

The German colonies are state undertakings. British colonies and dominions have been built up throughout the world rather by the free and adventurous spirit of our race than by any state effort. Indeed, in some instances they have sprung into being against the will and without the encouragement or assistance of the British Government. The German colonies are governed, as Germany is governed, by the will of those who control the State and not by the consent or will of the people. The great over-seas dominions of the British Empire have been granted, not as of grace but of right, the same privileges of representative self-government as those enjoyed by the people of the British Islands. In the one case there is the strength and unity which freedom brings; in the other case, the weakness which autocracy develops.

Among the utterances of those who have most widely influenced German public opinion during the past quarter of a century, one does not fail to discover the profound conviction that the British Empire chiefly stood in the way of German expansion and pre-dominance and that war between the two countries was absolutely inevitable. They recognize and frankly declare that Germany must fight for and win quickly all that other nations attained in centuries of gradual development. To put it shortly, Germany requires a special place in the sun and the British Empire stands in the way. The spirit of Prussian militarism knew from the first that its ideal could not be realized without a victorious war against our Empire. That spirit spoke in Bismarck in 1862, when he said: "The great questions are to be settled by blood and iron." They believed our race to be decadent and the Empire a sham which ought to be destroyed. Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, France in 1870 and our Empire on that future day to which they drank.

You do not need to be told of the momentous nature of the struggle in which we are engaged. I hope that every man in Canada will realize that it challenges the continued existence of this Empire and involves the destiny of this Dominion. History records no such titanic conflict. Not for us alone, but for our Allies as well, the conflict involves the very life of nations. "We must square our account with France," said Bernhardt; "France must be so completely crushed that she can never again come across our path;" and, again, "It would be a war to the knife with France. One which would, if victorious, annihilate once and for all the French position as a great power."

"It is upon the navy that, under the good Providence of God, the wealth, prosperity and peace of these islands and of our Empire do mainly depend." So reads the statement of our dependence upon the sea as set forth in the "Articles of War"; and the