

of a dominant party, though so far as naval and military questions are concerned they have probably been formed in ignorance, will prevail against the representations of experts. The forces at work are not commensurate. The soldiers and sailors who are consulted can only argue and exhort, they can secure the dismissal of no one but themselves; whereas the party which is urging its leader to adopt measures in the teeth of professional advice can depose him and shelve him if he refuses to conform to its will, whose exponent he is.

In a volume published two years ago, "The Cabinet and War," I urged that the continuity of what one may perhaps call strategical policy, on which Lord Esher's Committee rightly laid so much stress, was jeopardised under the system now established. It is difficult to believe that Mr. Gladstone would have committed himself to the policy of an advisory body, no matter what its technical authority, whose members had been appointed by Lord Beaconsfield. The political see-saw works with the same effect at the present day. It may be vitally necessary for the safety of the Empire, but it is hard for a Premier who is all for retrenchment and small armaments to allow himself and his colleagues in Parliament to be overruled by the representations of men who owe their position to the choice of a predecessor since defeated at the polls.

It may be argued that if the soldiers and sailors concerned find their counsels disregarded, and believe that those requirements of Imperial Defence which do not change with alternating Ministries are being sacrificed to political exigencies, they can resign and thus draw public attention to their dissatisfaction, and perhaps, if they are men of great eminence, arouse general alarm. One touches here upon a very delicate and difficult subject. Every one knows the strong sentiment of loyalty to service and country which prevails among British officers; but soldiers and sailors alike are rightly and necessarily ambitious, as a rule, of success in their profession; and it must always be a question for a man's own conscience in what circumstances he is bound to resign, and thereby perhaps sacrifice