



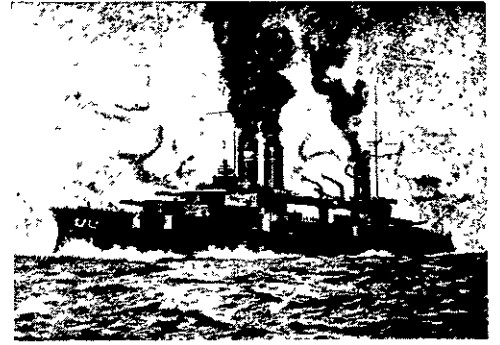
H.M.S. INFLEXIBLE

The Dreadnought Offer

Naval Programmes

The British Navy and the World

The Armstrong Works



H.I.M.S. BAYERN

The Naval Situation.

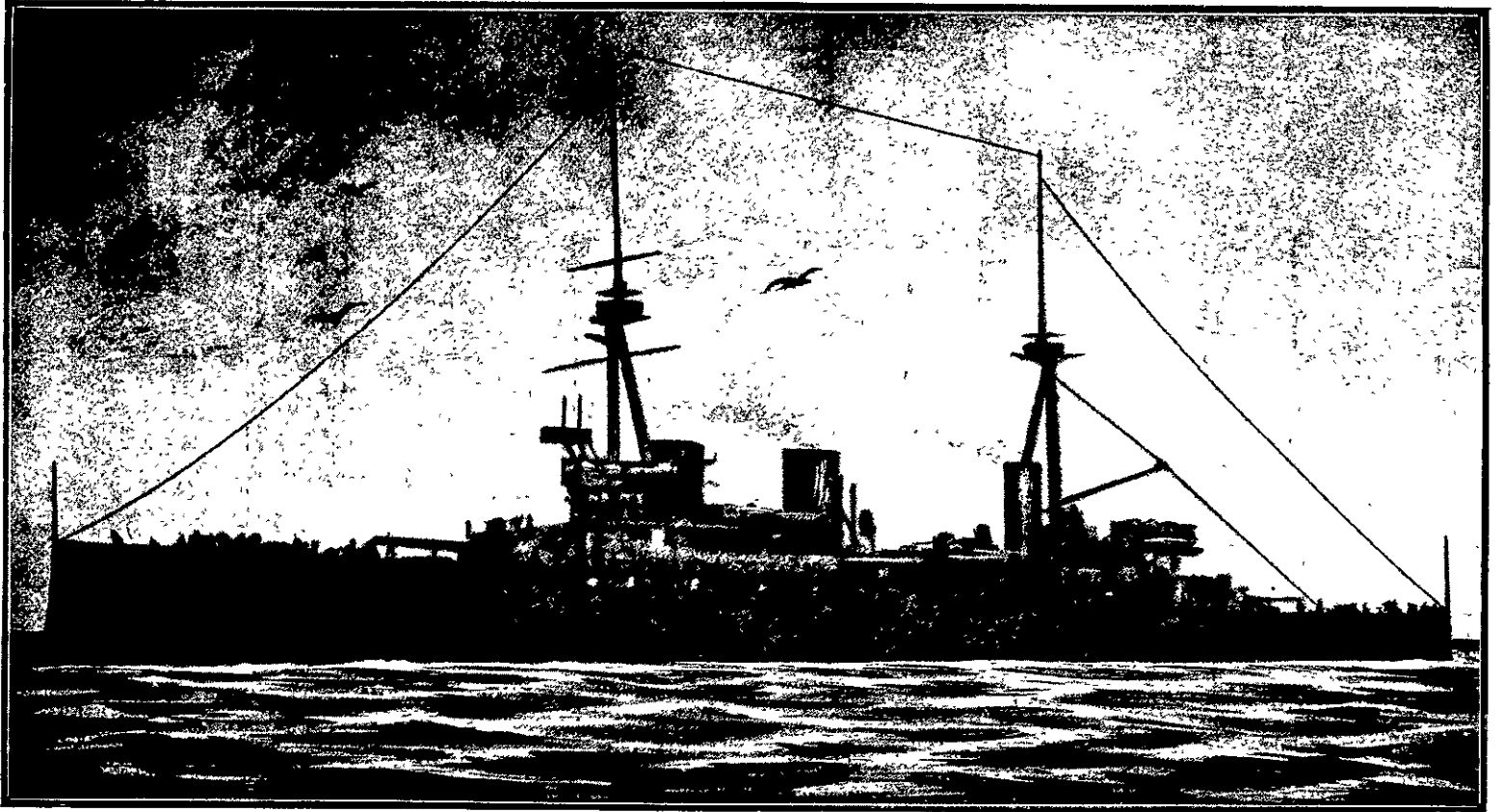
The recent speeches in the House of Commons and the events leading up to the promise by New Zealand of one, if not two, Dreadnoughts, have led to a great deal of attention being drawn to a state of affairs, the occurrence of which must have been long evident to anyone who seriously directed his thoughts to naval matters.

In 1905 the lessons of the Russo-Japanese War led to Britain laying down the Dread-

naving other nations to do similarly began the race afresh. Germany's Dreadnoughts were timed to hoist the pennant in 1911, and this has indirectly been the excuse of the British Government for the small naval programmes of late years. It takes Britain only two years to build a battleship, and this rapidity of construction gives her a great advantage over foreign nations. But the last year in which the German programme can be met is the present year 1909, and the Liberal Government, pledged

two-power standard will have been abandoned.

In these circumstances, we must express our admiration of the promptness of Sir Joseph Ward in his fine offer of practical assistance. Not alone for its addition to the fighting force of Britain is the gift valuable, but also for its excellent moral effect of encouragement to the other colonies and to the motherland, and of discouragement to Germany. And we think also that it is the right system of contribution to the



H M.S. INDOMITABLE

nought, a battleship so far in advance of anything that had preceded her and so new in design that it was not for a whole year after her completion that any of the foreign nations dared embark upon what they considered the dangerous scheme of copying her, and during that period not a single battleship of any description was laid down outside of England. But when that year was past, other nations, and Germany in particular, proceeded to build at a rate almost as rapid in number of ships laid down as Britain herself, and we then found ourselves in the position of having practically thrown away the great naval lead which we undoubtedly possessed a year before. For the Dreadnought rendered everything before her practically obsolete, and Britain by building her and thus in-

to retrenchment, is consequently in a quandary. This year, if we are to have safety, must bear the burden of its own naval estimates proper, and also have thrown upon it the weight of extra expense necessitated by the meagre programmes of the last few years.

Thus when Mr. Asquith brought down his naval programme of four ships, and four more if circumstances require it (and with a Liberal Government circumstances never do seem to require it), there was an immediate uproar. Of course a good deal of the uproar was mere "scare," but beneath it there was, and is, a solid substratum of truth; and though we cannot hold with Mr. Balfour that the one-power standard is endangered, we do think that, unless a large naval programme is begun this year, the

defence of the Empire, as opposed to any system of local colonial defence. It is becoming more and more recognised that the naval battle which will decide the fate of New Zealand may be fought in the North Sea, or at any other spot vastly removed from New Zealand itself, and that it is the British Navy alone that can be looked to for defence. Until that navy is defeated nothing can come near New Zealand. The public mind is, we are aware, filled with the idea that there are such things as "raiding cruisers which have slipped past the defending Fleet." These raiders, firmly established as they thus are in the public belief, are impossible while Britain holds the command of the sea. Even in the case of Japan, where there might very possibly be no imperial fleet on the scene