

THE NAVY LEAGUE

Annual Address of President in London

Duke of Buccleuch Includes Summary of What the Fleet Has Done in Three and a Half Years of War

The following is the annual address of the president of the Navy League, London, the Duke of Buccleuch, to the members on the work of the navy:

NEW YEAR MESSAGE.

To the Members of the Navy League at Home and Overseas.

Ladies and Gentlemen.—On behalf of the executive committee of the Navy League I beg to tender to you all our warm greetings and hearty good wishes at the opening of the year 1918. I desire at the same time to express the grateful appreciation of the central organization for the valuable support which has been so generously extended to the work of the league by all its members during the last year, and to place upon record its sense of obligation to the supporters of the movement everywhere for their unflinching loyalty to and confidence in British sea power and the devoted officers and men of our incomparable fleet.

In transmitting this message of goodwill and gratitude it may perhaps be opportune to offer a few observations on the naval situation which may inspire the confidence and stimulate the hope of all those to whom British sea power has been and must always be an article of national and imperial faith.

The naval aspect of the war as it presents itself to the executive committee of the Navy League may be briefly summarized under the following heads:

1. Officers and Men.—After forty-one months of unparalleled strain in the prosecution of world-wide sea warfare the devotion to duty, spirit of sacrifice and confidence in ultimate victory stand at a higher level throughout the whole personnel of the British fleet than at any previous moment in our history.

2. Strength and Efficiency.—In the development of its effective power the fleet has achieved since the beginning of the war a degree of superiority and a stand-



THEY ADVANCED IN CLOSE FORMATION.

ard of efficiency of which no conception could be formed in the terms of comparative naval preparedness in time of peace. It may be declared in the fulness of conviction that as an instrument of war the British navy at the opening of this New Year is the most powerful and the most highly developed weapon which has ever been devised.

3. The Air Service.—The recognition that aircraft is an essential part of naval organization is very gratifying and there is reason to believe that measures are now being taken to supply our airmen, who have proved themselves so superior, with a sufficient number of first-class machines to enable full use to be made of their skill and courage.

4. Relation to War Upon Land.—The three great facts emphasized in the preceding paragraphs will, it is hoped, make it abundantly clear that the British fleet, in conjunction with the fleets of the Allies, is now and must continue to be the dominant factor in the ultimate destruction of the military strength of the German powers. The overwhelming influence of sea power upon the whole field of war is amply demonstrated in the practically unchecked continuity of communication for troops, munitions and supplies between all the Allied nations and all the theatres of operation since the beginning of the conflict.

5. The Submarine Menace.—While the destruction of British and Allied commerce by enemy submarines is the most serious and disturbing factor in the naval side of the war, it has been officially announced by the admiralty that the number of German submarines now being sunk in contrast with the volume of merchant tonnage destroyed by enemy action may be regarded as satisfactory.

6. Commerce Destruction in Previous Wars.—It may not be without interest to direct attention to the losses of merchant ships and tonnage owing to enemy action former wars. During one period of five years, 1861-65, in the great sea wars of the eighteenth century, 3,300 British merchant vessels were captured or destroyed, the loss representing roughly 25 tons per annum for every thousand persons of the population of the British islands at the time. The outstanding lesson of history is that an invulnerable fleet can never be crushed so long as it retains command of the sea.

7. Our Indomitable Mercantile Marine.—On the naval side of the war nothing can be more calculated to stir the pride of the British race than the magnificent bravery and chivalry of the officers and men of the British mercantile marine. It was the arrogant hope of the enemy that the methods of "frightfulness" which were so ruthlessly practised in the destruction of merchant vessels at sea would in effect increase the difficulties of manning and operating the British merchant service. In this respect the enemy has been completely disillusioned and the fearless bravery, cool skill and irrepressible sense of public duty of every section of British seafarers, no matter on what class of craft they have been employed, are the admiration of the civilized world.

8. United States Co-operation.—The advent of the United States in the war has enormously strengthened the sea power of the Allies, and the co-operation established so effectively and harmoniously between British and American fleets must give intense gratification and joy to the whole of the English-speaking world. The gigantic and comprehensive programme of naval construction authorized by the American government affords abundant evidence of the belief of the American people in the efficacy of sea power and immensely enhances the future naval position of the Allies.

9. Criticism of the Navy.—In the nature of things it is obviously impossible

that anything approaching accurate knowledge of the conditions affecting naval warfare can be known outside the very limited circle of those immediately responsible for the direction of naval policy and operations, and it cannot therefore be too strongly urged that ill-informed criticism relating to naval strategy and disposition should be earnestly deprecated. It is respectfully suggested as the clear and unmistakable duty of all the nations within the empire to give their unqualified loyalty and confidence to the commander-in-chief and the officers and men of the fleet in carrying out the responsibilities which devolve upon the navy from day to day. Nothing is more encouraging to those who man our fighting ships in all the seas than the solemn feeling that they possess in unstinted measure the trust and the affectionate sympathy of their fellow citizens in the discharge of their duties.

10. Public and the Fleet.—It may be asserted that with the exception of a negligible minority the public opinion of the whole empire is solidly behind the fleet. At time in history has the significance of sea power in the preservation of civilization and democratic liberty been more manifest; at no time has the relationship between human freedom and the power of the sea been more intimately brought home to the minds of the liberty loving nations of the world.

11. What the Fleet Has Done.—At the close of three and a half years of war it may be advantageous to epitomize the outstanding features of naval achievements during the process of the struggle: (a) In consequence of British command of the sea, apart from air raids and a few spasmodic dashes of enemy cruisers, the territory of the British Empire has been held inviolate from enemy invasion. The British Empire is the only nation engaged in the war which has conquered enemy territory and lost none of its own.

(b) The lines of communication between all the theatres of war have been amply defended and maintained, and protection for the transport of over thirteen millions of men from port to port has been provided. Moreover, under the leadership of the fleet, over two million horses, twenty-six million tons of munitions and war supplies, and fifty-three million tons of coal and oil have been conveyed to meet the needs of the Allied armies.

(c) Within the British Empire itself the navy has safeguarded the ocean carriage of nearly one hundred and forty million tons of food and materials. Notwithstanding the vigor of submarine attack the number of vessels of all nationalities at and from United Kingdom ports in the week ending December 25, 1917, was 4,960 as against 4,941 in the week ending February 25 last, when unrestricted submarine warfare began.

(d) The maintenance of the blockade of Germany has resulted in the complete stoppage of her ocean going commerce. The German flag has been swept from the seas and only on one occasion—on June 1, 1918—has German naval power ventured to challenge a fleet action.

(e) The conquest of German colonies in Africa, Asia and Australasia has been the direct result of the application of sea power in support of the operations of military forces on land.

In submitting the foregoing statement my colleagues on the executive committee and myself associate ourselves with you in the sincere hope that the year before us may bring an honorable and permanent peace between nations, and that the menace to civilization which has overshadowed the world since August, 1914, may never again be repeated.

BUCCLEUCH, President of the Navy League.

THE OLD NORTH BRITISH SOCIETY

A Sturdy Halifax Organization—Its Early Days Recalled in Interesting Article

(Montreal Journal of Commerce.) Canada is often spoken of as a "new country," or a "young country." New and young it is in comparison with the countries of the old world. But many events are occurring to remind us that, to say the least, we are getting along in years. A modest celebration a few years ago at Annapolis Royal, and a much grander one a little later at Quebec, emphasized the fact that three centuries had elapsed since the forefathers first established settlements on the shores of the Bay of Fundy and the St. Lawrence river. A memorial tower erected near Halifax tells us that the boon of parliamentary institutions has been with us for over one hundred and fifty years. In the business, religious and social circles we are reminded of the presence of institutions of long standing. A great banking institution proclaims with pride that it has entered upon the second century of its career.

At Halifax today, a Scottish social and charitable organization, the North British Society, is celebrating its one hundredth and fiftieth anniversary. On the 26th of March, 1768, at the house of one of their number, there assembled a group of men whose names, for the most part, declared whence they came—Taylor, Gillespie, Scott, McLennan, Kilbo, Clark, Fraser, Harkness, Girdles, Morrison, Thomson, McCrae, Luke—who resolved to form "The North British Society, or Scots Club." There was no bank in those days—not until fifty years later was our oldest bank established—but the records show that in the very first step of the movement the paramount necessity of caring for the funds was well recognized. In the place that the bank would occupy in a similar movement to-day, there was established the box—with a capital B to mark its importance. It was no mere incidental reference that was made to this box. Before doing anything else these thrifty Scots gave assurance to their brother Scots and to the world that the siller would be looked after. Thus articles 1 and 2 of the constitution read:

"Article 1.—Every member joining this Society shall pay seven shillings and sixpence, to be deposited into the box, and one shilling for the good of the house the first night.

"Article 2.—That a proper box be provided, at the charge of the society, with three locks and keys; those keys to be kept by proper persons appointed by said society, for to keep said money as may be delivered into said box from time to time—all the money that shall arise for the benefit of said society."

It is to be observed that there were not merely three keys, but three locks, apparently three separate locks, giving assurance that not one haubee would be drawn from the box until all three of the "proper persons" foregathered for the solemn function. Although the rules are silent on this point, it is a fair inference that there was a safe in the box, at several points of circumstances under which the members were required to deposit sixpence in the box. It would seem that there was every facility for putting money into the box, but as for getting anything out of it, nothing less than the united efforts of three sturdy Scots could accomplish that. That treble system of locks and lockmen probably was as good a security as the bank's double liability of the present day.

There is food for thought, in the dry times of today, in that provision in Article 1 which required from every member "one shilling and sixpence for the house the first night." One's curiosity as to the meaning of the words "for the good of the house" is increased by a similar reference in a later article, which fixes the hours of the monthly meetings—to last from seven to nine in the summer, and from six to eight in the winter—at which time each member shall pay the treasurer one shilling for the use of the box, and sixpence for the benefit of the house where the society may meet according to appointment." It might not

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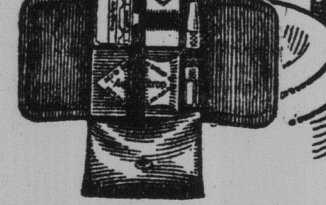
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NEWS OF SOLDIERS

W. L. Harding, 152 Watson street, West Side, has been advised that his nephew, Flight Lieutenant George H. Harding, Royal Flying Corps, 24 years old, has been missing since March 27. He was last seen flying over the German lines. He is a son of George Parker Harding, formerly of Carleton, but many years a resident of Minneapolis, Minn.

The names of three New Brunswick men appear in the midnight casualty list: Wounded, L. M. Chase, French Lake; killed in action, H. E. Cole, Moncton; gassed, D. J. Robson, Harvey Station.

Frank Hibbard of St. George was advised yesterday that his son, Edwin Hibbard, formerly of the 149th battalion, had been wounded in the head in France. Word was received in Sackville on Tuesday stating that Sergeant John Fullerton of the 10th battalion, has been wounded.

The University of New Brunswick and Mount Allison have been asked to supply a tank crew for the Canadian tank battalion. The tank crew consists of an officer and eight men.

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MUTT AND JEFF—JEFF DIDN'T WANT TO BLOCK THE TRAFFIC

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BY "BUD" FISHER