

placed before you this matter fairly, and I have endeavoured to show you the responsibility attaching to New Zealand and to the Old Country, and our relationship in connection with that responsibility. That we must realise to the fullest possible extent. We may, of course, have differences in detail, but not in respect to the principles I have placed before you. It is of the first importance not to New Zealand alone, but to the English-speaking peoples throughout the world, and also to the peoples of other nations, that we should try to preserve the peace of the world; and the only practical and sensible way of accomplishing that is to see that the greatest sea-Power in the world—that is, the British—is maintained in its fullest efficiency. Our sea-power should be so strong as to remove the possibility of destructive attack or disastrous encounter, and by accepting our share as a portion of the Imperial Empire we shall help to increase that strength; we shall assuredly add to the power and greatness of the Empire; we shall help to continue the flying of the old flag: and I am confident that by having a great navy, more powerful than that of any continental country—by such a course we are insuring the peace of the world at large.

The Hon. Mr. T. DUNCAN (Oamaru).—Sir Joseph Ward and gentlemen,—It is only a few minutes since the resolution which I have here was put into my hands to propose, but I may tell the Assembly that I am very pleased it has been done, because I heartily concur in every word in it, and I believe that all the right-thinking members in this Assembly will agree with me. The resolution is as follows:—

“That this meeting of members of the House, recognising the vital importance to the Empire of the impending Naval Conference, considers it necessary that New Zealand should be represented at such Conference, and that in view of the important part New Zealand proposes to take in Imperial naval defence such representation should be by the Prime Minister of New Zealand. This meeting further considers that, as this is the first session of a new Parliament, it is expedient that the Prime Minister should be in his place to explain the policy of his Government to the House, and that therefore Parliament should, after making the necessary financial arrangements to enable the business of the country to be carried on, be prorogued until the thirtieth day of September next.”

I hope that resolution will all be agreed to unanimously, without any attempt being made to introduce party warfare. I think we should all be above that. If you agree to that resolution I need hardly say more; but I would just like to say that from the first I, as one of the members of Parliament, indorsed the action of the Government in this matter. I knew that it was an occasion when New Zealand should take her place and show, as heretofore, that she was watching what was happening in the Old Country, and was prepared, when any difficulty arose, to be there as a support, as far as either men or money was concerned—or Dreadnoughts either, if you like to put it in that way. And there is no doubt that is the feeling all over New Zealand at the present day, with very few exceptions. There is no question of the work of Parliament being put back in any way by the short adjournment. I am certain that we can quite easily do all the legislation that is required from the 30th September to the end of December and be home for our Christmas dinner. You can make ready in a very short time for the Premier to go and be there at the opening of the Conference. And I am quite certain that it will be an epoch in the history of this country, as well as in the Old World, that this Conference should be held, because it will show the world that the British Empire is not divided, and that is the main thing that we have to depend upon. We, as citizens of this Dominion, have to protect our seaboard, and it would be a sorry day for us if some foreign nation had control of the seas. Such a nation could stop our traffic, and then we would not be able to send our produce to the Old Country, and we should not be able to pay off our indebtedness without sending produce to pay it. Therefore it is of vital importance to us that Great Britain should have command of the seas. There can be no doubt about that. I shall not speak further on this subject, but will leave it to others who may be more fluent than myself. I will now conclude by moving the motion I have read.

Mr. MASSEY (Leader of the Opposition).—I want, if honourable members will give me the opportunity, to ask the Right Hon. the Premier whether he has given us the whole of the correspondence which has passed between the Imperial Government and the New Zealand Government with regard to the proposed Conference. I do not think he has; but, if he has, will he have it printed and circulated prior to the discussion being taken? I do not think I am making an unreasonable request. It can be printed in an hour or two, and it would be a convenience for every member to have the correspondence prior to expressing his opinions thereon.

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—In reply, I should like to say that I have given the whole of the correspondence that is not confidential. Confidential correspondence I certainly decline to give. I want to make that absolutely clear. Some people may not respect confidential communications, and may think they ought to be given; but I will not disclose anything that is of a confidential character in this or any other matter to the House or to any one. It is my duty not to do so, and I shall not deviate from it. Regarding the request that the correspondence should be printed, I shall be glad to have it printed; but I think in the meantime we should go on. I want us to meet again at half past seven to-night, and, if I can, I will get the correspondence printed and circulated in the interval; if not, I will lay it upon the table of the House, after Parliament assembles. I think the question may be confined within very small limits: Is the country to be represented at the Conference; and, if so, is it to be represented by the Prime Minister, and is Parliament to prorogue to enable him to do so? These are the two issues we want an opinion upon at the present time.

Mr. J. ALLEN.—Why did you not put that plainly in the resolution?

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—Well, the resolution that has been passed is intended to meet it.

Mr. MASSEY.—By way of explanation—and I may make another explanation presently—I should like to remind the honourable gentleman that we have not had the whole of the correspond-