by a Nazi Government. As long as that Government exists and pursues the methods it has so persistently followed during the last two years,