

lions of the Under Secretary for War or the figure of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  millions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I look at the figures as a test of the foresight of this Government. They entered upon the war with a light heart and a lighter purse. In October they were satisfied they would have a military parade and a walk-over in the Republics. It was not till February they discovered they must have 13 millions more. In the Budget in March the right hon. gentleman put the gross cost of the war at 23 millions, towards which he had a surplus of five millions and a deficit of about 17 millions. (Sir M. Hicks-Beach: That estimate was till the end of the financial year.) Yes, the 31st of March. But in that very March they wanted  $37\frac{1}{2}$  millions more, and now they want  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions more. All I can say is that these figures do not spell prescience as to the character of the war on which they had entered.

I am not going to-day—under no circumstances do I think it at all necessary or expedient—to discuss the origin of the war. I doubt very much whether at this time, or even in this generation, a just judgment will be formed upon the war. It will be judged by those who live to see its results. Do you suppose it will be determined by a snatch dissolution? That is not the final judgment of a nation that has a future. I have lived to see another great war. I remember the time when, in the streets and in the music halls, the Crimean War was as popular as this war. No man could be heard to aver against it, but half a century has elapsed, and the Prime Minister of England has avowed that at that time we put an equal sum of money on the wrong horse. I say that, in the end, this war will be judged by its results, and the results of this war will depend upon the policy which attends its conclusion. That is all we can say to-day. All

we can do is to contribute, as far as we can, to making that policy a wise policy.

We are told, and that is all I will say upon the origin of the war, that the war was inevitable. That discovery was made after the event, and an inevitable Government has been the sport of inevitable circumstances. I am not myself a disciple of the inevitable in statesmanship. I am old-fashioned enough still to believe in the doctrine of causation, and I am not satisfied with a defence which rests upon a purblind fatalism. If a great enterprise is undertaken with means ludicrously inadequate, if there is a lamentable breakdown in your hospital system, or if military disasters are repeated in the presence of an inferior foe, I am not satisfied to be told that all this was inevitable. For my part, I hold with the great Roman satirist that "prudence and not fortune is the deity which guides the destinies of mankind." However, I admit it is of no use to attempt to argue with a Predestinarian Administration. They tell us they knew all about the armaments of their antagonists, their Mausers, and their Krupp guns, and, in fact, they told us they were armed to the teeth; yet ten millions was all they asked for for some six months. And in that war, for which ten millions were asked, I think the losses from all causes—killed, wounded, missing, and deaths from disease—have been as near as possible equal to the whole number of their foes.

We are told sometimes—it is a favourite dilemma of the Colonial Secretary—that we must either approve the origin of the war and its prosecution, or oppose it altogether and refuse the means of carrying it on. Now that, with great respect to him, I will venture to say, is absolutely irrational. When your house is on fire it is not at all immaterial who set it on fire, but what you have got to do is to put it out.

To say that you must either approve the conduct of the person who set it on fire, or object to its being put out, does not seem to me to be a sensible proposition. In the same way, if the interests of the nation are imperilled the first duty of every man is to employ the means and to support the means best fitted to put an end to that danger. That is my view on this subject, on which, since the war began, I have consistently acted. The question of ultimate responsibility remains, but the duty of dealing with the present danger, of quenching the flames, and removing the peril to the country, is imperative. That is just, reasonable, and perfectly consistent. The House of Commons have voted, and they will always vote, in my opinion, the money, whether by taxation or by borrowing, which is necessary to bring this war to the earliest finish.

I know that the right hon. gentleman the Colonial Secretary has charged those upon this bench with having been willing to sacrifice the interests of the country when they were responsible for the government of the country. He brought a charge against the leader of the Opposition—a charge he found it necessary to retract, but for which he has not thought fit to apologise. That is the right hon. gentleman's way. But I must observe that my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, was not the chief offender. He had the misfortune to have an "imperious colleague" under whose evil influence he was guilty of a crime that was never committed. That imperious colleague does not ask or expect any amends for that charge from the Colonial Secretary. He was good enough to say that the right hon. gentleman had diminished the artillery of this country under the compulsion of an "imperious colleague who was seeking after popular Budgets." I am perfectly contented with the

somewhat belated acknowledgment on the part of the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues that the Budgets of the late Administration were popular—Budgets which the right hon. gentleman and his friends wasted no means, but employed every artifice, to defeat. What did the late Administration find? They found a deficient revenue, they found a Navy neglected by their predecessors, and a demand for an increase in the Navy. They met those demands by calling upon the people for great sacrifices in respect of taxation, and that was the popular Budget of an imperious colleague, who coerced my right hon. friend into a crime which it is admitted he never committed. These are the sort of reckless charges which are manufactured upon the eve of a dissolution.

If you want an example of the sacrifice of public interests to popular Budgets you must go to Governments who in times of peace and of great surplus cut down the Sinking Fund, and who appropriated that which might have gone to the national defence to favourite classes whom they are willing to subsidise. That was not the conduct of our short Administration with its feeble majority. We met the difficulties in which we found ourselves, not by borrowing; we called upon the nation for great sacrifices; we carried in this House—yes, and they could not reject it in the House of Lords—a popular Budget upon the surpluses of which the right hon. gentleman and his friends have been living for five years. Therefore, for my part, I am quite willing to accept as amends for the unfounded imputation he cast upon me his recognition that it was a popular Budget. I have no desire in this matter to introduce party recriminations. In the interests of the credit of the public life of this country I do enter, and I will continue to enter, a stern

remonstrance against this habit for electioneering purposes of inventing false charges. I am afraid that is a practice which is becoming more common than it used to be when I first entered political life. It is part of the new diplomacy. I am not an admirer of the new diplomacy, especially that particular feature of it.

Now I turn to a matter which is more satisfactory, and in which we can all agree, and that is the courage, the devotion, the self-sacrifice which every class of the subjects of the Queen in this country, and in her dominions beyond the seas, have shown in the trials to which they have been subjected in this war. Those people who believe that a long period of prosperity and peace depraves the fibre of a nation have seen that theory belied by the events of the past year. I have heard it said, and I am not sure it was not said by a member of Her Majesty's Government, that it was worth while to have the war in order to enjoy this spectacle. I do not go so far as that. I should not even be willing to set my own house on fire in order to see how my household would behave. I should be quite satisfied to trust to them without it. I think that is a poor consolation for all the suffering, the loss of life, and the sorrow which have been caused. I cannot, looking at this the final estimate of this Session, fail to look back to where we were this time 12 months. If the estimates and, still more, the sad records of this war could have been before this House in August of last year, I, for one, shall never part with the belief that there would have been a different temper and tone in dealing with the difficulties of that period, and that the result might have been different from what it was.

What was the condition of this country in last August? A condition in which every man could rejoice. You had an

unexampled trade, you had public credit high, you had the condition of the people in the matter of wages good; you had the necessaries and the comforts of life cheap, you had a revenue overflowing beyond the dreams of the avarice even of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. You had a surplus of ten millions from which with its prospects you had the expectation of great relief to the people of this country. You might have granted them many a boon; you might have given them relief from taxation, you might have granted old-age pensions. Such was the progress of the people of this nation as the result of 50 years' practically unbroken peace. I know there are people who advocate war and annexation. Sometimes it is in the cause of Christianity, sometimes in the cause of civilization, and, when those do not take, it is for the good of trade. We have heard from the President of the Board of Trade that he expects a decline in the trade of this country. I believe that that is borne out by the state of things at present in Lancashire. I have spoken of public credit. Nothing strengthens public credit so much as the knowledge that you are making constant provision for the reduction of the debt. It is this confidence which gives to this country the command of the money market of the world. In the last six months you have cut off provision for the reduction of the debt. In fact, you have diverted for war purposes 14 millions of money which would naturally have gone towards the reduction of the debt. That has to be added to the achievements of two Tory Governments—I beg pardon, Unionist Governments, it is the same thing—who depleted permanently the Sinking Fund to the extent of four millions. We know in whose interest. You have borrowed 43 millions of money, and by this Bill you add 13 millions more. That is the change

which has come over the situation and the nation within 12 months, and now we are told that these are what are called the final estimates—the winding-up estimates. The right Hon. gentleman says that he has taken more than he wants; and therefore it is to be assumed that this is all we are to be asked for.

Is there any man who believes that these are final estimates? He must be very little versed in the precedents of the past or in the probabilities of the future. He says that he is going to leave in South Africa 45,000 men, 30,000 for a permanent garrison. The first observation I make upon that is that if you are going to shut up for a long time 30,000 men in South Africa you must raise 30,000 more men in England, but there is no estimate for that. And there is not merely the question of the estimate of the money, but the question of the enlistment of the men, and of that we hear nothing. As to the garrison of the Republics, I do not offer any opinion on that subject. I know that that territory is nearly twice as big as the United Kingdom, and 30,000 men in the midst of a discontented population will not be a very large proportion. If you are going to add to disfranchisement confiscation, then, in my opinion, it will be very inadequate; and if you are going to put on the top of that an attempt to levy 30 millions or 40 millions the inadequacy will be even greater. It is not merely the money you have borrowed and the money you have spent, but we are told that there are to be great claims for compensation. Who is going to pay the claims for compensation? We have heard nothing of that from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He talks about the compensation to be paid to all those loyalists who have suffered in the war. Who is going to pay it? We ought to hear something of that.

But, then, there are the other odd 15,000 men who are not to be brought home. Who are they? Are they the persons who are to become settlers there? What is your authority for believing that there are 15,000 men who have had experience of South Africa and who desire to remain there? We should like to have some explanation on that subject. I have talked to many and I have read the letters of many, and the one chorus is, "Thank God we have done our duty, and we hope we shall never see the country again." That is my experience on that point. But are these 15,000 men to have any support given to them? What are they to receive if they choose to remain there? Are you going to give them confiscated land, or are you going to give them money, and if so, how much money? Why in this estimate now put before us are we not told what is to be the cost of settling these 15,000 men? Do you believe there is any English yeoman who will allow himself to be placed down in South Africa in the midst of a hostile population alone? There are better places for him to go to than that. Of course, if you have a policy of confiscation, then there will be some inducement to the men to remain; but in any case, you ought to give us some account of who these 15,000 men are, what they are to receive, and what is to be the inducement for them to settle.

There is another thing which is not provided for in this final estimate. We are told that as the result of this war there is to be a great military consultation and a great military organization. Will that cost nothing? The principle, so far as I have seen it, of this future military organization, is that each military man has his own plan, which he considers the most perfect plan, and insists upon its adoption. The one thing they are all agreed upon is to denounce any check

upon it, especially on the part of the Treasury. It is perfectly obvious that you must raise 30,000 more men to take the place of the garrison that is to remain in South Africa, and the demands which are made for military organization may be of an indefinite character. Therefore, I cannot myself accept for a moment the estimates and the Bill we have now before us as closing the capital account of the war in South Africa.

Well, sir, unfortunately, we are upon a review of our financial situation, and there is another matter—I can hardly call it a small cloud rising in the East—for which a provision of £3,000,000 is made in this Bill. (Sir M. Hicks-Beach: There is a large margin.) Well, I should like to ask what is your margin? You had £3,000,000, and you ask for £8,500,000 for the war in South Africa; that is £11,500,000, and then you have got £1,000,000 additional for the reserve of stores, and so on. If that is a proper calculation it fills up your £13,000,000. However, the right hon. gentleman will explain that. At all events, we have done a very formidable thing. We have opened a new war account in China. Into what that trouble may or will develop no man can say. I do not blame the Government for not declaring their policy in this case because the facts are not known on which any policy can be founded. That the besieged Ministers and their dependants must be rescued if they be alive, as we all hope they are, everybody will of course agree, and that those by whom they have been attacked and some of them murdered, must be punished if they can be discovered. Beyond that, the future is dark and gloomy. We have interests in China equal to, if not greater, than those we have in South Africa, and never was there a time when it was more desirable or necessary for the good

of this Empire that we should have our hands free, and be able to make the influence of England felt in those regions. Never were we in a position more difficult to make that influence felt. We are in the position of a man with his arms tied behind his back.

Our resources are greatly restricted. We have had recourse already to troops from India in Africa and we have been obliged to have recourse to Indian troops in China. That is, in my opinion, a most mischievous practice for the interests of this Empire in India. By adopting it you place before the Indian people this dilemma. Either you are keeping an unnecessary number of troops in India at the expense of the people of India, who cannot afford it—and that is an injustice—or you are not; and then by removing a force from India you are exposing her to perils to which she ought not to be exposed. Therefore, not now only, but in former days, I have always protested against the use of Indian troops for purposes that are not Indian.

Well, you have this question of China to be solved by the concert of Europe. We know something of the concert of Europe. Up to this time the representatives of the concert of Europe have been occupied in nothing but competitive rivalry to see which could obtain the chief portion of the Chinese Empire, and then you are surprised that this is resented by the Chinese people. The Great Powers—I am speaking of them all—assumed that China was a corpse, and around that corpse the eagles were gathered together; but that corpse has proved to be most dangerously alive. It is clear enough that the ultimate questions which may arise in China may be more formidable than any we have had to meet in South Africa, and the £3,000,000 provided for dealing with China will be about as adequate as the £10,000,000 you have provided for South Africa.

But behind and beyond all these things there is a matter of greater gravity than any to which I have yet referred. Statesmen of the highest authority and character have been impressing upon us over and over again this fact—that we are the best hated people in the world. Not by the Governments, but by the people of foreign states, which is a much more serious thing. In a speech of the Prime Minister to the Primrose League he represented to them that so great and so combined was this hatred that we might at any time be exposed to an ugly rush from the nations of Europe. Such a statement as that has never in the history of this country been made by the Prime Minister of England. I do not say whether it is true or not, but that statement, whatever it is, is rather an unpleasant consequence of the regime of Imperialism which we have enjoyed for five years. We were told by the gentleman who is now Viceroy of India, on this Government acceding to office, that the mere fact of Lord Salisbury taking charge of the Foreign Office would produce a great calm in Europe, that everybody would be satisfied and everybody would be happy, that there would be the millenium, when the lion would lie down with the lamb. But at the end of five years the Prime Minister comes forward and says we are the object of the combined hatred of Europe. And what is his remedy for that state of affairs? It is to be brought about by the Primrose League, who are to arm with rifles the peasantry of this country. That does not entirely reassure me against this syndicate of European hatred.

*“Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget.”*

Nothing could be more childish or more puerile. Why, sir, if it is true that this danger exists, you must quadruple your

Army and you must quadruple your Navy. What does it mean? It means that if each of four of the Powers builds an ironclad you must build four, or if each adds a corps d'armee to its land forces, you must add four.

The remarkable thing is that when the Prime Minister made this declaration he said he really could not understand the reason for that hatred. He ought to understand it. It has grown up under his auspices. “It was inevitable.” That, I suppose, is the explanation given by the Government. There is another authority, greatly versed in foreign affairs, who holds the same opinion of the danger and of the universality of the hatred; but Lord Rosebery knows the cause of that hatred, and he has stated it in a celebrated speech. This is what he said, and it is deserving of the attention of the House and of the country: “The British Empire needs peace. For the last twenty years, and still more for the last twelve, you have been laying your hands,” observe these words, “with almost frantic eagerness on every tract of territory adjacent to your own, or which from any point of view you thought it desirable to take. That has had two results. The first result is that you have excited to an almost intolerable degree the envy of other colonizing nations, and, in the cases of many empires, or many countries, or several countries rather, which were formerly friendly to you, you can reckon, in consequence of your colonial policy, right or wrong—and I am supposed to be rather a sinner in that respect—not on their active benevolence but on their active malevolence.” That is the reason of the hatred given by Lord Rosebery.

He then goes into a careful calculation as to what has been the addition of territory in the last twelve years by the process which he described as a process of “frantic

eagerness to lay hands on every tract of country adjacent to your own," and he says it has resulted in "a mass of undigested Empire." Nothing affects the body corporal more than undigested food, and the body politic with an enormous mass of undigested Empire is in a state of unwholesome congestion. This undigested Empire he calculates has amounted "in the last twelve years to twenty-two areas as large as that of the United Kingdom itself"; and this is the very sound conclusion at which he arrived: "That marks out for many years a policy from which you cannot depart if you would. You may be compelled to draw the sword, I hope you may not be, but the foreign policy of Great Britain until this territory is consolidated, filled up, settled, and civilized, must inevitably be a policy of peace." That was spoken four years ago. That was before unconsidered trifles like the Soudan and the two Republics were added. Is it not a strange thing that great empires should be possessed with such a lust of extended dominion, and that the greater they are the more hungry they seem to be for more? What Lord Rosebery calls frantic eagerness for acquisition of territory, and what Lord Salisbury rebuked as "the desire to fight everybody and take everything"—a desire which, he said, was the ruin of great Empires—seems to be growing upon the nations of Europe.

What is the consequence? Their resources are strained to the uttermost, they leave no margin for dealing with the duties which belong to their patrimony, the great possessions they already have are starved and mortgaged for further acquisitions. Every nation seems to regard that which its neighbour acquires as a wrong to itself, and the consequence is that state of active malevolence which is referred to in the passage which I have read. The interests of what, after

all, is but a small and distant fraction of our vast Empire have absorbed all our resources in men; they have increased our taxation; they have accumulated our debt. What have they done for us? They have left us but a narrow margin for dealing with the great possibilities of danger in China; they have compelled us to refuse, what in my opinion we desired and ought to have given, assistance to our Indian subjects. These are the results—I am not speaking of the present war, I am speaking of this land hunger, this craving for acquisition when you have not settled, developed, or done justice to the territories you already possess, and you are not able to do justice to the people to whom you are responsible at home. Would it not be well to-day that, in reviewing the situation in which we find ourselves, those who are responsible for the fortunes of this nation, instead of inflaming popular passions and stimulating a spirit of wild and grasping ambition, should impress upon the public mind that great truth, that of all the interests of this vast and glorious Empire the greatest interest is peace?