

army was more numerous or better trained, or their artillery superior, or their powder better, these were all causes which under certain circumstances might make the French government decide for war. And there was a possibility that in such a war they might be beaten; he would not say he feared that, 'but nobody could deny the possibility of it.' It was only fearless civilian gentlemen, "the bold Parliamentary strategist," who thought there was no need of strengthening the army. The Chancellor then spoke solemnly on the consequences of defeat in war, and the responsibility members of Parliament would be under if by their vote they brought such a misfortune on the country. He had heard much, he said, about ministerial responsibility [*the absence of which in the German constitution was and still is a sore spot with Reformers*], but he heard little about the responsibility of members of Parliament for opinions and votes which deliberately weakened the military power of the country and might bring it to misfortune. Where was the tribunal to try such men? If they continued to act so, then he would move that such a tribunal be established.

Then he proceeded to describe the terrible consequences for Germany of defeat. The land would be ravaged as old people used to tell him it was ravaged and exhausted by Napoleon in 1807. A crushing indemnity would be imposed on them. They would have to give up Alsace-Lorraine and perhaps more of the Rhinelands; they would have to restore the Kingdom of Hanover [*pocketed by Prussia in 1866*]; they would have to return Schleswig certainly to Denmark, and they would probably have to give burdensome guarantees to France for better treatment of their Polish subjects. Then he told them with characteristic frankness that they would have to act towards France in a similar manner if they were again victors. The war of 1870, he told them, would be child's play compared with the next war in its results to France. Here are his own words:

We would take care that for thirty years France should be put out of condition for attack upon us, and that for at least a generation we should be completely secure from her. The war of 1870 would be child's play in comparison with that of—a year I know not when—in its results for France. (Cries of Bravo). Thus on both sides there would be the same endeavour; each would seek to bleed the other white.