

us, and I hope this point will not be lost sight of. If it were possible—for my feeling about war is so strong, and I have no doubt it is shared by every one present—if it were possible for me by one stroke of the pen to strike out the possibility of war I would do it without hesitation, but it is not. We know, every one of us, that there are countries in the world to-day, densely inhabited countries, that are only kept within their own boundaries, and kept from inflicting injustice on their weaker neighbours, by the fact that if they did it would probably bring down on them a stronger Power than themselves.

NEW ZEALAND'S SHARE IN NAVAL DEFENCE.

Mr. Hughes referred to the financial side of the question and the upkeep of the British Navy of the future. I do not suppose that New Zealand is in any better financial position than any other country. We have not been exactly crippled, but we feel the result of the war expenditure, and we are likely to feel it for some time to come. But for all that—I speak on behalf of New Zealand—I take the responsibility of saying that New Zealand will find its fair share of the money necessary to provide a navy strong enough in comparison with other navies to defend the Pacific in case of attack. I hope it will not be necessary, but it is only right that I should express what I feel, and I feel very strongly after seeing what took place on the last occasion in the Southern Pacific upon the outbreak of war. We have an idea of the possibilities that the future may bring forth, and while I have a great deal of respect for the opinion of General Smuts, I do think it would be unwise to leave the countries of the Empire—which means the Empire itself—absolutely unprotected. So far as America is concerned, I hope that we shall be able to join with America in that friendly co-operation which you, sir, referred to in your address yesterday. I would go the length of saying that so far as I am concerned, I am prepared to join in any well-thought-out alliance with America. Personally, I do not think that is possible, but whatever happens I hope the time will come when America and Britain will join together, if for no other purpose and with no other object than that of keeping the peace of the world and preventing war.

VALUE OF TREATIES.

General Smuts expressed the opinion that we should do without alliances. I am sorry, but I am not able to join in that opinion. So far as our treaties are concerned we must stand by them even if for the time being they do not seem to be to our advantage. With regard to the Treaty which was signed two years ago at Versailles, and which provided that we—I am speaking of the Empire now—should come to the assistance of France in case of necessity—I do not know whether legally that Treaty stands. I doubt it, because America has withdrawn from the position which she then took up. But so far as we are concerned I have no doubt about our moral obligation. Our reputation for fair and honest dealing is one of our best assets and must be maintained at all costs. Then we must ask ourselves this question: We have got through the worst war the world has ever witnessed—I hope the world will never see another like it—but if Britain had been compelled to stand alone in that war, the question that must occur to each and every one of us would be “Could Britain have been successful?” I doubt it. With all the confidence that I have in the might and power of Britain and the patriotism of her people—and their patriotism was proved by the fact that one million British citizens—the flower of the Empire—gave their lives to save the Empire—I doubt if by ourselves we could have stood up against the Powers of Central Europe and have come out successfully during the war.

RECOMMENDS RENEWAL OF ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.

With regard to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, this is probably one of the most important things we have to deal with. I declined even to my own Parliament to discuss details of many matters which I felt confident would be brought up before this Conference comes to an end. I took my Parliament into my fullest confidence so far as the proposed Japanese Treaty was concerned, and I told them that in my opinion, with whatever modifications may be necessary, I was quite prepared to