

A SPEECH BEFORE THE UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH OF THE EMPIRE PARLIAMENTARY
ASSOCIATION AT LONDON, ENGLAND,
JUNE 21, 1918. (1)



I desire at once most gratefully to acknowledge the very kind terms in which this toast has been so eloquently proposed by the Prime Minister and to acknowledge also the way in which you have received it. Your welcome to us has been that of kinsmen to kinsmen.

Journeys across the oceans in these days are not of the pleasantest and are sometimes protracted. Ours, fortunately, across the Atlantic, was uneventful, and both during the voyage and after arriving here it was with the deepest satisfaction that I noted a profound change in the outlook towards the submarine peril, as compared with what it was when we left here a little more than a year ago. I do not wish to be understood as suggesting that the menace has passed, but I do venture to believe, from what I have seen and from what I have heard, that the extreme peril of twelve or fourteen months ago has indeed disappeared and that in meeting that peril the British Navy has upheld the most splendid traditions of the past. And we in the Overseas Dominions, in common with you in these Islands, acknowledge—must acknowledge—with the utmost appreciation the remarkable service which the Navy has rendered to this Empire. After all this British Commonwealth of Nations can only be held together by sea power; it can only maintain its strength when the highways across the ocean are kept open. If it had not been for the Navy, what could we overseas have done to aid in this war?

(1) On June 21, 1918, the United Kingdom Branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association gave a supper in the Royal Gallery, Houses of Parliament, in honour of the Oversea Ministers attending the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference. The Right Honourable Lord Finlay, Lord Chancellor, presided. The other speakers were the Right Honourable David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable W. F. Massey, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and the Right Honourable H. H. Asquith. In response to the toast "Our Cabinet Colleagues from the Dominions", proposed by Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Robert Borden spoke as above.