

Armour and armoured decks protect the ship against attack by enemy's gunfire. High speed and great gun power enable the Capital Ship to bring vessels of less speed, power, or protection successfully to action.

The country whose fast capital ships and their complementary units are not contained or held by similar enemy's ships can, with these vessels, sweep the enemy's vessels and sea-borne trade off the seas.

The flying and the submarine enthusiasts of to-day are following in the footsteps of the explosive shell, the torpedo, and the mine enthusiasts who preceded them; whilst those who recognize the necessity for the Capital Ship are devising, successfully, means to counter each fresh menace to its existence.

It behoves us, therefore, to be cautious in accepting the opinion of specialists in any particular arm in this matter, which is so vitally important to the Empire.

In view of the above-quoted brief history of the gradual evolution of the great Capital Ship of the present day in warding off the perils which successively threatened its existence, and in view of the tremendous role played by the Capital Ship, the wise course to pursue is to continue to build capital ships until, *if ever*, it is shown that some other weapon has been found which permanently renders them inefficient.

The effective life of a capital ship is, perhaps, fifteen years, and the time to build about two years. There is at present no apparent prospect of the submarine or the aircraft defeating the Capital Ship in the next seventeen years. It is therefore sound and imperative to continue to build capital ships while such a condition of affairs exists.

**The General Situation as regards capital ships—
August, 1919.**

On the completion of H.M.S. "Hood" this year Great Britain will have no capital ships building. It is understood that America, on the other hand, is proposing to proceed with the building of the sixteen capital ships authorized in August, 1916.

Since 1916 the "Hood" will be the only British capital ship built.

Since that year Japan has laid down the four battleships of the "Kaga" class.

The position of affairs is shown in the comparative table below.

As the effective life of a capital ship is limited, unless some special steps are taken by Great Britain, India, and the Dominions, the situation as regards such ships will be unsatisfactory in a few years' time, when the older "Dreadnoughts" are obsolete, or nearly so.

**COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE CAPITAL SHIPS OF THE GREAT POWERS—
BUILT AND BUILDING.**

Country.	Super-Dreadnoughts,* over 30,000 Tons.	Super-Dreadnoughts,* under 30,000 Tons.	Dreadnoughts.
Great Britain	1	28	10 plus 4† second-class battle-cruisers.
United States of America	23	4	8.
Japan	8	0	5 plus 3 powerful cruisers of less strength than the 4 British second-class battle-cruisers.
France	0	12	4.
Italy	4	0	5.

* Capital ships carrying turret guns of larger calibre than 12 in. are referred to as "Super-Dreadnoughts."

† H.M.S. "New Zealand" and H.M.A.S. "Australia" included.