

House of Commons. They contain also the weighty opinion of the Marquis of Lansdowne, late governor-general.

In any plan of imperial defense Canada must henceforth perform an important part. On her Atlantic and Pacific coasts are the finest harbors of the world and enormous deposits of bituminous coal available for steam purposes. Halifax is a strongly fortified port with a large dock-yard; and at Louisbourg—now desolate, but once a famous fortress of the French—could well be established another important station for a naval squadron. Both at these places and in British Columbia can be formed those coaling stations which, as Captain Colomb has pointed out, are essential as strategical positions. The present governor-general of Canada, in a recent speech, referred to the important works that are now in course of construction on the Pacific coast for purposes of defense. "You have here Esquimaux," he said, "a naval station likely to become one of the greatest and most important strongholds of the empire. You have a coal supply sufficient for all the navies of the world. You have a line of railway which is ready to bring that coal up to the harbor of Esquimaux. You will shortly have a graving-dock capable of accommodating all but one or two of Her Majesty's largest ships. You have in short all the conditions requisite for what I believe is spoken of as a *place d'armes*; but until now that *place d'armes* has been inaccessible except by sea. We shall henceforth be able to bring supplies, stores, and material of war by an alternative route, direct, expeditious, and lying for more than half its way over British territory."

An astute statesman, the Marquis of Lansdowne, fully appreciates the Imperial importance of the Canadian Pacific Railway as a means of keeping open the communications between England and her dependencies in the east, and of strengthening the defenses of the empire at large. Possessing, as she does, the great steam-fleet of the world, and the power of increasing it to still larger proportions, she can always maintain a steady and secure communication with China, Japan, Australia, and even with India, and all other countries in which she has important interests at stake. From her depots at Halifax, or other places on the Atlantic coast of the Dominion, she can in four days reach the shores of the Pacific and supply a fleet ordered to protect her interests in the east, should they ever be threatened by Russia or any other power. The fishermen and sailors of the Dominion must prove an element of great strength in the maintenance of the line of communication with England and those countries with which she is politically or commercially identified. They can man the vessels necessary to protect our ports, and otherwise assist in the naval defenses of the empire. A thousand stalwart fishermen from Nova Scotia would aid materially in the defense of British Columbia or any other section of Canada.

Looking, then, at the maritime industries of Canada, from an Imperial as well as a purely commercial standpoint, we can not fail to see how intimately connected they are with the security of the empire. We all know that no country can be truly great that has not a seaboard and does not follow maritime pursuits. Spain sank low in the scale of nations as her maritime power declined with the loss of her great colonies. The prosperity of Italy has increased with the growth of her commerce and shipping, and she need no longer lament the palmy days of Genoa and Venice. We all know why St. Petersburg was built on a marsh, and the history of this century is replete with the evidence of the desire of Russia to establish herself within the Golden Horn. France has fed her navy from the hardy Bretons and Normans who have served a rude apprenticeship on the banks Newfoundland. Canada, as yet with a population of about five million souls, already possesses a marine greater than that of Russia, Germany, Italy, or France. Prosperous as may be hereafter her commerce in manufactures or in agricultural products, it is on her rich fisheries must always rest in a large measure her maritime greatness.

To maintain the communications with the East through Canada, to keep open this imperial highway at both extremities, the sixty thousand fishermen of the Dominion must form an almost indispensable element of greatest strength. They will issue out from Halifax at one extremity of the great continental line, and from Vancouver's Island at the other, forming, in time of war, a perpetual menace to our commerce and to our coasts.

This is no controversy as to the profit of a few thousand men in their business. They could doubtless find profitable employment elsewhere. It is a struggle on the part of Great Britain and Canada to increase their naval strength and diminish ours; to increase the numbers of a naval school whose graduates will be a constant threat to our commerce in time of war, both on the Atlantic and the Pacific.