

Britain Withdraws Ships From Mediterranean Sea

Admiralty Nonplussed By Questions Of Lord Selborne—One Test Of Naval Strategy Only, Namely, Destruction Of Enemies' Fleets—"Sea All One, Navy All One."

(By W. B. Thompson.)

LONDON, July 27.—Lord Selborne, a former first lord of the admiralty, delivered a trenchant attack on the government's policy of abandoning the Mediterranean when he raised a discussion on the subject in the house of lords. Why have the battleships been withdrawn from the Mediterranean? he asked. He did not so much criticise the government as ask for information. But he put an awkward question and placed the admiralty in a dilemma. Either it was necessary to withdraw the battleships from the Mediterranean or it was not. If not, then the ships ought not to have been withdrawn. It was necessary to withdraw them, then, he said, we are short of one whole squadron of modern battleships for the requirements of the empire. Lord Selborne agreed that naval policy should not be made a party question, but a national policy. All the same, there was, he said, grave anxiety as to the situation in the Mediterranean, and while it was not his intention to embarrass the government in a very difficult situation, he was bound to seek information on vital matters.

Sea One, Navy One. Dealing with the basis of naval strategy in time of war, Lord Selborne said the navy should have one task only—to find the ships of the enemy and destroy them. There could be no such thing as local defence. The sea is all one and the navy must be all one. No attack could be made on the empire except by the enemy's ships, and if the ships of the enemy were destroyed in the Mediterranean, Australia and New Zealand would be safe, and if the ships of the enemy were destroyed in the Indian Ocean the United Kingdom and Canada would be as safe as South Africa and India. Where would the enemy be found? asked Lord Selborne. "He will endeavor to effect a temporary superiority in some one sea in the hope to overcome a portion of our fleet. He will attempt to deceive us, to make a feint to draw us away from his objective." Turning to our position in the Mediterranean, "the shortest and easiest connector with our Indian Empire and Australian Dominions, and the only route to Egypt from Europe," Lord Selborne spoke of the danger which threatened our trade. Our volume of trade in the Mediterranean, he said, was immense, and a large proportion of the trade was food, food not only from the Mediterranean basin, but also from the Black Sea. What was being done to protect this trade? During the last eight years the garrisons at Malta and Gibraltar had been reduced by four battalions of infantry. Eight years ago when the garrison consisted

of eleven battalions, we had in the Mediterranean twelve battleships, four armored cruisers, and twelve other cruisers. To-day there were no battleships of the line in the Mediterranean and only four armored cruisers, while the other cruisers had been reduced from twelve to three. Emphasis had been laid in certain quarters on available torpedo craft, but he reminded their lordships that torpedo craft were only a mere auxiliary of battleships. In the event of a sudden outbreak of war, Lord Selborne asked, what would be our chances with our present naval strength in the Mediterranean? If we were at war with a power who had no strength in the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean powers remained neutral, all would be well. But suppose we were at war with a power in the Mediterranean, said Lord Selborne, but we ought not to be dependent on the loyalty and courage of some ally to protect our interests in the Mediterranean. Far beyond the Mediterranean, what must be the effect on the people of India and on the people of the Far East if the might of Britain disappeared from the Mediterranean? Lord Selborne pressed upon the government three essential requirements: Co-operation in naval matters between the dominions and the mother country; increased garrisons at Malta and Gibraltar; a squadron of battleships in the Mediterranean.

Lord Crewe's Reply. Lord Crewe, who replied for the government, frankly admitted that he would have preferred that the debate had been postponed. At a later date he would be in a better position to reply to the points made by Lord Selborne. Lord Crewe, however, recognized that in the immediate future we would have to "revise some of the old formulas." In 1912, he said, we had 16 battleships and battle cruisers on the Dreadnought type, as against 15 possessed by all other powers in European waters. In 1914 the British Empire would possess Dreadnoughts against 33 of the other powers, and in 1915 we should possess 38 Dreadnoughts against 51 of the European powers. Nevertheless, Lord Crewe optimistically assured their lordships that "the government had not lost sight of our responsibilities in the Mediterranean." The Marquis of Bristol said we could not regard Gibraltar alone as sufficient for the base of our supplies for fleet and army in case of need. He quoted the saying of Nelson that there was no better negotiator for peace than a squadron of battleships, and that ought to be the policy of the government, as he was sure it was the policy of the nation. Lord Brassey contended that the laying down of ships was not resented by Germany, but that discussions and comparisons were, and if we steadily built the ships we required armaments would be silenced and international relations improved.

Lord Lansdowne Hopeful. Lord Lansdowne trusted the strong case presented by Lord Selborne, with all his exact knowledge, would receive some attention from the government, before their minds were made up. If any battleships were sent back to the Mediterranean they would be based on Gibraltar and would hardly

be available for Mediterranean waters. That, he suggested, was a complete departure from the old order; and they were making the change at a moment when other Mediterranean powers were stronger than ever. What impression, he asked, would be produced upon our allies in Japan, who were keen and quick to appreciate any failure of maritime strength on our part? And what would be the result on our diplomacy in the Near East? And what of our great interest in the Balkan Peninsula? By adding to the strength of the Mediterranean garrisons, by re-establishing the defence, and by adding to the strength of ships, the government might mitigate the blow which had been struck at the reputation of this country as a great naval power by the course which they had most unfortunately determined to adopt. The subject then dropped.

"Papa, what is a safety match?" Mr. Henpeck (looking carefully to see if his wife is within hearing). "A safety match, my son, is when a bald-headed man marries an armless woman."

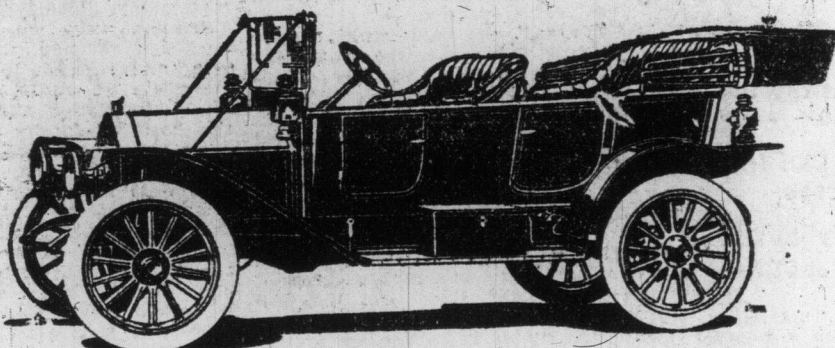
Drummer (in wine).—"Have you tasted that sample of wine I left with you, madam?" Madam—"No; I haven't, but I don't think it can be any great shakes, for it's been here three days and the servants have barely touched it."

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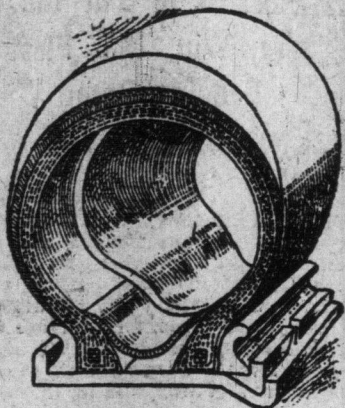
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State Must Intervene In Industrial Conflicts

Events Of Last Twelve Months Indicate That Government's "Laissez Faire" Policy Must Cease—Labor Should Be Assisted To Secure a Share Of Wealth It Creates.

(By W. B. Thompson.)

LONDON, July 27.—The events of the last twelve months have surely taught us that this era of laissez faire has definitely passed away and that governments in future must be prepared to take a regular, not necessarily an arbitrary, part in all industrial conflicts.

Such is the Nation's comment on the doctrine enunciated by Mr. Asquith in his reply to the influential deputations of business men who waited upon him in regard to the industrial unrest. "Promising that it was 'extremely undesirable that a government as a government should concern itself in industrial disputes,'" the writer goes on to say, the prime minister "endeavored to lay down the right limits of governmental intervention. The normal attitude was to be one of 'complete detachment and impartiality,' to be broken only as a last resort and then only in cases where the nature of the dispute was such as 'not merely to affect the particular trade, but to threaten the general interests of the community.'"

It is upon this doctrine that in modern times governments have generally proceeded in this country. The state must stand and look on until a really grave emergency has arisen, and then, with no preparatory inquiry, no proper machinery and no sufficient statutory powers, must intervene, arousing the deepest resentment in the breasts of the two contending parties who wish to fight it out themselves, each confident of victory, and affording little satisfaction to the public by its tardy and irregular protection.

In every such industrial conflict the general interests of the community are directly and vitally engaged, alike

in the conflict itself and in its sequel. . . . Wherever an industrial dispute takes place in which the weaker party is forced into accepting terms degrading and injurious to its standard of life, it is the manifest duty of the state to intervene.

"The board of trade and the new industrial council have already powers to hold inquiries into the issues of a conflict, not only on the application of the parties concerned, as is commonly supposed, but by a reference of the government without the invitation of the parties. When trouble is brewing in an important trade it ought to be the business of the government to set on foot a detailed inquiry so that they or their industrial council might be in a position to publish an authoritative report before war actually broke out.

The advantages of such a course are obvious. The impartial statement of the issue would, upon the one hand, greatly facilitate agreement between the disputants, while, on the other, it would bring all the weight of an informed public opinion to bear upon the side which had the best of the argument as tested by the inquiry. This right and duty of impartial inquiry might well be extended so as to conform to the conditions of the Canadian Act of 1907. This measure provides that no strike or lockout shall take place without a month's notice, during which a compulsory investigation shall be made by an impartial authority. Why should not powers of arresting the outbreak of war, pending the investigation of the cause of dispute, be given to an enlarged industrial council?"

Dealing particularly with the Port of London strike, the writer adds: "We look to the Government to secure that, if, as seems likely, the financial weakness of the transport workers forces them to yield, the employers shall not reap any benefit from their callous rejection of conciliation and arbitration. For upon the successful application of these two principles the peace of our industrial life more and more depends. To this task the government will more and more be required to give direct assistance, whether by timely processes of inquiry, by insistence upon an attempt at conciliation preceding every stoppage of work, or by providing adequate legal penalties for definite proved breaches of agreements."

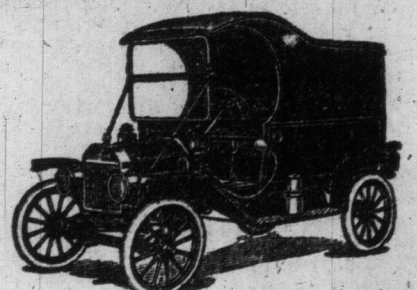
"If, as seems tolerably certain, in

bor cannot make good its claim to what it deems a satisfactory share (of the growing fund of wealth) by processes of bargaining and bickering, it will demand the assistance of the government as a regular instrument in enforcing that claim, and in proportion as the government is truly representative it will yield to that demand."

Caller (on the doorstep)—"Is the lady of the house in?" Housemaid (who has just received a month's notice)—"The mistress is in, but she's no lady!" "But I doctor myself by the aid of medical books." "Yes; and some fine day you'll die of a misprint."



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