

The Navy of England

Sir

For thirteen years or more the defence forces of the Royal Navy and of the Royal Air Force have been allowed to dwindle till today they are seriously inferior to any standard of safety.

During these past years the Government of the day has year-by-year told the British people that if an International Millenium fails to eventuate they will then find time to consider the problem of the security of England! What has been the outcome? More gestures, more disarmament in utilities and definitely a progressive weakening of the Royal Navy.

The politicians who make these promises are the same men who have consented to the blotting out of one half of the sure shield of England - The Royal Navy. At a recent meeting at the Mansion House an imminent politician declared that if we remain in isolation war is certain, and he recommended our adhesion to the nations of Europe who are to be banded together to make war on an aggressor. What a glorious future for our island! In either case according to this prophet war is certain. The weakness of our country makes neutrality impossible and dangerous. How grateful we ought to be to the Government under which we have been privileged to live!

It is admitted, that we have not the minimum number of cruisers necessary to convoy the food supply of these islands across the oceans of the world in case of war. I am informed that if war broke out between certain powers that it is doubtful if we have enough ships to defend and ensure respect for our neutrality and that if British interests were seriously threatened in the Far East or in Australasia it would not be feasible to detach an effective Naval Force for their protection. Lastly, what language can adequately describe the gesture, which builds British cruisers of smaller size and of inferior gun power to those of foreign navies. Is it with the wish of the British people that our splendid sailors should be forced to face such odds? Why should we build a Navy to please the foreign powers and foreign interests? Is it wicked to make adequate provision for the safety of England?

Why is it that the National Government is so helpless in the matter of the security of 'this precious stone set in the silver sea'? The reason is, that the National Government which has done splendid service in restoring the finances of the country is an amalgam, the component parts of which are hopelessly at variance when tested by the problem of adopting a sane policy of defence.

The National Socialists: The Socialists are in the main pacifists and defeatists. They care nothing, even if they know of it, for the glorious history of our country; or for its past, present or future mission in the world. They invariably oppose the vote for the moderate defence forces maintained by this country. They have an urge to manage the affairs of all nations of the world including Manchukuo and Japan. They make one exception. They cry 'Hands off Holy Russia'. They are wedded to and delight in the feebleness of their own Navy, and in disaffection in the British overseas dependencies. Moreover, it was the Prime Minister who journeyed to Washington and

later in London contrived to castrate the effective force of the Royal Navy. American Admirals summoned three or four years ago before the Senate Naval Committee, were asked whether they would prefer to command in 1936 the American Navy or the British Navy. They unanimously agreed that they would prefer to command the American Navy. The reason given was that the American ships would be new, while many of the British ships would be out of date and obsolescent.

The National Liberals are forever hovering in a dilemma concerning national defence. Their doctrine is that righteousness exalteth a nation, and with this we all agree. The question which daunts them and makes them useless in an emergency is whether righteousness is best attained by allowing a foreign nation to destroy “this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England”, or whether righteousness can ever justify under any circumstances the adequate defence of our island home.

The Conservative Party: Of this party there is little to be said. It has not been heard of for some time. It appears to have become merged in the crown following the Prime Minister. The typical Englishman is believed to have a non-yielding, bony spine. The powers that be appear to have cartilaginous backbones able to bend in any direction, like those of the Elasmobranch fishes. If any one doubts this statement let him wander round the world and make his own observations – Ireland, Malta, Palestine, Egypt, Tanganyika, India, Ceylon and China; or let him listen to the apologies made by official politicians for the existence of our people in any part, e.g. Ceylon, of the British Dominions.

Aliens and traitors are officially welcomed while the Britisher abroad who does his duty honestly and faithfully is given the cold shoulder and is classed officially as a nuisance and out-of-date.

Gestures, sentimental hopes, pacts and leagues and the exploring of avenues are the stock in trade of present day politicians. As a matter of economy would it not be wise to dismiss say half a dozen of the ablest, the wisest and most experienced ambassadors in the service of Britain and appoint an ambulatory ambassador in their place. The holder of the new post might be named ‘His Excellency the Most Noble the ambulatory ambassador of Great Britain’. He could always be on the move by special train, special aeroplane, or special ship from one foreign capital to another. The test condition regulating the appointment to this key position should be that the candidate should possess no previous experience in diplomacy, and that he was entirely unknown to the individual members of the foreign Governments to which he was accredited. The missions of British Statesmen over a period of many years to Geneva and to the capitals of Europe, each one heralded by trumpets, has been the main cause of the fear and dread of the future, which has spread through all the nations of Europe.

Considering the present outlook in Europe, is it possible that any sane man can believe that the arguments advanced by even the most eminent lawyer in Christendom would bend Mussolini from his life work of attempting to transform modern Italy into a great nation? Considering the present outlook in Europe, is it possible that any sane man can believe that the arguments advanced by even the most eminent lawyer in Christendom would deflect the cool logical patriotic Frenchman, one iota, from the national purposes of defending the sacred soil of France? The ‘white cold virgin

snow' of the patriotism of France is offensive to our Internationalist Prime Minister. Hence for some years England has been flirting with and giving support to everything emanating from Berlin. The French people hold that the English are stark staring mad, and they are quite right. We are disarmed and we send a solemn mission to Paris recommending the French people to follow our example: and this notwithstanding that a group of Military Panthers are again in control of the destinies of Germany. During the lifetime of many of us France has twice been invaded without the slightest justification, and each invasion has been planned for decades before it took place by the Military Dictators of Germany. Germany is rearming and planning for the future with wolverine sagacity. War has been the national industry of Prussia since the time of Frederick the Great.

“Anxious but not desperate” is the report concerning disarmament following the last journeying of an ambulatory ambassador to Paris, Berlin and Rome. This is only the repetition of the story or report we have often heard before. We do not want to hear any more about the Disarmament cant, but we do desire to hear about the Security of England. There is no longer any doubt that the Disarmament Conference has failed. It has dissolved “like the insubstantial pageant of a dream”. Why not face the facts in the English way? Why not give up gladly the spice of Socialistic hypocrisy, which has so long besmirched the official English talks on Disarmament. Supposing that the country decides to take Naval defensive measures with earnestness and determination: how long will it be before this island will attain to a comparatively safe position? Perhaps in three or four years. Meanwhile will a potential enemy wait till we are armed? A minister of a Foreign Government declared the other day that ‘England was unready and disarmed: she will be the first to be attacked’. The pressing of Disarmament on Nations which naturally object to our everlasting suggestions to this effect is dangerous. They rather appear as if we were agents innocent perhaps, of the German Government.

Where are the Giants? Where in any walk of life are Alpine Altitudes to be found? Where are the Palmerstons, the Disraelis, the Gladstones in politics? The Heavenly Twins control the fortunes of the present Government. They are “grown together like to a double cherry, seeming parted, and yet a union in partition. Two lovely berries moulded on one stem. Two seeming bodies but one heart”. There’s the rub. Notwithstanding the fading away of the Conservative party and its Leader it is difficult to believe that Mr Baldwin is not in favour of a strong Navy. England alone among the nations of the World lives by the commerce of the sea. Round her coasts should “ride a puissant Navy.” “The fleet of England is her all in all. Her fleet is in your hands, and in her fleet her fate.” “By a divine instinct men’s minds mistrust ensuing dangers; as by proof we see the waters swell before a boisterous storm”. Those who fail to provide England with a fleet of sufficient strength, to use a Wellingtonian phrase, “will be damned to everlasting fame”.