

When the German programme is completed Germany will have a fleet of 33 Dreadnoughts. That fleet will be the most powerful the world has ever seen. This imposes upon us the necessity of rebuilding the whole of the fleet. That is the situation. If we were to fall into a position of inferiority we should cease to count for anything amongst the nations of Europe and we should be fortunate if our liberty were left, and we did not become the conscript appendage of some stronger power. That is a brutal way of stating the case; but it is the truth.

These are the words not of a jingo, but of Sir Edward Grey the present Foreign Secretary, which practically in effect were repeated by Mr. Asquith who described the situation as:

Most grave, and to us not only unforeseen, but unexpected.

I think that is proof that a fleet without a Dreadnought is practically useless and that it is not an addition to the war strength of the navy in time of war. The hon. Postmaster General delivered an eloquent speech the other day which we all very much admired as far as its eloquence was concerned, but which contained a goodly number of misrepresentations. That hon. gentleman, swelling himself, said: This is the third occasion upon which Canada is rushing to the support of the motherland. The first was in the tariff of 1897, brought down to this House, in which we gave a British preference, the second was when we sent our troops to South Africa, and the third was when we brought down this navy Bill. Let us deal with these seriatim. In the first place I challenge the hon. gentleman to show one expression in the tariff of 1897 that gave a preference to Great Britain. That tariff contained a reciprocal clause, but while the hon. gentleman was not a member of the government, although a member of the House, the present Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding) and his colleagues took particular pains to explain to the members of the House that any nation in the world might have the advantage of that reciprocal clause. It was pointed out by every hon. gentleman on this side of the House that it would be impossible to grant a British preference under that provision of the Tariff Act. But hon. gentlemen opposite knew it all and it was not until British diplomacy, which in years gone by was ridiculed so much by the Prime Minister, had helped them out of the hole into which their blundering legislation had got them, that they were enabled later on to give a British preference. So that, the hon. Postmaster General was not accurate when he said that in 1897 they gave a British preference. But was it the preference which had been promised the people by the right hon. Prime Minister? I have here the London speech of the Prime Minister in which he told the elec-

tors that he was just as much in favour of a preference as was Sir Charles Tupper. He stated that one of the first things he would do when returned to power would be to send a commission to England to negotiate a mutual preferential treaty, but within forty-eight hours after he landed in England he broke faith with the people of Canada and he advised the English people not to grant us a preference, and not to have anything to do with the obnoxious policy of protection which was the curse of Canada, but which by the way he has retained as a principle of his fiscal policy down to the present hour. I say he betrayed the people of Canada; I say that any one who acted as he did in the ordinary business relations of life, would be found guilty of false pretenses, in that the right hon. gentleman secured the support of the people of Canada on his pledge of preferential trade, which on being returned to power he absolutely repudiated. The Postmaster General must think that the people of Canada are blest with a very short memory when he claims credit to this government for sending Canadian troops to South Africa. We do not forget the Prime Minister's Chicago interview in which he stated that the Militia Act would not permit Canada to send volunteers beyond the confines of our own country, that the constitution would not permit it, that there was no appropriation, and that parliament would have to be called. We do not forget the interviews and editorials in the Toronto 'Globe' to the same effect. We do not forget that a colleague of the Prime Minister stated in the province of Quebec that not a man and not a gun would be sent by the Canadian government to assist the motherland in South Africa. We do not forget that Sir Charles Tupper, the leader of the Conservative party, wired Sir Wilfrid Laurier, pledging him the support of the Conservative party if he sent the troops to South Africa, nor do we forget that in reply to the telegrams of the Montreal Star sent to the mayors of every city, town and village the universal response came back: Send our boys to the front. We know that it was only when forced by overwhelming public opinion that the Prime Minister yielded and that Canada was able to participate with England in that campaign. We know that then the Prime Minister went down to the province of Quebec and that he practically apologized for permitting Canadians to enlist and fight in the British army. We had Mr. Bourassa, when a Liberal in the House, telling the whole story of that war some years ago, and the character of the campaign that was carried on in Quebec. Mr. Bourassa told us that there was a large section of Quebec opposed to the sending of