

of the treaty. Some of these relate to the emigration of Japanese to America; but the hostility to Japan, more or less marked, that exists in America to-day cannot be wholly accounted for by this fact. As it is vital in the interest of civilization that a good understanding should exist between America and ourselves, we should endeavour to do everything in our power to ascertain exactly what it is to which America takes exception in this treaty. We ought not to give her room for criticism which the world could support. We must make it perfectly clear that the treaty is not aimed against her, and that it could never be used against her. War with America is unthinkable. As the contingency is quite an impossible one, it need not be seriously considered. Yet it is well that the attitude of Australia should be made quite clear.

SUGGESTS CONFERENCE WITH AMERICA AND JAPAN.

Whether it would be wiser to invite a conference with America and Japan, to ascertain what would be mutually acceptable, is a suggestion which I throw out. If one were quite sure that America desired, or was prepared to accept, what would form a reasonable basis of an alliance with Japan, then I certainly would strongly press the suggestion. But in any case we ought to try and ascertain precisely what America's views are on this most important matter.

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT.

Now I turn from the consideration of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, sir, to a question of supreme importance which you raised yesterday, and it is one which is related both to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and to naval defence—I mean the question of disarmament. You said, sir—and I am sure the world will be very glad to read those words of yours—that you would welcome any suggestion and discuss with any Power any propositions for disarmament or limitations of armaments. Your words come most opportunely. I think this is the psychological moment. We ought not to underestimate the value of this Conference—it is no use denying the fact that in America they do distinguish between England and the Dominions in a very marked way—and a suggestion coming from you backed by the Dominion Prime Ministers might gain a hearing where the voice of England alone failed. After all, the distinction which Americans draw between us is easy to understand. History partly explains it. They see, too, in us replicas of themselves. They see us struggling and fighting towards the goal that they have already attained. And I think they are right in supposing that, subject to that determination which we have to achieve our destiny in company with each other and with Britain, we resemble so many Americas. We are free democracies. We want peace. We at least are free from the suspicion of Imperialistic ambitions. The world, tired of war, is yet neurotic, its nervous system so disturbed by war that while it cries aloud for peace, force is the first thing to which it turns to redress its grievances. You cannot expect, you cannot hope for, any more favourable moment than the present. If you fail to secure agreement for the limitation of armaments now, how can you expect to do so in the years to come? The appalling race for naval supremacy has already begun, although the fires of the Great War are not yet cold. It creates interests in the various countries where this suicidal race is run. This vicious rivalry grows by what it feeds on. Every year it becomes more difficult to stop. Speak, therefore, now on behalf of this gathering of Prime Ministers. Let us give the world, weary of war and staggering beneath its crushing burdens, a lead. Invite the United States of America, Japan, and France to meet us. We cannot hope that the world will beat its sword into a ploughshare, but, at any rate, it can stop building more ships. Let us stop naval construction and naval expenditure, other than that necessary for the maintenance of existing units, without prejudice to what may be agreed upon hereafter. In this matter the first step is everything. If the world resolves to stop making any further preparations for war everything is possible: until that step is taken we are only beating the air.

Such an invitation issued with such authority behind it would, I think, find great support in America, and, I hope and believe, in Japan too. In ten years' time, in five years' time, the position will be that both these countries will be poorer. They cannot continue such a competition indefinitely. If they persist, we and all