

5 been able to offer a successful resistance. Why, my lords, that action at Spion Kop cost us over 1,600 casualties. I doubt whether there was any engagement in the campaign which aroused a deeper public interest than the battle of Spion Kop; and do your lordships think
6 that it would have been possible for us, if asked whether there were any despatches about that engagement, to make reply that we had such despatches, but that we intended to keep them to ourselves, or that that answer would have been accepted as sufficient and satisfactory by
7 the public? I doubt it extremely. We should have been exposed to a well-known ordeal in public life—the ordeal of question and answer. We should have been asked whether there were despatches, and should have had to answer “Yes.” We should have been asked whether they
8 contained such-and-such statements. If we said “No,” we should next be asked whether they contained such-and-such another statement. In that way the contents would have been wormed out of us; and it is my belief that in the end—what with being shelled in Parliament
9 and sniped at in the Press—we should be compelled to make a clean breast of it, and lay the papers upon the table of the House of Commons. But, supposing we had resisted successfully the demand for publication, do you think the result would have been to screen the generals
10 responsible entirely from blame? Why, it was a matter of

(b.) At the rate of 80 words a minute. Takes 10 minutes.

Governments may come and go; feelings may change from year to year. That root of bitterness against England, which I am wholly unable to explain, may be a mere caprice, merely something to satisfy the exigencies of the journalists of the moment, or it may indicate some deep-set feeling with which at a later date we shall have to reckon. We can have no
1 security in any confidence in the feelings or sympathy of other nations, however much we may honour them, however grateful we may be for the sympathy they have shown us—we can have no security except in the efficacy of our own defence and the strength of our own right arm. Everywhere you see the powers of offence increasing—armies become larger,
2 navies are founded, railways, telegraphs, all the apparatus which science has placed at the disposal of war becomes more perfect and more effective; and all these things may, by one of those strange currents which sweep across the ocean of international politics, be united
3 in one great wave to dash upon our shores. Do not imagine that I wish to paint the future in dark colours. I am not urging despair. I am not urging even a dark appreciation of the future; but I am urging the necessity of precaution in time. It may be that your precautions—as I trust they may—will turn out entirely unnecessary. It will be a great matter of hearty
4 congratulation if it is so; but the loss that you will thereby sustain is so inconceivably small compared with the loss which you will sustain if your precautions are inadequate that you will not for a moment measure one against the other. Undoubtedly it is not a question so much of feeling, but it is a question of this strange phenomenon which is working itself out
5 before our eyes, that the material for military action, for aggression, is increasing in power and efficacy in every one of the great nations every year, while the temptations to exercise it, the territories of which it may give the possession and the key, are falling more and more at the disposal of the chances of war. You must not be blind to that species of danger which must constantly beset you; and allow me to remind you that as a great maritime Power you
6 stand in a special position.

The great military Powers of the Continent, disposing of great territory, have passed through unsuccessful wars which again and again have brought the enemy into their country, and yet they are as strong, or even stronger, after the experience has passed by. Can we say with confidence that that would be the fact if London were the scene of a similar operation? Remember what has happened to the great maritime Powers of the past—to Holland, to
7 Spain, to Venice, and, if I might go into ancient times, to Carthage and to Tyre. In every one case the great maritime Power has been paralysed and killed, not by the disasters it may have suffered in its provinces or its outlying dependencies, but in every case it has suffered by the blow directed at the heart. That is a lesson which a power like England ought not to neglect. As long as our heart is unstruck we may look with comparative indifference to the
8 result of any war. If our distant provinces were affected we might do as we did in the Peninsular War—we might win them back again. But if our heart is struck there is at once an end to the history of England. Of course, we have the navy, and I firmly believe that that defence will be sufficient. But considering the prodigious, the enormous, interests which we have to safeguard, is it wise that all our eggs should be put into a single basket? Are we
9 not bound to think of our national defence on land? And our national defence on land has this difficulty attached to it: The problem is that we cannot have recourse to the remedy, to the defence, to the protection which every nation on the Continent has had occasion to set up and to preserve, and to which its existence is now owing. Nothing in the nature of a conscription—that is to say, nothing of a nature which requires the population of this country to leave their homes for a certain number of years to learn the military art—that, at present, as far as we can see, is not a remedy which the people of this country would accept. And what we have to look to, what we have to determine just now, is how is the manhood of this
10 country to be utilised for the preservation of the Empire?

(c.) At the rate of 100 words. Takes 5 minutes.

I know that our Empire at this moment is regarded with great jealousy, and even with great dislike, throughout the earth. It is vain to shut your eyes to these things, and those who are cognisant of the spirit which inspires not the governments but the nations of the great majority of the countries of Europe must feel, without charges of panic or pessimism being brought against them, that our country cannot be too well prepared for every emergency