

Two contrary laws seem to be wrestling with each other nowadays; the one, a law of blood and of death, ever imagining new means of destruction, and forcing nations to be constantly ready for the battlefield, the other, a law of peace, work and health, ever evolving new means for delivering man from the scourges which beset him. The one seeks violent conquests, the other the relief of humanity. The latter places one human life above any victory; while the former would sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives to the ambition of one. Which of these two laws shall ultimately prevail God alone knows.

Now that is a statement of actual truth never more clearly demonstrated than in our own day. It is a truth we witnessed at the time of the great war, that we are witnessing again to a degree that no one hitherto could have dreamed of. We see in the world forces that are working for destruction and for death. We see forces that are working for peace, health and work. What I want to say to my hon. friends who seem to claim a monopoly of belonging to those forces that are working for peace, health and work is this, that you cannot go on with that work unless you protect yourself from the other forces. That is something to be kept in mind. When some of us to protect ourselves and our country against the forces of blood and of death ask parliament to vote money for purposes of defence, that we may continue to further the law of peace and work and health we are told that we are preparing for and promoting war. We are doing nothing of the kind. We are trying to make the national position secure to enable the law of peace, work and health to prevail and progress. This we believe is only possible as we keep at bay those forces that are making for death and destruction. No one can deny that there is coming over the face of Europe, if not of other parts of the world as well, something in the nature of an alignment of forces which are wrestling with each other, forces which do not confine themselves to any one country and which are operating in ways that are exceedingly dangerous. All that is changing the situation from what it was a few years ago with respect to the need of defence in different countries.

But more than that. We have at the present time and have had since July of last year a great civil war waging in Spain, one of the great countries of Europe. We have seen how difficult it is for other nations to keep their own nationals out of that war. That is something to be considered and to be reckoned with. The fact that in these many months we have seen coming from all parts of Europe men who are prepared to throw their lives into that ghastly furnace, fighting on one side or the other makes pretty clear

what we may expect if war ever gets beyond the boundaries of that country to a greater extent than it has at the present time. It has required all the ingenuity and skill that the statesmen of Britain and other countries in Europe could command to confine that conflict within the boundaries of that single unfortunate country. Who will say that those of us who are sitting here may not before the end of this present parliament witness some terrible expansion of that conflict, unless it is totally ended within that period of time. If the conflict spreads, if a conflict of that character becomes international, is it likely that any part of the world is going to escape its terrors? Facing such a possibility, not to speak of others scarcely less evident, can a government which has the responsibility of looking after the defence of its own country, ignore altogether what is necessary for the protection of its coasts, its harbours, its great cities, its people wherever they are, in contingencies that may arise.

These are things which the present administration have had to consider. The situation would be appalling and hopeless if there were not other factors which help greatly to relieve it. It would not be fair to leave the house or the country with the impression that the existing situation menacing as it may be is one that cannot be met. It is a condition that has been continuous more or less for the past five or six years. Europe has been in a very unsettled state. But some way or another, by the working together of men of good will, the nations have been able to maintain peace to a very considerable extent, and we hope and pray that they may be able to continue so to do. And there are many reasons to believe that perhaps they will. I do not suppose that Germany wants to go to war, I do not suppose she is ready to go to war at the present time. I imagine Italy has had enough of war for a while. I imagine Russia knows what it would mean to have to carry on a war in any country other than her own. So far as Japan is concerned there is evidence that the power of the people there who desire peace is very strong. We know whatever the ambitions of their rulers may be that throughout the world the peoples as a whole are anxious to preserve peace. On the whole there has been some improvement, a less tense strain in the international situation, a balancing of forces, a growing recognition on the part of every government of the uncertainties of success and the penalties of failure, a growing readiness too to seek to remove the causes of conflict, the sources of friction and to realize that in the end war settles nothing even for the victor. But one thing is certain, and that