

The conditions of naval and military safety for the Empire are not problems within the competency of the Defence Committee, which is instructed on such points by the Cabinet. And this is the Committee which *in the mind of those who created it* was to "fulfil the main functions of a General Staff as they are now understood all over the civilised world by statesmen who have considered the necessities of Empire."

One may be thankful for the fact that all our leading politicians do not share Sir Henry's opinions. Mr. Balfour, on the occasion of the same debate, showed that he had risen to a comprehension of what patriotism demands when the security of the Empire is being discussed between the Head of the Cabinet and those who are able to advise him soundly on Service matters. He said:

I can well understand that the Defence Committee might be asked to consider or reconsider such a problem as the two-Power standard for naval defence, for it is a question that touches so many interests that it cannot properly be regarded solely as a naval question.

And again:

There is no doctrine more clear than that it is the gravest mistake to diminish the amount of your regular forces until the expansible Army on which you have to rely in the event of a sudden struggle for national existence is in working order. The Government take exactly the opposite view. They are sanguine that they will be able to find an expansible Army. [Mr. Haldane dissented]. Well, I can only read their speeches in our three Parliamentary debates as meaning that the Government have absolutely resolved that the Regular Army is to be largely diminished, although they have not got anything like an expansible Army. *Suppose I had been present at the discussion of that great question, I should have urged on the Defence Committee what I am now urging.*

These quotations plainly show the difference between the spirit in which a Unionist Cabinet approaches the subject of Imperial Defence and that which prevails when a Radical Ministry takes up the question. Mr. Balfour recognises that the great naval and military problems to be solved should be discussed by those who understand them, and that the politician should be guided by the conclusions of the expert. On these