

CHALLENGED BORDEN TO SHOW THAT EMERGENCY EXISTS

F. B. Carvell in Telling Speech on the Naval Question Points Out That Men Guiding the Destinies of the Motherland are Men "With Two Eyes, Who Have Them Open"

Patronizing Medlers Do Not Represent British Thought—Canada Capable and Equal to Build Her Own Navy

(Continued from last issue.)
I want now to take up the other side of the case for a few minutes, in reference to the question of emergency. Notwithstanding the lamentable statement made by my hon. friend from East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) last evening, we know that Great Britain is the banker of the world. We know that in the last five years the British have been able to reduce their national debt by about \$50,000,000 a year; and that they have been able to pay all the expenses of government and to carry on their naval programme to a greater extent than has any other nation in the world. We know that they have been able to do all this out of revenue, and they state publicly that they are going to continue to do this.

We know that the Lords of the Admiralty have no fear whatever as to the outcome of this naval question between Great Britain and Germany. On this side of the House we believe that no emergency exists. I think we have the facts and figures to prove it.

The hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Weichel) made some reference last evening to the statements Churchill when discussing the naval proposals in the British House of Commons on the 22nd of July last. That speech has also been referred to by a number of hon. members who have taken part in this debate. I have here a quotation, which to my mind is the pith of the whole matter. This was made after the German Naval Bill of 1912 was made public, and after the ministers from the Dominion of Canada had been to London, asking as to what they could do in the way of immediate assistance to the British navy. You will find it in the English Parliamentary Debates, Volume 41, July 22, 1912. After having discussed to some extent what the British proposed to do and what the German Naval Bill proposed to do, he uses these, to my mind, very common-sense suggestive words:

"Cool, steady, methodical preparation, prolonged over a succession of years, can alone raise the margin of naval power. It is no use flinging millions of money about, on the impulse of the moment by a gesture of impatience, or in a mood of panic. Such a course only reveals your weakness and impatience. Those who clamour for sensational expenditure, who think that the kind of danger with which we are faced needs to be warded off or can be warded off in that way, are either ignorant themselves of naval conditions or take advantage of the ignorance of others."

Where can you find the whole pith of the matter boiled down in a few words and as appropriate words as these? He tells the British people: There is no need to get nervous over the matter; we have it well in hand; what is the use of flinging away millions of money? You fling away millions of money, the argument would be, in vessels which are not necessary; you increase the cost of upkeep and these vessels will become obsolete in a short time. Better take a cool course and meet the conditions as they arise. It seems to me that Winston Churchill had in his mind conditions, which neither the British people nor we knew; but which have come to light during the last two or three weeks. It is well known that prior to that time, Winston Churchill had gone to Germany and prior to that he had stated to the British public and to the world at large that Great Britain intended to do, that they intended to maintain the supremacy of the British navy upon the high seas. We find now that the statements made by Mr. Winston Churchill at that time were made with a knowledge which was not possessed by the world at large; but which is now coming to light. I find it in a dispatch in one of our Ottawa papers

she is looking after her own interests and does not require any of the colonies to look after their affairs; and they know that they can trust their parliament and government to do what is necessary for the country's protection. One of the most impressive things that I have seen in this connection took place at a conference held in London, a meeting of the independent Labour party, the Parliamentary Labour party, trades unions, trades councils and the Fabian Society. The delegates assembled represented two millions of Labour-Unionists of Great Britain. Think of it—a conference represent two millions of Labour-Unionists. And here is the statement made by the president in his opening address, he being not only president of the society but also a Labour member of Parliament:

"Mr. G. H. Roberts, the Labour member for Norwich, presided, and, in the course of his presidential address, made the following reference to Premier Borden's offer of battleships to the Mother Country:—

"Much comment is evoked by Canada's offer to furnish 'the country with three battleships. But the Dominion elect to build, man and maintain its own navy would not interpose. But a gift which greatly adds to our annual expenditure is open to criticism. Accepting Government assurances that our defensive forces are sufficient and efficient, these three vessels must be in excess of requirements. Besides which, giving the colonies representation on the Imperial Defence Committee is a departure fraught with such far-reaching consequences that it must be subjected to searching inquiry. In resisting unnecessary and provocative armaments, which squanders wealth otherwise badly needed, we have the glorious consciousness that the future peace, happiness and well-being of the world's millions largely depend on our exertions."

I commend this particularly to my hon. friend from North Waterloo (Mr. Weichel). If this had been brought to his attention in time, I think he would have made it known in this House. I have given it here because it comes from a body of men such as I have described, who believe that the British Government is amply looking after their affairs, even such as those who for five hundred years have never failed, when the standard of Britain was in danger to pledge their lives for their country's security. These men say that such a contribution as ours is unnecessary. But I have more than that. I have an editorial from the London Daily News of February 8. Now, this is not ancient history but something of very recent date. I do not intend to read the whole article, but I would take too much time. But I commend it to the very careful consideration of hon. gentlemen opposite. I hope the right hon. member of the Government himself will take the trouble to read the article, because there is more in it than I have seen in any article published on the naval question either in this country or across the water. The article discusses first the recent statement made by Admiral Von Tirpitz:

"Admiral Von Tirpitz speech, if we understand it, was not a whit less important than his colleagues'." One of his colleagues in the Reichstag. "Referring to Mr. Churchill's speech on March 18, he said that as head of the German navy, he had no objection to Mr. Churchill's ratio between the English and German fleets of 16 to 10. This statement implies, firstly, a renewal of Germany's assertion that she does not desire to contest British supremacy on the seas; and secondly, a quite new declaration that the ratio of 10 to 16 secures that object of self-defence which Germany has in view."

This is a Admiral Von Tirpitz, who, as I understand it, is in charge of the naval affairs of the German Government, stated publicly that he had no exception to take to Mr. Churchill's proposed ratio of sixteen to ten, that is, sixteen British ships to ten German. The News discusses this to some extent, and finally we come to the Canadian end of it, and this is my justification for reading it here this afternoon:

"Clearly, if the standard of 16 to 10 is acceptable to Germany after having been formulated by Mr. Churchill, there is very powerful reason for remaining faithful to it. Are we doing so? Two circumstances suggest a doubt. There is firstly the complication of the Malay-Canadian battleship; there is secondly the report that our programme of construction in the current year will be larger than foreshadowed by Mr. Churchill last year. Upon the second circumstance, so long as it rests upon rumor, there is no need to dwell; but the first requires comment. Mr. Churchill has said that the Malay-

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Canadian battleships will be additional to the English programme; they must therefore increase the ratio to more than 16 to 10. We have repeatedly emphasized that so long as we have to man and maintain the colonial ships without any corresponding reduction of our own programme this Colonial assistance imposes an additional burden upon the British taxpayer. If in addition we drive Germany into enacting new navy laws, and revive a competition when it promises to stop, then it will be admitted that the policy of counting the Colonial ships added to the Imperial fleet as external to the British programme is a very costly one. The course indicated by prudence and wisdom is two-fold. We should discourage gifts to the British navy and encourage the dominions to build local navies. The German authorities, precisely because they announce their fleet as intended for defense, could not count the local navies of the dominions under local control as additions to the British navy or in any way increasing the potential danger to German security. German naval apprehensions must be wholly European, and the dominion navies are wholly extra-European. It follows, therefore, that Canada would be doing the best for herself and for this country and for the peace of the world if, instead of presenting three battleships to the British navy she followed the example of Australia and developed a local navy of her own."

That is a statement, as I have said, which, in my judgment, should be considered very carefully by hon. members of this House. When a great newspaper like the London Daily News, which is not a provincial paper, but one of the great journals of the world, read, probably, by as many people as any other paper in Great Britain except possibly The Times, comes out and practically tells the Canadian Government that they are not helping but actually injuring the British Empire by the course they are taking, it is time that hon. gentlemen opposite should drop their jingoism, get out of this atmosphere that they found in London, and come back to reason and common sense. It is time for them to drop this Bill, and as my hon. friend from Assiniboia (Mr. Turritt) said, redistribute the seats and, if they are bound to have a decision, let the people say what we are to do on this subject. But we have more evidence. I have given only a small portion of it, and I will not give much more, for to do so would take up more of the time of this House than I should be justified in occupying. But I wish to give a little more. A great deal of jubilation on the other side occurred over the attitude of my hon. friend—and I do treat him as a friend—the hon. member for Sunbury and Queens (Mr. McLean), a gentleman with whom I have been associated in political matters for many years. That hon. gentleman took the course which he thought proper, and I do not intend to enter into any argument with him. But we are indebted to the hon. gentleman for a lot of facts which, if properly digested, present cogent reasons to this House why we should not go on with this proposition but should come back to sane common sense. The Admiralty memorandum was given to the present Government, I believe, at their earnest importunity; and I have a suspicion that they could not get what they wanted the first time and sent the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster) back to get it—the Minister of Trade and Commerce is the man, I think, it will be found who turned the trick. But they only discussed dreadnoughts in the Admiralty memorandum. They absolutely threw to the winds everything which had to do with the navy, except dreadnoughts, and they only compare the dreadnoughts of Britain up to 1915 with those of Germany up to 1920. I now intend to present to the House a number of statistics submitted by one in whom hon. gentlemen, I know, have the most absolute faith. I believe that they are absolutely correct, and that, when read by members of this House and the people of the country, they can be relied upon as being the very essence of the facts with regard to the naval situation. The conditions revealed by the tables presented by the hon. member for Sunbury and Queens (Mr. McLean), are wonderful indeed, and one could talk for two hours on a matter and yet not exhaust all the information contained in them. According to one of these tables, I find that the total number of the ships of Great Britain is six hundred and fifty-five, and of Germany, three hundred and sixty-four. I am satisfied that the hon. gentleman obtained this information from reliable sources, and that he would not place these tables on 'Hansard' if he had not verified them, and had not considered them absolutely reliable. Great Britain, six hundred and fifty-five; Germany, three hundred and sixty-four—and yet hon. gentlemen say we must reverse the common-sense policy adopted by this Parliament in 1909 because Britain is in danger; because there is an emergency! Ah, Mr. Speaker, it is because there is an emergency in the Tory party of Canada! I may have more to say about that later on.

I now come to the next table, wherein I find that the hon. member has not dealt with things small and insignificantly, but with the very best fighting machines that sail the waters of the earth to-day. The next table discards everything except the twenty-five most up-to-date, modern, invincible fighting ships afloat. Of that total of twenty-five, we find that Great Britain possesses twelve, and Germany two. These are battleships with a speed of twenty-one knots and up. The next item refers to battle cruisers of twenty-eight knots and up. There are only a dozen of these vessels in the world to-day, and of that dozen, Great

Britain possesses six, and Germany three. Of armoured cruisers there is a total of twenty-five, with a speed of twenty-three knots and up, Great Britain possesses seventeen, and Germany two. Of a total number of protected cruisers of twenty-four, with a speed of twenty-five knots and up, Great Britain possesses fourteen and Germany four. Of the fastest destroyers in the world, a total of twenty-five, with a speed of thirty-three knots and up, Great Britain possesses ten and Germany four. Yet hon. gentlemen state, in the face of such a remarkable supremacy as that, that an emergency exists, and that this country should give \$35,000,000 to Great Britain, imposing a burden upon the British taxpayer which he does not want. That is Canadian Tory jingoism in its very essence!

Hon. gentlemen opposite, especially the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup), discussed this question as though the whole world were arrayed against Great Britain; as though it was the duty of British statesmen to place the Empire in such a position as to enable it to cope with any possible combination. I do not think this is a reasonable position to take; I do not believe it is necessary to have a fleet on every sea and ocean in this

world, all of them greater than those of all other nations combined. It is not common-sense—it is foolishness, and I do not think hon. gentlemen can expect that such an argument can be accepted as anything but foolish. Does any one believe, after what took place in Manila bay not more than a decade ago, that the United States would stand by and see the British Empire demolished. I am not relying upon the ordinary sense of humanity existing between the different sections of the Anglo-Saxon race. I am discussing only what might reasonably happen. I am not considering the United States as an ally of Great Britain, but simply stating that I do not believe the United States would stand idle and see the British Empire smashed by any of the great military powers of Europe, if that were possible. When I read these figures, and observe the enormous supremacy of the British Empire over the rest of the world, I cannot but come to the conclusion that Great Britain does not require the assistance of the United States or any body else. We have the entente cordiale in Europe, between France and England, and would any hon. gentleman state that France would sit

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