

THE SPECTATOR.

April 20, 1912.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Times* sends to Tuesday's issue a summary of the German "Defence Bills" and the financial provisions for these measures. The Navy Law as now amended provides for an increase of eight battleships, four large and six small cruisers in the total number of ships permanently in commission in the active battle fleet. The new construction required by the Amended Navy Law consists of three battleships and two small cruisers, one battleship to be added to the 1913 and one to the 1914 programme, the date of the third battleship and the two new small cruisers being "held up." The additional expenditure required by the Naval Law Amendment up to and including 1917 is £10,500,000. The increase of *personnel* which is provided for till 1920 works out at 1,590 men annually. The proposed increases in the Army involve the addition of two new army corps and an increase of the total peace strength from 515,321 to 544,211, which corresponds almost exactly to the increase in the population of the German Empire shown by the census of 1910, and will cost £22,025,000 up to and including 1917. The total cost of the new Defence Bills is found partly by the abolition or reduction of the *Liebesgabe* on spirits, which is expected to produce £725,000 in 1912 and £1,800,000 afterwards, but mainly in large increases in the estimates of revenue and in calculations tending to indicate great improvement in the financial position of the German Empire.

