

Britain was threatened. Well, as against the ipse dixit of my hon. friend from Calgary, we have the assurance of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Asquith, of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Churchill, and of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, that the supremacy of Great Britain is not threatened; and much as I hold my hon. friend from Calgary in esteem, I am bound to take the opinions of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Churchill, and Sir Edward Grey, on the question of British supremacy as against any opinion held by my hon. friend from Calgary.

The hon. gentleman professed great regard for Germany; but, while professing that regard, he insisted that that was the nation that was likely to challenge England's supremacy. He used the familiar word 'menace'; he could not be aware that the language used by himself and his friends on other occasions both in this House and out of it, had produced a German peril, not in Germany, or as between Germany and England, but in the ranks of the Tory party in Canada. And with the view of allaying that menace, the Government found it convenient to appoint to the Privy Council at the beginning of this year an hon. gentleman for whom we all have the highest respect, the hon. member for South Waterloo (Mr. Clare). The papers also announced that in order to further allay this peril, the gentleman to be appointed to succeed Senator Sullivan of Kingston in the Senate, was another estimable gentleman of German birth, whom Providence unfortunately has removed from the scene of action since that announcement was made. My hon. friend from Calgary cannot have been aware of that when he made that statement yesterday, but he used the arguments with which we are all familiar. Now, Mr. Speaker, as I cannot take his opinion on the question of British supremacy, against that of Mr. Asquith, of Mr. Churchill or of Sir Edward Grey, neither can I take his opinion on the question of there being a German peril. I prefer rather to take my views from such a communication as I hold in my hand, a letter addressed to the editor of *The Times* by three gentlemen whose names I will read to the House presently, and who are the representatives of the Foreign Policy Committee in England. This letter is as follows:

To the Editor of *The Times*.

Sir,—The Foreign Policy Committee has, since its inception more than a year ago, persistently advocated the desirability of an improvement in the relations between this country and Germany. We have been glad to note during the last six months that the previous tension was relaxed, and that the United Kingdom and Germany were working together in friendly concord in the interests

of peace through all the complex negotiations connected with the Balkan war.

We now seize the earliest opportunity of expressing our deep satisfaction at the further favourable turn events have taken in consequence of the recent statements of Admiral von Tirpitz and Herr von Jagow. We would not rashly over-estimate the significance of a declaration of which we have only the bare outline; still less would we hastily assume that all cause of trouble has disappeared or that a final limit has been placed on naval expenditure. We desire, however, to express our cordial appreciation of this definite step made by the German Government towards the establishment of a complete understanding; and although candid critics of Sir Edward Grey's policy on many occasions, we feel bound to accord our fullest acknowledgments of the part which he has played in making such a step possible.

The acceptance for the first time of a standard of proportionate strength for the two navies, coupled with an announcement that German relations with Great Britain are particularly good, cannot fail to have a marked effect in cementing a lasting friendship between the two peoples. We feel confident that the spirit in which this advance is made will be fully reciprocated by our own Government and that any suggestion of a departure from the standard of naval strength laid down last year would be peremptorily rejected by them. It is manifest that a sanction of further increases would entirely destroy the possibility of any agreement being reached.

If a satisfactory settlement of this highly controversial subject can be arrived at by the two Governments they will be truly representing the sentiments of the people in both countries, and an arrest of the insane competition in armaments throughout Europe may be looked for with fresh hope. But the time has not yet come to speculate too far on future developments and we content ourselves for the present in welcoming without reserve or misgiving the course events have recently taken.

Yours, &c.

(on behalf of the Foreign Policy Committee),

Courtney of Penwith,

President.

L. T. Hobhouse,

Chairman.

Arthur Ponsonby,

Hon. Secretary.

The names attached to that letter must all, I submit, carry great weight in this country. The first name is that of a gentleman who occupied a very important place in the British House of Commons for a great many years. The second name is that of a gentleman who has also been prominent in the public life of Great Britain, and the third name, if I mistake not, is that of a gentleman who, in his lifetime acted as private secretary, or in some such confidential capacity, to Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. We cannot, I say, be otherwise than greatly impressed by a declaration bearing such names as these.