

It is said that the British Government will shortly take strong measures to prevent the promulgation of peace propogandas. This may be an interference with what we call the right of free speech, but under some circumstances and when the Empire is fighting for its life, free speech is sometimes veiled treason.

Those who have followed the career of Lord Lansdowne will not be much impressed by his foolish and mischievous utterances. Things are soon forgotten, but the record of the finding of the Royal Commission to enquire into the military preparation for the war in South Africa so damaged his reputation that his views on any subject connected with either peace or war are of little consequence. The finding of this Commission, on which sat some of the very best men of the Empire, was a damning verdict of ignorance, incapacity and wilfull blindness on the part of those who at that time were at the head of the British Government. Lord Milner was probably the principal offender. But the man most culpable from the official military standpoint was the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne. His culpability was that, being officially responsible for the sufficiency and efficiency of the military forces of the Empire, he allowed its armaments to become so grossly insufficient that three months of war with two small republics emptied our arsenals—that he was guilty of criminal negligence in omitting to inform himself of or to listen to the elaborate information supplied to him by the Military Intelligence Department, notwithstanding the repeated warnings of his military advisers, with the result that it was not until three weeks before the outbreak of war that he awoke to the fact that the Orange Free State was about to take the field against us—that although on September 5th he became convinced that war was inevitable he not only made no preparation to meet the Boer attack for seventeen days, but actually on September 16th cancelled an order for 1,000 mules which were urgently needed for transport purposes—that he took no adequate measure to provide reinforcements and discouraged every proposal made by volunteers to strengthen our forces in South Africa until after our three-fold defeat in December—that he in effect caused the retirement of one of England's most valued and brilliant