DEFENCE OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

Premier Balfour's Masterly Presentation of the Question.

NO POWER NEED HOPE TO CAPTURE LONDON WITHOUT AT LEAST SEVENTY THOUSAND MEN.

And a Forlorn Hope Force of That Size Could Not be Landed on the English Coast Under Any Conceivable Circumstances.

(Conclusion.)

The difficulty of invasion depends upon the men that have to be landed the number of men that have to be landed depends chiefly on the difficulties they will find when they come to be landed, and, therefore, some home force is an essential part of the argument I am advancing, and however little I may personally believe in the possibility of evading the British fleet I do not ask them to accept any conclusions on that point at all; I do not ask them to accept the doctrine of the Blue Water School in any shape whatever; but I ask them to take the problem as I have given it, namely, an insignificant body of regular troops here, and an unorganized body of persons with some knowledge of arms, while we suppose that the enemy will require at least 70,000 men to reach London. If the House agree with the committee they will assent to the view that we have stated the problem in a very concrete and very moderate shape, and yet a shape which, if answered satisfactorily from our point of view, will relieve everybody's mind. (Cheers.) Having got so far let me observe that since the days to which I have alluded earlier, the old days of Nelson and Wellington, there have been great scientific changes which all, I think, make in favor of defence—(hear, hear)—and I particularly notice two of them. One is the use of steam and the other is the use of wireless telegraphy.

WHEN BONY TRIED IT.

When Napoleon was collecting his legions near Boulogne the British fleet was, of course, watching him, but it was no dount possible for the panic-monger of those days, if panic-monger there was, to say, "If the fleet can reach the scene of action in time no doubt they will absolutely prevent any landing on these shores, but suppose a dead calm or head wind prevented the fleet from coming up, how do you know Napoleon could not land a sufficient number of men to make resistance impossible?" I will not agrue whether that could happen in those days or not, but it certainly cannot happen now. Steam makes for concentration, and concentration can be effected with infinite facility now by means of wireless telegraphy. (Hear, hear.) It is not necessary now that our ships should be in port or near a land telegraph station, or should be kept in close touch with the shore; it is sufficient if the cruisers which I have described as always remaining in home waters should always keep within the range of wireless telegraphy in order to concentrate at any moment at the point of danger. But there are two other changes introduced by the torpedo and the submarine which must qualify the extreme doctrine of the command of the sea which used to be held, and perhaps is sometimes still held by the so-called Blue Water School.

OTHER FACTORS NOW.

The command of the sea at one time really meant the command of the sea, of the whole of the ocean waves up to the shore, and superiority in battleships gave that command. But it does not give it now in the same full sense, and I do not believe that any British Admiral, even though our fleets rode unchallenged in every part of the world, would view with serenity the task of convoying and guarding during hours of disembarcation a huge fleet of transports on a coast infested by submarines and torpedo-boats. (Hear, hear.) And let it be remembered, no strength in battleships has the slightest effect in diminishing the number of hostile torpedo craft and submarines. A battleship can drive another battleship from the sea; it cannot drive a fast cruiser because a fast cruiser can always evade it. A strong and fast cruiser can drive a weak and slow cruiser from the sea; but neither cruisers nor battleships can drive from the sea, or from the coast, I ought to say—(hear, hear)—either submarines or torpedo destroyers which have a safe shelter in neighboring harbors and can infest the coast altogether out of reach of the battleship, which is very likely much more afraid of them than they have reason to be of her. Those are great changes which nearly touch the particular problem on which I am asking the committee to concentrate their attention—the problem whether it is possible, under the conditions named, to land 70,000 troops on these islands.

THE REAL DIFFICULTIES.

To proceed now to the precise difficulties which an invader will have to deal with. He has first got to transport—I am obliged to suppose from what follows, whether I like it or not, that our enemy in this case is France, because, as the problem is a problem of invasion I am bound to take as the potential invader the great nation which is nearest to us and from which invasion would be most easy. (Hear, hear.) I need not tell the House that the last thing in the world I regard as possible is an invasion by France—(cheers)—but everybody will agree that in taking a concrete instance I am obliged, whether I like it or not, to take that country, friendly though it be. How is France going to get the transport for 70,000 men? If it is a matter of long and open preparation, then it is clear that we cannot suppose that that our fleets have gone on this wild goose chase. We must suppose, therefore, that it is a fairly rapid proceeding. On a particular day in last year it appears there were in French ports on the channel and on the Atlantic steamers of about 100,000 tons under the flag of the French I do not quite see how, if the matter is to be a matter of surprise, the French government could count on more than the ships they actually had in port at the time. But 100,000 tons is absolutely insufficient to carry 70,000 men. The calculation that the Admiralty favor is that for such a force you would require 250,000 tons. I am informed however, that some experiments made by French authorities a year or two ago indicate that perhaps that estimate may be too high, and that it would be possible to carry out the operations with 210,000 tons. I do not know whether the right hon. Baronet the member for the Forest of Dean, differs from that calculation.

Sir C. Dilke—I only saw the Turks send all their reinforcements on a very different scale.

Mr. Balfour—If the right hon. baronet takes that view——

Sir C. Dilke—I am not offering it as an argument; I do not differ from the argument.

THE TONNAGE REQUIRED.

Mr. Balfour—I am dealing with the information supplied to me by those whom I have cross-examined, and who, I think, are well qualified to judge, and they think 210,000 tons is a low estimate of the amount of tonnage required. Whether that be right or whether it be wrong, it is plain that the steam tonnage in the Atlantic and Channel ports of France at any given moment is wholly insufficient to carry that number of men. I do not believe it would carry more than half. It is no small matter to follow those transports, even if they had them, in some harbor. The nearest harbor available is Cherbourg, which is a very bad harbor in which to make such arrangements, because it is entirely exposed to view, and operations could not be carried on in secrecy. Brest would offer very much better facilities. Does the right hon. gentleman agree with me? (Sir C. Dilke—Hear hear) Then Brest is quite as far from any place where a landing is likely to be attempted, and every mile you add to the distance exposes this huge fleet of transports—if you have them—to the attacks of torpedo boats, and that irrespective of the strength of the convoy.

ELEMENT OF TIME.

It would be quite impossible to carry out the operation of transferring 70,000 men from Brest, or even from Cherbourge, in the daylight. Some hours of darkness there must be, in which protection would be almost or quite impossible against the species of attack to which they would then be exposed. Assume, then, to have reached our coast. I ought, perhaps to say that by the time they reached our coast the alarm would long since have been given to every ship between the Faroe Islands and Gibraltar, and every ship available, every cruiser, every torpedo boat, destroyer, every craft that could be made available for resisting invasion would be concentrated at the point of danger; and when this huge convoy reached the point of danger what is it to do? Disembarking 70,000 men on a coast like the coast between Portsmouth and Dover is not a very easy task, and, above all, it is not a quick operation. I do not believe anybody will estimate the time it would take at less than 48 hours. My advisers say that is a most sanguine estimate. Forty-eight hours involves two nights. Then, calm weather is required. The operation cannot be carried out or attempted except in calm weather. That is exactly the time at which, if torpedo boats or submarines get their chance, they have that chance in the greatest perfection. How does anybody imagine that this fleet of inexpert transports, which would not be provided with nets, because nets cannot be improvised, as the ships have to be structurally devised so as to bear them—how is it possible that this helpless mass of transports could escape the attacks of those torpedo boats and submarines, put ting out of account everything that cruisers, battleships, or any other naval weapon at our disposal could accomplish? The thing is impossible.

A DESPERATE ENTERPRISE.

Conceive the position of the invading soldiers—the pick, no doubt, of the invader's army. It is not as if they were fighting for glory on a stricken field. Packed in those transports, commanded not by men of the French navy, but by ordinary merchant captains, not knowing when, or where, or how, the attack would take effect, knowing only that if it did not take effect it would mean the sudden hurling into infinity the whole helpless regiment of soldiers, does anybody think that it is an enterprice which would be undertaken by any sane person? I do not know whether we have the right to measure the courage of ous opponents by our own, or our readiness to take responsibility by that of our own naval officers, but I am certain that there is no admiral in the British fleet and never has been an admiral in the British fleet who would undertake such a task as I have supposed. If a French admiral were to have committed to him the expedition which I have endeavored to draw in imagination, he could not protect the transports, he could not even protect his own ships, if they were obliged to lie there in positions perfectly well ascertained, absolutely known, within a few miles of torpedo stations of our own, two days and two nights. Why, it is not the transports alone that would suffer loss and destruction in that time. If the protecting fleet itself did not suffer some great calamity while they were lying helpless off this shore naval authorities have very greatly overrated the efficiency both of torpedo craft and of the submarine. The committee will, perhaps, think that I have gone sufficiently into detail. I have left out some details, but I think that I have said enough to show that we have really endeavored to put to ourselves the problem, in a very concrete form. We have not gone into generalities about the command of the sea or the superiority of our fleet, or this difficulty or that difficulty; we have endeavored to picture to ourselves a clear issue which is very unfavorable to the country, and have shown, at least to our satisfaction, that on that hypothesis, unfavorable as it is, serious invasion of these islands is not an eventuality that we may seriously consider. (Cheers.)

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There are some establishments in Europe where they do this kind of thing. You are taken into the sweetening department, and you see cones of sugar ready to be operated on. A cone is placed over an apparatus, apex downward. You notice many little holes in this apparatus close to the apex or point of the cone. Some thickish liquid is poured on the flat end of the cone, and then the machinery is set in motion.

The holes become the mouths of suction tubes, and the sweetening liquid is drawn through the cone, giving it the necessary quality.

Another interesting fact in connection with this article is that some of the pieces of "lump sugar" are really made up of dust or fragments pressed together.

If you will examine certain pieces you will observe that the crystal formation of good sugar is not to be seen, and you will also discover that these close grained "lumps" take longer to dissolve, though, of course, all sugar that takes a long time to melt is not necessarily made up stuff.—London Globe.

Old Orchards.

It is an exceptional case when an old orchard should be filled with young trees. Generally the soil is exhausted by the former growth. The better plan is to set in a new location.

Penitentiary Supplies.

SEALED TENDERS addressed "Inspectors of Penitentiaries, Ottawa," and endorsed "Tenders for Supplies," will be received until Monday, 5th June, inclusive, from parties desirous of contracting for supplies, for the fiscal year 1905-1906, for the following institutions, namely:

Kingston Penitentiary.
St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary.
Dorchester Penitentiary.
Manitoba Penitentiary.
British Columbia Penitentiary.
Regina Jail.
Prince Albert Jail.

Separate tenders will be received for each of the following classes of supplies:—

1. Flour (Canadian Strong Baker's.)
2. Beef and Mutton (fresh).
3. Forage.
4. Coal (anthracite and bituminous).
5. Cordwood.
6. Groceries.
7. Coal oil (in barrels).
8. Dry Goods.
9. Drugs and Medicines.
10. Leather and Findings.
11. Hardware, Tinware, Paints, &c.
12. Lumber.

Details of information as to form of contract, together with forms of tender, will be furnished on application to the Wardens of the various institutions,

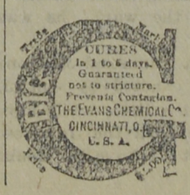
All supplies are subject to the approval of the Warden or Jailer.

All tenders submitted must specify clearly the institution, or institutions, which it is proposed to supply and must bear the endorsation of at least two responsible sureties.

Papers inserting this notice without authority from the King's Printer will not be paid therefore.

DOUGLAS STEWART,
GEO. W. DAWSON,
Inspectors of Penitentiaries

Department of Justice,
Ottawa, May 10, 1905.
May 13,dS3i.



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A DREADFUL DISASTER.

French Fishing Vessel Missing—One Hundred and Ninety Men Probably Perished.

Sydney, N. S., May 29.—News of what is probably the worst fishing disaster of the year, in which nearly two hundred lives have been lost has been brought here by the French cruiser Truade, which arrived yesterday. For the past week the Truade has been cruising about the Grand Banks in a vain search for the French fishing schooner Cousins Rennis, which left France six weeks ago with a large quantity of supplies and one hundred and sixty men to replenish the St. Pierre fishing fleet. Failing to arrive at St. Pierre within the usual time occupied in such a passage, about three weeks, the authorities both at St. Pierre and in France became uneasy concerning the vessel's safety, and the government sent instructions to the Truade to commence a search for her. After cruising about the Grand Banks and the Newfoundland coast for a week, the cruiser could find no trace of the missing vessel and her officers decided that she had been sunk by iceberg or collision with some other vessel and went to the bottom with all hands—about one hundred and ninety men. The Cousins Rennis was a three masted vessel of 128 tons net and was built at Advocate, N. S., by A. C. Elberton, in 1893.