

A BREEZE FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN

DURING a recent debate on the condition of the Mediterranean Fleet, an important point was raised as to the line which divides the functions of the Legislature from those of the Executive. The question at issue was whether or not the Mediterranean Fleet had its proper complement of cruisers, and of what are called, not too felicitously, auxiliary vessels. The Executive immediately saw its frontier violated and took a strenuous offensive, which turned what should have been a sober discussion of a serious national problem into an acrimonious party debate. The charge which was formulated from the Opposition benches was that the fleet in question was deficient in cruisers and auxiliaries, that its defective condition had been brought to the notice of the Government by the flag officers concerned, and that the Government had done nothing to make things good. This charge members of the Opposition were prepared to prove. The Government were not prepared to deny it. But with considerable spirit and no little tactical skill they slipped from the threatened position and delivered an overwhelming counter attack from an unexpected direction. It was not an attack merely on the Opposition, but something of greater boldness, and much more in the fashion of the time. It was an attack on the Legislature and its right to intervene in executive matters. The question raised, they said, was purely