

Fifth Day.
23 April 1907.

NAVAL DEFENCE.
(Mr. F. R. Moor.)

would bring the movement closely in evidence; it would bring it to the notice not only of these men but to the notice of the Colony, and would raise a spirit of enthusiasm which we cannot hope for unless we do have something of that sort.

From the statement we have had this morning it seems that the Admiralty is realising there may now come about a new departure with regard to the defence of these outlying portions of the Empire, that is in the direction of the utilising of smaller craft. These scientific craft are highly technical, I take it, but they could be used in our waters very effectively, not only in the event of war, but in the meanwhile for the training of our local people, and also as one of the best means for repelling any threatened attack by a cruiser or any ships an enemy might put round our coast, and deterring, perhaps, the attack from being delivered.

That being the case, I feel that I should put myself here entirely in the hands of the Admiralty and the Home Government as regards advice. We are here to learn, to exchange ideas with you, and where possible to give you every assistance in our power, and if our first crude idea is not one that commends itself as the most efficient to the Admiralty, by all means let us take advice, and I promise that we will do our best to forward the movement that Lord Tweedmouth has indicated to us this morning.

I can only say this, that as regards our local defences we are trying to do our best. My little colony has just spent some 700,000*l.* or 800,000*l.* of money in quelling a rebellion among the natives. That is a danger we all of us in South Africa have to face, and I think we do fully realise that we have to face that in the future and we have to provide efficient men and means for being able to govern these people without looking to the Home Government. Putting it against the arguments that have been adduced by the representatives of Canada, and also the last speaker, Sir Robert Bond, I do humbly submit that it is a set off to the arguments that have been adduced as regards policing their waters. We have in Natal made and wrenched from the reluctant hands of nature one of the finest harbours in the southern hemisphere and it has cost us millions of money to do it. That harbour to-day is at the disposal of the British Navy, with all its furniture and all its conveniences, and all we ask of you is to advise us how to turn those facilities, that we have carried out entirely at our own expense, to the greatest advantage for the common good. I do not say it with the idea of trespassing on the claims of my sister colonies in South Africa, but we have the finest coal that has yet been discovered in South Africa. That coal is available in any quantity that you may desire at our harbours, and we are providing these facilities for handling it and for getting it into depots as may be desired in the interests of its use not only commercially but for defensive purposes.

I feel that this contribution we are now giving in money would be perhaps more advantageously spent if it was more in the direction of men and material—a direction that would appeal to the people, so that they would have evidence that it was really a living organism which we had started and it would encourage them to go on with the good work. With regard to what Dr. Smartt had said as regards increasing the combination, when the time comes that we can afford it, and when we have, as I hope we shall have, the federation of our Colonies an accomplished fact, I do trust that we will be able to increase our contribution. But I do trust also that the Admiralty will meet us in getting that contribution made more in the direction which I have tried to indicate than by simply a cold lump sum, voted on our estimate, for which we have no actual evidence as directly concerning the people we represent.