

It might have commenced (but did not) during the Boer war, when the German Reichstag passed the naval bill preceded by the assertion that—

"Germany must have a fleet of such strength that, even for the greatest naval Power, a war with her would involve such risks as to imperil its own supremacy."

Ever since that time, Germany has steadily pursued her declared purpose with the result that to-day, although far inferior in naval strength to the United Kingdom, she is less palpably helpless than she was ten years ago. Naturally enough, the United Kingdom does not like the change. She would much prefer being supreme upon the ocean—in a position to dictate, in extra-European politics, to the rest of the world. And, feeling perfectly confident of her own superiority to all considerations but those of absolute justness and right, she can see but one reason for the existence of a German navy, namely, a predetermined and wanton attack upon the British empire.

That is a very foolish attitude, and before finishing this paper I shall endeavor to establish the assertion. Meanwhile, as an aid to the understanding of the history of the scare (the scare of 1909—the only scare that has arisen) observe that it must be attributed to five factors: (1) the existence of a substantial foreign navy; (2) the timidity of a powerful and invulnerable nation in presence of another unable to assail her; (3) the play of party-politics working upon that timidity; (4) agitation by militarists, armament-makers and yellow journalists; and (5) a foolish speech (16 March 1909) by Mr. McKenna.

Party-politics was the strongest of these factors. The Germany naval bill above referred to was passed in 1900. A new bill providing for larger expenditure was passed in 1904 (a). Mr. Balford's (Unionist) government resigned in December 1905. During these five years there was no "scare" and no attempt at arousing apprehension. Mr. Balfour's statement (7 March 1905) that—

"The committee of Defence were clearly of the opinion that the invasion of these lands in such force as to inflict a fatal blow or threaten our independence was impossible" (b).

being sufficiently satisfactory.

(a) Ann. Reg. 1904, p. 279.

(b) As given in Ann. Reg. 1905, pp. 65, 6. And see *Ibid*, 1906, p. 36.