

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1912.

THE MARGIN OF NAVAL POWER.

The Telegraph quotes with approval a recent statement by Mr. J. Allen Baker, M. P., to the Toronto Globe, to the effect that Great Britain's strength in pre-dreadnought ships is "overwhelming" as compared with Germany's. Accepting this statement, or professing to accept it, as an accurate description of the naval situation, Mr. Fugate's organ joins the Globe in suggesting that "Mr. Borden's emergency is to be found in Ottawa rather than in Great Britain; but," it adds, "perhaps we shall know more when Mr. Borden shall have made public his policy and his reasons for it." An instructive example of facing both ways is thus presented; backing Sir Wilfrid Laurier's doctrine that there is no German menace in one breath and admitting in the next that Mr. Borden may possibly be fully justified in recommending an emergency contribution. This uncertainty, sitting on the fence, must be very trying.

Mr. Baker who was born in Canada, represents East Finsbury in the British House, and is well known for his praiseworthy efforts in initiating and organizing the interchange of visits between representatives of the Christian churches of Great Britain and Germany in the interests of international peace. That is no reason, however, why Mr. Baker should draw an inference from pre-dreadnought days which tends to the belief that British sea power today is "overwhelming." At the close of the 19th century and for some years afterwards the British fleet was equal to the combined fleets of Europe. This was the pre-dreadnought period to which Mr. Baker refers when Germany was slowly but steadily marching towards the position she has now attained of a great naval power, second only to Great Britain. Obviously the pre-dreadnought British fleet far outnumbered the pre-dreadnought fleet of Germany, but that will not meet the emergency.

Speaking at Hamilton, Ont., on Trafalgar Day, Admiral Kingsmill accurately defined the situation. He is reported as follows:

"Nelson's victory established Great Britain as supreme upon the seas, but lately a new naval power had arisen and was ready to strike, and Britain must be prepared eventually to meet her. The Admiral spoke of the number of ships in the British Navy which were practically obsolete, while German ships were all new."

The first British Dreadnought was launched in 1906. It was a new type, an all-big-gun ship, and revolutionized naval construction. Eighteen months elapsed before Germany could find an "answer," which took the form of four ships of the Nassau class, slightly larger. Since that date Germany has made tremendous strides in her programme of naval construction. Any naval expert will admit that the naval battles of the future will be won, not with ships of the pre-dreadnought class, but with modern armored cruisers and battleships of the Dreadnought and super-Dreadnought type.

Mr. Baker states that in pre-dreadnought ships Germany has "no guns larger than eleven-inch ones." That is not the issue today. Here is Germany's latest reply which is more to the point:

"Berlin, Oct. 22.—Guns of 15-inch calibre, which will throw shells weighing 1,650 pounds, are to be mounted on the latest German super-Dreadnoughts, the Elzeut Weissenburg, Elzeut Kurfurst Friedrich, and an unnamed vessel at present denoted as "S," which are now being built at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven. The news comes in a roundabout way from naval quarters in Italy and Austria, but there is reason to believe it is accurate. The guns weigh 101 tons each, and are 62 feet long. It is stated also that the existing battleships, which are supposed to be armed with 12-inch weapons, really have guns of 14-inch calibre."

At the end of the pre-dreadnought period in 1906 Great Britain had 31 battleships in full commission to Germany's 15, admittedly an overwhelming superiority. At the present time Great Britain has 27 to Germany's 19, or a superiority reduced to 42 per cent. In 1914 Great Britain will have, according to the latest programme, 33 battleships in full commission to Germany's 29, a superiority of less than 14 per cent. These figures throw some additional light on Admiral Kingsmill's statement that a new naval power has arisen and that her ships are "all new."

There is nothing to be gained by quoting statements such as those made by Mr. Baker. The British Navy is still the greatest fighting force upon the seas, but it cannot be denied that owing to Germany's aggressive policy in naval construction in the last few years the margin of superiority has been reduced. Mr. Churchill practically admitted this fact in July when introducing the supplementary naval estimate. He said: "Cool, steady, methodical preparations prolonged over a succession of years can alone raise the margin of naval power." If it should be the policy of the Government of the Dominion to recommend an emergency contribution to increase the British fleet for the Empire's protection, the time is opportune. To the extent of Canada's contribution the margin of the Empire's naval power would be further increased.

THE PANAMA AND SUEZ CANALS.

Some of the port improvements being made, incident to the opening of the Panama Canal, are mentioned in the Marine Journal. They include the construction of a new harbor at Valparaiso to cost \$15,000,000, harbor improvements at Buenos Ayres to cost \$30,000,000, port improvements at Montevideo to cost practically that sum and \$100,000,000 is being expended by Brazil in putting into first-class condition every port of her 5,000-mile coast line and in building railways extending into the interior of that country. Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba and other Central American countries are fully alert to the trade opening that will follow the completion of the canal, while in Japan three steamship companies are building vessels to use the canal, and the banks of that country are considering the opening of branches in Latin-American countries.

A Chinese steamship company is also planning to operate a line from Shanghai to Central and South American ports, and Australia's commercial organizations are sending agents to South America to develop trade, while citizens of Australia and New Zealand are arranging to establish a canal steamship line of their own. A new line of freight vessels is also to run from Calcutta or Bombay to South America. Canada will run two new direct lines respectively from Vancouver and

Montreal to the corresponding coasts of Latin-America. From this it will be seen that the activity incident to the commissioning of this waterway is not confined to Europe, but is world-wide.

It has been recently announced that the Suez Canal will be deepened. This is not necessarily an indication of rivalry with the Panama Canal—though that consideration may enter into it—as of recognition of the increasing size of ships. The canal, which is now thirty-three feet deep, is to be deepened at once to thirty-six. This will not be a serious task, as there are no locks to enlarge and no rocks to deal with, but merely sand and mud to scoop or pump out with marine dredges. Of course the cost will cause no embarrassment, as the company already has profits larger than it knows what to do with.

The Suez Canal was originally made in 1869, only a fraction more than twenty-six feet deep. At that time there was not a mercantile vessel in the world, excepting only the unfortunate Great Eastern, of more than 5,000 tons; the White Star liner Britannic, in 1871, being the first to exceed those dimensions; and it was not until 1885 that plans were made for deepening the canal to about twenty-eight feet. By that time the Unbria and Etruria had been built, but still no ship had reached the size of 10,000 tons, the first to pass that figure being the American City of Paris, in 1888. And, of course, the vessels which traversed the canal were smaller than these crack American liners.

But if the growth of ships was slow in those years it has latterly become breathlessly rapid. The mast-mun was 5,000 in 1871, and 10,000 in 1888. In 1901 the Celtic passed 20,000, in 1907 the Lusitania exceeded 31,000, in 1910 appeared the Olympic of 45,000, and in 1911 the Hamburg line began the Imperator of 50,000 tons. Today there are more than a dozen vessels in actual service of more than 20,000 tons each in the world's mercantile fleets and there is no indication of a cessation of the progress toward still larger ships.

REPORT ON OLYMPIC GAMES.

The official report of the British Olympic Council has been issued and contains a review of the recent Stockholm meeting. Great Britain was third among the nations in the great tournament, but the authors of the report say that emphasis might rather be laid upon the fact that a dozen other nations were behind her. To be even third in such a sensational company is no small honor. Olympic records were shattered every day, and in several cases world's records were beaten. British athletes were good, but American and Swedish athletes were a shade better. For instance, Applegarth was under 22 seconds in the 200-metre race, but could only get third against a world's record-breaker. The representatives could do the half-mile in 1:56, but the 600-metre race showed that there were eight men in Stockholm capable of beating 1:55.

The Council in its report makes the suggestion that for the next games there should be one great Imperial team to represent Great Britain, made up of picked men from the British Isles, Canada, Australia, South Africa and other Dominions and possessions. It is pointed out, however, that in some of the events the German committee may decide to limit such competing nation to six candidates instead of the twelve now allowed. In that case it would be far better for the Dominions to continue the policy, adopted in past competitions, of sending separate entries. Thus, instead of half a dozen men representing the Empire there would be half a dozen representing the British Isles.

Finally, it expresses the hope that in the near future there may be a single amateur standard adopted for the whole world, and applying to every sport. As it is now, the definition of amateurism varies in most countries, and even in different sports in the same country. The English definition is the strictest in the world, and the British are therefore placed at some disadvantage as compared with countries that do not so rigidly draw the line against professionalism.

Current Comment

Free Drinking Cups.
(Calgary Herald.)

Travellers on railroads on this continent will be grateful for the decree of the Supreme Court of New Jersey upholding the decision of the Public Utilities Commission to the effect that wherever tanks or fountains of drinking water are provided there must also be provided free drinking cups. This is the outcome, and we may hope that it will prove to be the ending of the controversy which has raged ever since the law of 1911 forbade the use of common cups at drinking places and required the provision of separate individual cups.

Mission Station on Spion Kop.
(Washington Star.)

Spion Kop, the mountain outside of Ladysmith, Natal, South Africa, where the deadliest battle in the Boer war was fought, has been purchased by Seventh Day Adventist missionaries, according to word that has just been received at the headquarters of the denomination in Tacoma Park, and a mission farm for the education and Christianizing of the Zulus will be established. Spion Kop is about 18 miles from Ladysmith, and there it was on January 24, 1900, that the famous battle between the Boers and British was fought.

A Welcome Aid.
(Hamilton Spectator.)

There is rather a remarkable record extant of British nobility investing in Canadian land. This movement is full of promise. There is absolutely no possibility of the principle of landownership prevalent in the Old Country being perpetuated here; the capital involved is a welcome aid to the development of the country, and the material furnished will prove invaluable in solidifying the Empire.

Sartorially Correct.
(Hartford Times.)

Before it is too late let us record the interesting fact that the Hon. Eugene Debs, the Socialist candidate for President, is the only nominee for that office who has worn creased trousers in New Bedford, Mass., this year. The esteemed Standard of that city certifies to this. Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt have both spoken there during the present campaign.

Interest in Civic Affairs.
(Ottawa Journal.)

The organization of an Ottawa Civic Club at the Y. M. C. A., to stimulate the interest of young men in civic affairs, is a sign that some citizens of the Capital are proceeding along the proper lines.

Ottawa's Excuse.
(Ottawa Free Press.)

According to Dr. Bruce Smith, Ottawa gives less to charity than other Canadian cities. It might be added that in other cities people don't have to buy their drinking water by the gallon.

Not to be Expected.
(Chicago News.)

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Ballet's Popular Work

Ballet's tureful opera "The Bohemian Girl" has been produced in this city many times and under many different circumstances. It remained for the Aborn Opera Company, in the Opera House last evening to set a new standard for this work here, and one which, it is safe to say, will not be eclipsed for some time.

The Aborn Opera Company is probably the strongest aggregation producing standard opera which has visited St. John in the past decade. There are sixty people in the company and the production is equipped with splendid scenery and accessories. Consequently the production is as a treat for the eye as well as the ear. In this connection the spectacular features of the production are especially pleasing, notably the fair scene in the second act, and the later-acted ballet in the final act.

Of the company itself, it may be said that the choruses are large, well costumed in the picturesque garb which the locale and time permit, and are every one singers. In volume and precision the chorus numbers last evening compared more than favorably with the very best ensemble singing ever heard in St. John. Harmony is a strong point with the chorus of the Aborn Company and the forty voices blend with a strength and tone quality which is delightful.

High Class Organization.
The standard of excellence which would be expected in an organization which has long stood for the standard of productions of the standard works. It is to be sincerely regretted that St. John has not previously had the opportunity of listening to such a production, and music lovers will certainly join in the hope that now that the Aborn Opera Company have been introduced to this territory they will make their appearance an annual event.

The prima-donna, Miss Blanche Morrison, who sang "Arlene," is a soprano with a marvellous upper register of pure sweet tones. Her voice is well cultivated and of good range, and she masters the difficult upper notes with an ease and control which is a rare quality in a young singer.

Miss Albright, who sang the role of the Gypsy Queen, is a contralto with a powerful resonant voice. Her selections were well sung, and the tone quality of her voice won many admirers.

It is well worth the price of admission to hear James Stevens, who sang the role of Count Arban, render "The Heart Bowed Down." His voice is of that peculiarly rich velvety baritone quality which arouses the love of music in a layman and is a selection such as that provided for him in The Bohemian Girl, he is at his best. Mr. Stevens' singing was regarded by many as the gem of the evening.

Joseph Florian is the "Devilhoof" of the production. He had no solos last evening, but in quartette and trio his fine bass was heard to distinct advantage.

Roy Pilcher, the tenor, was somewhat of a disappointment. His tones were true and fairly sweet, but he seemed to lack verve and expression. He was heard to better advantage in "Fair Land of Poland" than in the role of the famous "Dance of the Hours" from the opera "La Gioconda."

In justice to Mr. Pilcher, it should be said that he was not at his best last evening. He was just recovering from a cold and his work tonight will probably show much improvement.

Excellent Specialties.
The special numbers interpolated into the opera were instant approval. In the fair scene in the second act the "Tigani Whirlwinds," a troupe of Arabian acrobats, who originally formed part of a larger troupe brought to America to open the New York Hippodrome, contributed an exhibition of acrobatic tumbling, dancing and feats of strength, such as has never been witnessed here before.

There are six in the troupe, ranging from a powerful man down to a youngster of eight or nine years, and they are artists in their line. Their marvellous performance last evening was received with round upon round of applause.

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the final act being in particular masterpieces of stagecraft. The company used all its own special scenery, there being no house property visible last evening except the curtain.

In every particular the production of The Bohemian Girl by the Aborn Opera Company is the biggest the

atrical event of the year. It was witnessed last evening by a capacity audience, and on its merits should draw capacity business at the matinee this afternoon, and at the final performance tonight, for it will be some time before St. John will see its equal again.

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