

question of British supremacy, against that of Mr. Asquith, of Mr. Churchill or of Sir Edward Grey, neither can I take his opinion on the question of there being a German peril. I prefer rather to take my views from such a communication as I hold in my hand, a letter addressed to the editor of *The Times* by three gentlemen whose names I will read to the House presently, and who are the representatives of the Foreign Policy Committee in England. This letter is as follows:

To the Editor of *The Times*.

Sir,—The Foreign Policy Committee has, since its inception more than a year ago, persistently advocated the desirability of an improvement in the relations between this country and Germany. We have been glad to note during the last six months that the previous tension was relaxed, and that the United Kingdom and Germany were working together in friendly concord in the interests of peace through all the complex negotiations connected with the Balkan war.

We now seize the earliest opportunity of expressing our deep satisfaction at the further favourable turn events have taken in consequence of the recent statements of Admiral von Tirpitz and Herr von Jagow. We would not rashly over-estimate the significance of a declaration of which we have only the bare outline: still less would we hastily assume that all cause of trouble has disappeared or that a final limit has been placed on naval expenditure. We desire, however, to express our cordial appreciation of this definite step made by the German Government towards the establishment of a complete understanding; and although candid critics of Sir Edward Grey's policy on many occasions we feel bound to accord our fullest acknowledgments of the part which he has played in making such a step possible.

The acceptance for the first time of a standard of proportionate strength for the two navies, coupled with an announcement that German relations with Great Britain are particularly good, cannot fail to have a marked effect in cementing a lasting friendship between the two peoples. We feel confident that the spirit in which this advance is made will be fully reciprocated by our own Government and that any suggestion of a departure from the standard of naval strength laid down last year would be peremptorily rejected by them. It is manifest that a sanction of further increases would entirely destroy the possibility of any agreement being reached.

If a satisfactory settlement of this highly controversial subject can be arrived at by the two Governments they will be truly representing the sentiments of the people in both countries, and an arrest of the insane competition in armaments throughout Europe may be looked for with fresh hope. But the time has not yet come to speculate too far on future developments and we content ourselves for the present in welcoming without reserve or misgiving the course events have recently taken.

Yours, &c.

(on behalf of the Foreign Policy Committee),

Courtney of Penwith,

L. T. Hobhouse

Arthur Ponsonby

President.

Chairman.

Hon. Secretary.

The names attached to that letter must all, I submit, carry great weight in this country. The first name is that of a gentleman who occupied a very important place in the British House of Commons for a great many years. The second name is that of a gentleman, who has also been prominent in the public life of Great Britain, and

the third name, if I mistake not, is that of a gentleman who, in her lifetime acted as private secretary, or in some such confidential capacity, to Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. We cannot, I say, be otherwise than greatly impressed by a declaration bearing such names as these.

In answer to an interrogation from my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) regarding the position of Sir Charles Tupper with reference to Imperial federation, the hon. member for Calgary admitted that Sir Charles Tupper was against the idea of a contribution, but he endeavoured, as I understood him, to justify that on the ground that Sir Charles Tupper took that position because he was looking to the ultimate federation of the Empire. My hon. friend from Calgary was singularly misinformed on that point. In the *Kingdom Papers*, No. 11 at page 40, it is pointed out:

In 1891, Lord Salisbury requested a deputation from the Imperial Federation League to prepare and submit some scheme. The league appointed a committee; the committee failed; and the league dissolved (1893.)

Sir Charles Tupper was a member of the committee. In its consultations, he had to fight those who proposed colonial contributions; and, afterwards, he wrote as follows:—

Knowing as I do that the most active members of the committee were mainly intent on levying a large contribution on the revenues of the colonies for the support of the army and navy of Great Britain, I am delighted to have been able, almost single-handed, to obtain such a report from such a committee.

In another publication, which I have under my hand, there is a communication from Sir Charles Tupper in which he points out that it was he who broke up this committee because of their taking that attitude. He was opposed to the action of the committee on the very ground upon which we, on this side of the House, oppose the present proposal before Parliament. May I point out also that upon this subject Sir Charles Tupper never changed his opinion. From the first he was opposed to a contribution not only in the days of the Imperial Federation Committee, but he has been opposed to a contribution ever since. On November 20, 1909, after the scare of that year had passed away, he wrote a letter to the present right hon. Prime Minister from which I desire to read a few paragraphs. The letter is as follows:

The Mount, Bexley Heath,

November 20, 1909.

My Dear Mr. Borden:

I have read with much interest the communication of the Canadian correspondent of the *Times* on naval defence in to-day's issue of that paper. I regard that question as more important than any mere party issue, and am glad to learn that you are resolved to maintain the patriotic attitude of the Conservative party assumed last session. A few years ago, when Canada was struggling to open up for British settlement the great granary of the world, a few gentlemen here raised the question of a Canadian contribution to the Imperial navy. I joined issue with them and was sustained by the press and public opinion. It was admitted that Canada was not only no burden to the Mother Country, but without her harbours and coal mines on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, Britain would require a larger navy. Contrast the progress of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand under Imperial management, and since it was relinquished, and it will be seen to whom their present importance is due.