

HOW THE LION ROARED.

Reports of the Speeches That Made French Editors Rage.

Lately extracts from French papers were published in this journal, showing resentment at speeches in the British House of Commons. Following is a summary of the parliamentary utterances in question:

Sir E. Ashmead Bartlett, conservative for Sheffield, opened the debate in the Commons on Great Britain's relations to France in Africa. He first directed the attention of the house to the encroachments which the government permitted France to make upon Siam. In Africa France is still more active than in Asia, he said. She had sent out an expedition which was menacing the upper Nile, and she seized African territories recognized as being within the British sphere of influence.

Sir Edward Grey, parliamentary secretary of the foreign office, said that Great Britain stood in such a position of trust in Egypt as to make the British and Egyptian spheres of influence cover the whole Nile waterway. The house ought to be careful about giving credence to the rumor that a French expedition had been sent to the Nile country to occupy the valley of the river. The foreign office had no reason to suppose that any French expedition either had been instructed to enter the Nile valley or had the intention to do so. He could not believe it possible in the face of the fact that the British government's views were fully known to France. The advance of a French expedition under secret orders from the west side of Africa into a territory subject to British claims, whose rightfulness had been so long known, would be not only an inconsistent and unexpected act, but also an unfriendly one, and would be regarded as such by the government. ["Hear, hear."]

Without doubt African affairs for the last two years had caused considerable anxiety as to what might happen in the future. During those years no provocation had been given France from the British side. England had striven to the utmost to reconcile the occasional conflicts of interests. The government would continue to pursue this line of policy, omitting nothing calculated to maintain good relations with France, and, at the same time, to uphold the undoubted claims of Great Britain. To that end, of course, the co-operation of the French government and French public opinion was necessary. He relied on the sense of justice characterizing the French government and people to help reconcile the conflicting interests of the powers in parts of the world which were but little known. [Cheers.]

Joseph Chamberlain, the liberal unionist leader, spoke of Sir Edward's statement as the cleverest and most satisfactory declaration yet heard on this subject from a responsible representative of the government. He now saw, he said, that unless a clear understanding with France as to African affairs could be reached the most serious consequences might easily ensue. The statement ought to leave Great Britain's claims on Egypt beyond all misunderstanding. The whole Nile valley from the lakes to the sea was within the Egyptian or British sphere of influence and that claim on Great Britain's part had been within the knowledge of France for five years. He must remind the house, however, that as recently as at the beginning of the month the statement was made, unchecked, in the French chamber and in the presence of the minister of foreign affairs, that France's object was always to make England feel that her presence in Egypt was harmful and that France could come up with her elsewhere than in the Mediterranean. If the French government did not accept such statements it ought to repudiate them. France ought to be questioned regarding her expedition to the Nile valley. [Hear, hear.]

Henry Labouchere, the radical leader, pronounced Sir Edward

Grey's speech a menace to France. ["Oh, oh."] He quite understood the cries of "Oh, oh." They came from the Tory members, who were delighted to find a liberal minister acting upon their principles. ["Hear, hear."] This speech was a menace on the lines of the familiar warning "hands off." Certain members seemed to imagine the Nile to be as much British property as the Thames. He, for one, could not feel surprised that, in view of such statements, France was not friendly.

Sir Edward Grey denied that his statement had implied in any way a menace to France. ["Hear, hear."] The question of a general settlement of their respective interests in Africa was under discussion between the two countries.



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