

a nation can lose its liberties than by the force of arms. It will lose some of them if it allows a Ministry to expend money without consulting the people's representatives. And when I was consulted on the question of the gift of a Dreadnought, these are the views I expressed; but I said I thought you must have some other information which justified you in making the gift, and there must be some great national crisis of which you had knowledge. What was my astonishment, on reading the despatches to the Australian Federal House, to find there was no justification at all for the hysterical manner in which the offer had been made. Had the enemy been at the gates of any part of the nation, I should have said probably you had a shadow of right; but even then the Government of this or any other British dominion would strain the Constitution by pledging four millions of the country's money without consulting Parliament. We have been called together to-day to decide whether or not you should go Home. We might just as well have been called together two months ago and consulted about the pledge of four millions. I am in favour of giving not only one Dreadnought, but two, and of taxing ourselves to the last shilling, if it is necessary for the safety of the nation; but I am satisfied the Government should not vote any money without consulting the people's representatives. I intend to hand down, as far as I can, the liberties I am here to protect, as far as I am able, to my successor as I found them. I do not think the question of the Government's offer of a Dreadnought should have been brought into the discussion to-night. We should have been simply consulted as to whether or not the Prime Minister should go Home. But that is a question that should very well have been decided by the Ministry. If it was competent for the Ministry to decide the question of appropriating a grant of four millions, it is comparatively a mere nothing for them to appoint a delegate to a Conference. The business of the country could be carried on satisfactorily in the Prime Minister's absence. You have had two months in which to drill a lieutenant, and this should have been done. From long experience of at least one of your colleagues, I am satisfied that he is quite competent to carry on the business of the country for the next three months.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is he willing?

Mr. ANDERSON.—I do not know; I am not in his confidence, but he is quite able to carry it on. The condition of the labour-market seems to be very much more acute in the North Island than in the South. It reminds me of what occurred years ago, when a number of the population of this country drifted to Australia. From the experience gained in the years that have gone, I think Parliament should sit continuously till some means has been found to stop what appears to be the beginning of a similar exodus. I trust also that during the session we shall do something in the matter of compulsory military training. In my district Volunteer officers of long experience say the system of Volunteering has been a failure. So far as they can see, it is impossible to put it on a proper footing, and they privately and publicly affirm the necessity for the compulsory training of all our young people. There are other reasons that have been adduced by previous speakers which warrant us in insisting on the business of the country being proceeded with. We are all agreed that the Prime Minister should go Home, and it is to be hoped that when he is there he will be able to do something that will be of advantage to this country. When he returns he may be able to bring about an improved system of local defence. He is undoubtedly the proper man to go Home, but no reason has been adduced why the business of the country should be neglected for the next three months during his absence.

Mr. BROWN (Napier).—Sir Joseph Ward and gentlemen,—I feel, as a new member, that I should indicate which way I am going to vote. I must say at the outset that I am a strong supporter of the Premier. I have already voted for his going Home, and I will also support him in proroguing the House. I regret, from my point of view, some of the remarks which came from the Opposition in connection with the offer that has been made to the British Government of a Dreadnought. I take it that every member of Parliament is in favour of England being helped; but we are not all in agreement with the suddenness with which Sir Joseph Ward made his offer. That, however, is only a matter of detail. Sir Joseph Ward only did what any member of the Opposition would have done if he had been sitting on the Treasury benches, and in offering a Dreadnought to the Mother-country the other side of the House would have supported him. I have a letter here which I do not know if I would be in order in referring to, but I may say at once that it is not marked "Strictly confidential." It is from a gentleman now in England who some time back visited the district which I have the honour to represent, and I had the opportunity of paying him some slight attention. He thought fit, on his return to the Mother-country, to write me this letter, and, with your permission, I will just read it:—

"DEAR MR. VIGOR BROWN,—I send you a *Standard* with an account of the great meeting at the Guildhall on Wednesday. It was a great and stirring sight to see the hall crowded with London's responsible citizens, to see the tense earnestness of the audience as Mr. Balfour and other speakers spoke on the critical situation in which the nation finds itself owing to gross dereliction of duty on the part of those in power.

"What I want specially to mention was the heartily appreciative and enthusiastic manner in which the name of New Zealand was received and her noble example set by offering the Mother-country one, or, if necessary, two battleships. Believe me, the feeling that the 'lion's cubs' over the seas are ready to rally round the old mother is very deep in the hearts of all those who are proud of their birthright as Britons—and they are, after all, every one. We don't count those miserable 'Little-Englanders' who consider the fate of their parish pump before the Empire."

Now, gentlemen, I do not suppose there is a single "Little-Englander" in this Parliament. The letter goes on,—

"You in New Zealand may be sure that your loyalty to the Old Country is appreciated very heartily, and I feel humiliated that Mr. Asquith did not frankly and freely accept the offer now without his halting condition of 'if it is necessary.' That is the general feeling. Good luck and prosperity to New Zealand!"

Now, that is from a gentleman who passed about two or three months in this country and