

He spoke as follows:—

Gentlemen,

I propose to speak to you on some of the lessons of the war as to international law, especially on retaliation and the indirect blockade, as it has been called, which was carried on against Germany by Great Britain latterly in co-operation with the United States of America. My remarks will naturally fall under three heads:

1. The doctrine of retaliation and its effect on neutrals;
2. The doctrine of continuous voyage; and,
3. The system of rationing neutral countries in the vicinity of Germany.

1. RETALIATION. The first observation which comes to me is that it has been thought sometimes that neutrals are affected as regards their use of the high seas by the law only of contraband and of blockade in the strict sense of the term. It has, however, always been a part of international law that the position of neutrals might be affected by reprisals exercised by one belligerent against the other, and that neutrals might to some extent be prejudiced by such reprisals. There is nothing new in this doctrine—it is as old at least as the time of Lord Stowell. Lord Stowell had to deal with the orders-in-council passed by the British Government by way of reprisal for the decrees of Berlin in 1806, 21st November, and of Milan in 1807, 17th August. By these decrees Napoleon affected to put the British Isles into a state of blockade and prohibited all intercourse with them, and all traffic in British merchandise. Having regard to the predominance of the British navy at that time this proclamation of blockade was most audacious, but as the influence of Napoleon was predominant on the continent his decrees were obeyed by his allies and by those who dreaded his power.

Great Britain retaliated for the Berlin decree by the celebrated orders-in-council of 7th January, 1807, and 11th November, 1807. By the second of these orders there was proclaimed virtually a blockade of France and of the countries of her allies, and of all countries which submitted to Napoleon's decrees at Berlin and