

fully size up the situation, and whether I am acting under full knowledge and comprehension of the great interests which are involved. I cannot do that unless I inquire and examine and think and reflect.

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.

What is the situation? Britain is not an aggressive nation. I say that without fear of contradiction. Her hostages are such that she dare not be aggressive. Her possessions are so great that there is no will or wish to be aggressive. Her great problem is to organize, develop and maintain what she has got. She is a defensive, peaceful nation and must so remain. That weighs with me and I feel that it counts for much. More than that; let us not be misled by a play on the word 'emergency.' It is the condition of things that we want to understand. If the conditions imply danger, present or prospective, and if the danger is one that we, as part of the Empire, are called upon to face and to make provision for, the emergency can go to one side. It is the fact I am after, it is the condition that I want to ensure myself and the country against and that I would like to see the Empire insured against.

What is the condition? There, you have Britain, the heart of the Empire, geographically placed in the North Sea, and you cannot take the heart of the Empire out of that place. You cannot change the geographical position. Great Britain to-day is the heart of the Empire. What does that mean? Stand at her ports and watch for a single month, a single year. Britain herself has only 121,000 square miles in an Empire which owns one quarter of the territory of the wide earth, 11,900,000 square miles. Britain has forty-five millions of people in an Empire which has 400 millions of people of every diversity of race, creed and class. Britain is diffused over the whole earth and the various parts of that Empire are thousands of miles distant from each other and from her. Dispersion adds to the difficulty of government, though it has advantages in some other respects.