THE INVASION OF ENGLAND

Lord Roberts' Speech in the House of Lords— A Powerful Plea for Home Defence by a Man Whose Services to His Country Entitle Him to be Heard—Command of the Sea, He Points Out, is Altogether Insufficient to Meet the Menace of a Land Force.

On November 23rd in the House of Lords, Earl Roberts delivered his now famous speech dealing with the possibility of an invasion of the English coast by a foreign enemy. Brief cable condensations of the Earl's speech were printed in Canadian newspapers at the time. Copies of the London Times arriving in Montreal this week give the speech in detail.

Earl Roberts rose to call attention to Lord Tweedmouth's statement on May 18 last, and to ask if the Committee of Imperial Defence therein referred to has arrived at any conclusions with respect to the necessity for guarding this country against invasion, and whether these conclusions demand a revision of the facts and figures laid down by the Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence in May, 1905; and to move to resolve:

"That in the opinion of this House the defence of these islands necessitates the immediate attention of His Majesty's government to the provision (in addition to a powerful navy) of an army so strong in numbers and so efficient in quality that the most formidable foreign nation would hesitate to attempt a landing on these shores"; and also to move to resolve, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable, in view of altered strategic conditions in the North Sea, that His Majesty's government should, following the precedent set by Mr. Balfour in 1905, make a statement on the invasion problem, and should state definitely the conclusions arrived at as the result of the recent inquiry by the Committee of Imperial Defence."

Continuing, the Earl said:

My lords, during the last two years I have endeavored from time to time to induce your lordships to take into your serious consideration the vitally important question of home defence, but for some reason, unexplainable to me, my efforts have hitherto been in vain. I can understand the general public turning a deaf ear to warnings that are distasteful to them. They prefer for the most part so fully occupied with their own affairs and their individual struggles for existence that they do not trouble themselves much as to what is going on in the outside world, but are content to trust the safety of their country to those whose duty it is to watch over it and to take all possible measures for its protection. That duty is yours, my lords, as it is the duty of those elected by the people to look after their interests. It is a sacred duty and I am deeply concerned it should be neglected and that the warnings of men, who, like myself have earnestly studied the subject, against a danger which appears to us to be all too obvious, should have fallen hitherto on utterly sterile ground. For years, if you, who know from history the fate that overtook all former great and flourishing maritime and commercial states which refused to undergo the personal sacrifice that alone could ensure the safety of their possessions—if you, who have the best means of ascertaining what is taking place in other countries, and who ought to be able to realize that our naval supremacy is being disputed, can rest satisfied to leave matters as they are, and, ignoring the great responsibility that rests upon you, neglect to do all in your power to get this country placed in such a state of defence as would make even the most powerful foreign nation hesitate to attack it, I cannot help feeling that a terrible awakening may be in store for us at no very distant period. (Cheers.)

Specious Argument.

It is impressed upon the British public by a certain number of politicians, whose sole object apparently is to create disturbance, and distract without any thought of the proportionate risk to the country, that an invasion is an impossibility, a mere delusion of a few alarmists, who regard the maritime advancement made by our continental neighbors in the interest of peace and commerce as a preparation for attack on these islands. By still another school the people are told that, as long as we have command of the sea, there is nothing to dread, for no foreign troops could ever land on British soil. And, my lords, they are entreated by a third party to believe that a second line of 315,00 citizen soldiers, officered by men but slightly acquainted with the rudiments of soldiering, and with only the veneer of training which is to be given to such of them as choose to receive it, will be able to withstand and repulse the highly-trained troops of a first-rate military power. If the general public are led astray in this way by those to whom they look for guidance, how is it possible for them to come to any other conclusion than that there is no need to trouble ourselves about invasion or to undergo the smallest personal sacrifice for our country? But you, my lords, have the means of judging for yourselves whether the politicians, in their anxiety to obtain funds, for, no doubt, most laudable objects, may not reduce the navy and army to such an extent as would render them incapable of performing the duties for which they are maintained. You should be able also to satisfy yourselves whether the navy alone, under all eventualities, could ensure your slumbers never being disturbed. But whatever conclusions you may arrive at on these two points, let me beg of you not to believe that an inexperienced, inadequately trained second line of citizen soldiers could cope successfully with the thoroughly organized highly trained troops that would assuredly be selected for an attack on this country. (Cheers.) Do not allow yourselves to be led away by specious argument, which is all the more dangerous from the fact that it accords with what we all would wish to believe. It really would appear that all classes in their anxiety to give Mr. Haldane fair play and help him in the arduous task he has undertaken, have become somewhat hypnotized. Soldiers apparently forgetting their well founded and strongly expressed convictions of only a few years ago, seem now prepared to trust the same stamp of soldier, whose unfitness for service in the field they then pointed out in no measured terms. And this encourages civilians who have not had the same opportunities for forming a correct opinion on the subject, to think that military preparation and adequate training are quite unnecessary, and that all that is required to ensure our country's safety is to have on paper a certain number of men, guns and horses, to be turned into a fighting force if the enemy will give us six months' notice of his intention to attack.

Mr. Haldane's Scheme.

I implore you, my lords, to study this question for yourselves, and to satisfy yourselves whether the territorial army, as at present constituted, will be sufficient in numbers and efficient in quality for what it is required. Consider whether a week's or a fortnight's training for two or three years will suffice to make a lad, who has never been drilled or has never fired a rifle, into a useful soldier. And as regards the much-needed six months' training, supposing for argument's sake that we could calculate on being given six months' warning, can we feel absolutely certain that the few patriotic employers who have allowed their men to join the territorial army, and are good enough to spare them for a week or fortnight's training yearly, would or could consent to their being taken away for six months, during which time their business would go to pieces, while their competitors in trade, who have refused to allow their men to serve their country, would be reaping great benefit from their selfishness and want if patriotism? (My lords, a home defence army is either required or it is not required. If you come to the conclusion that it is not required and that the three years' training is needed, I would ask you what can be the object of spending vast sums of money on Mr. Haldane's territorial army scheme. But if a home defence army is required—and the only purpose for which it can be required is to resist invasion, and that possibly unhindered by any previous notice—then surely common sense tells us that it must be on a scale and so organized as to ensure its being able to deal successfully with any troops to which it is likely to be opposed. (Cheers.) The question, then, on which I desire to fix your attention is whether invasion of this country is possibleor is not possible, for it is upon the answer to this question that the necessity for our having an efficient army for home defence rests. The facts that my noble and gallant friend Lord Lovat and I are about to place before you may, we hope, help you to come to a definite conclusion on this subject, and, holding the views we do, it will be an intense relief to us if we can convince your lordships that our defensive arrangements cannot be left as they are without the safety of the country being seriously endangered. (Cheers.) My lords, you will, no doubt, remember that Mr. Balfour, in his position as chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence, made a speech in the House of Commons on May 11, 1905, in which he indicated the conclusions the committee had arrived at on the subject of home defence. These conclusions were based on data furnished by the Admiralty with reference to France, which country Mr. Balfour selected because he said it is "the great nation which is nearest to us and from which invasion would be the most easy." But more recent enquiries have shown that, although the data may have come correct as to France in 1905, they are not correct as regards Germany in 1908. The conditions by which Mr. Balfour was guided are completely changed—as the right hon. gentleman stated at the time was likely to happen—and I trust it will be possible to satisfy your lordships that we can no longer feel ourselves safe from the possibility of invasion, and that Lord Lovat and I are justified in once more pressing the question of home defence upon this House. (Cheers.) Mr. Balfour, in stating the problem to the House of Commons, assumed as an hypothesis that "our regular army was abroad upon some over-sea expedition, and that our organized fleets in permanent commission were absent from home waters." He then proceeded to explain the amount of tonnage necessary for 70,000 men, which was considered to be the smallest force with which, under the most favorable circumstances, an invasion could possibly be made; the number of ships suitable for such a force available in French ports throughout the year; the time required for embarkation and disembarkation; and the places where landings were most likely to be attempted.

The Sense of Security.

After discussing all the pros and cons as to the manner in which such an invasion would probably be carried out, Mr. Balfour concluded with these words: "I trust I have convinced the House, that even in these suppositions, unfavorable as they are" (to us) "serious invasion of these islands is not a possibility which we need discuss." This strongly-expressed opinion of Mr. Balfour's has had a most unfortunate effect. (Hear, hear.) The War Office, which up to that time had been preparing a home defence army equal to any emergency then contemplated, at once stopped all schemes for resisting an invasion, and decided that it was only necessary to provide against a couple of small raids of 5,000 men each, while the public accepted the statement with delight. It was, indeed, just what they wanted to hear. They were only too glad to have such high authority for confirming their belief that the military precautions against invasion are entirely unnecessary. My lords, I have good reason for knowing that this is the case, for, in my endeavors to convince our fellow-countrymen that it is their sacred duty to prepare themselves to take a useful part in the defence of their own homes, I am frequently met with this response: "Our homes are in no danger; why should we do anything of the sort? No army is needed for home defence, for we have the late Prime Minister's assurance that invasion is a matter about which we need not trouble ourselves." This settled conviction is not confined to the proletariat, for Lord Lovat can tell you that at the public schools and universities which he visited when preparing a scheme for a reserve of officers, one of the chief reasons put forward by the masters and graduates for not responding to his call was their belief in the immunity of these islands from invasion. His experience was the same when subsequently serving on a War Office committee appointed by Mr. Haldane for a similar purpose. It thus became evident to us that it was hopeless to look for any improvement in the home army so long as this false belief in our security from invasion should so widely exist, and we are determined to find out whether the information furnished to Mr. Balfour three or four years ago as to the power of France to invade this country was in all respects correct; whether it was applicable to Germany at the present time, and whether any fresh data regarding the movement of troops by sea could be obtained by a study of the Russo-Japanese war.

The Problem of German Invasion.

Great pains have been taken to get at the truth, and our researches have proved that the question of invasion now differs materially from the aspect it presented when Mr. Balfour made his speech in 1905. To begin with, Mr. Balfour only considered the question from the point of view of the invading force coming from France, while we have gone into it on the supposition that it would come from Germany. By taking France as an instance of the quarter from which danger might arise, Mr. Balfour did so only to illustrate his argument. That did not imply hostility to France or fear of France. So far was that from being the case that Mr. Balfour's government was at that time drawing closer to France. What Mr. Balfour claimed, and was so well justified in claiming, when he referred to France, I claim for my analogous reference to Germany. (Hear, hear.) It implies no hostility, which it would be impossible for me of all people to feel in the slightest degree. It implies no fear. What we are bound to do, without offence or without suspicion of foreign countries, is to take their military position into account in considering what ought to be our own military arrangements. This is done every day in case of the navy without offence being meant or taken. We are constantly—ministers, Government, and all—discussing our navy with direct reference to the strength of foreign navies. Why should we give offence by discussing our army in the same way? (Hear, hear.) With regard, then, to Germany, my lords, we have ascertained without the possibility of a doubt that vessels available for accommodating 230,000 men are at all times available in the northern ports of Germany; that, as the result of their new "service law," by which the period with the colors is decreased and the period in the reserve increased, that number of men could be collected during several months in the year, in the districts nearest to those ports, without any fuss or mobilization arrangements being put into force; that the railway facilities are such as would admit of an army of that strength being brought to the several ports and embarked in a much shorter time than had been stated with regard to France; that, instead of three tons per man being required, as was previously estimated, one and a half ton would be quite sufficient for all purposes; and that, with the enormous boat accommodation of the big modern liners, with the frequent practice of troops in embarking and disembarking, with the education given to the officers of the mercantile marine serving in the reserve, and with the various mechanical appliances which now exist, the disembarkation of German troops could be carried out far more expeditiously than had been thought possible in the case of French troops. In other words, our researches have proved that a force of 150,000 German soldiers could be transported in the same number of vessels that Mr. Balfour had been informed would be needed for half that number of French soldiers, and that the embarkation and disembarkation would occupy a much shorter period than was supposed to be necessary for the smaller force. It is true that the distance is greater from Germany to England than from France to England, but this is only an apparent disadvantage, for German ports are really nearer to those places on our eastern coast most likely to be selected for the disembarkation of an invading army, than are the ports on which our own fleets are usually based. (Cheers.) Then a glance at the chart of the North Sea will show you that the German base is in a sense double, since it includes both the North Sea and the Baltic, and for naval purposes these two bases are practically one, owing to their being connected by the Kaiser Wilhelm canal.

Its Feasibility.

Another and most important advantage to Germany is that, owing to the railways being in the hands of the state, all the preliminary arrangements, up to the actual despatch of the troops, could be carried out with infinitely more secrecy than in France. Another and equally important advantage is that, owing to the North Sea being less crowded with shipping than the English Channel, once the German transports had started, they could proceed to their respective objectives with much less chance of being detected than would be the case with French transports in the channel. With the facts we are able to give you, my lords, and which we have been at pains to verify, I think you must realize that in Germany there would be no difficulty in ascertaining the requisite number of troops being specially collected, as to the amount of tonnage needed for the transport of the same being always available, or as to the great local facilities that exist for embarkation purposes. The only question that remains is the question of the feasibility of keeping us in ignorance of what was happening until too late for us to prevent a landing. The question of absolute secrecy is one on which we do not insist. We hold that an invasion would be in the nature of a surprise, at a time when it was least expected, and when we might be—as at the present moment—quite unprepared for it. (Hear, hear.) We place no faith in our receiving sufficient warning, and we believe that, owing to the entirely different conditions which prevail in these two countries, what would be impossible in Great Britain would be quite impossible in Germany. The German government is methodical, and in time of crisis would practically become an executive despotism, with control over the telegraph and post offices, over the railways, and, above all, over the press; and under such conditions it might be difficult, if not impossible, for us to ascertain what was going on. (Cheers.)

Eluding the Fleet.

Then the North Sea is open, and our coast line opposite Germany is extended. The Germans have the choice of landing at various places on our shores, and up to the very end we might remain in ignorance as to their intentions. Even if the surprise should fail and we knew that the Armada had started, our fleets might miss what they were hunting for; they might, so to speak, grope vainly for their object in the metaphorical initial "fog of war," intensified as it might be by an actual sea fog in the English Channel which constantly causes such disaster to our shipping, and they might, even have the opportunity to strike, as has happened over and over again with our most experienced commanders. There is, therefore, a chance, and a very serious chance, that a German army might get into this country as a result simply of the the efficiency of the measures taken to secure secrecy, and against this the utmost strength and resources of our navy can give us no protection whatever. (Hear, hear). The Germans are perfectly awhre that it would be essential for their transports to elude our fleets. In order to secure this—the only obstacle to a successful invasion of these isles—would they not naturally and necessarily resort to every deceptive device of war? Would they not try to mislead and distract the fleets? They would most assuredly not confine themselves, as we have always hitherto been asked to believe, to one large expedition offering the broadest target, and enabling us to concentrate our efforts on that target, which would be greatly to simply our problem. Would they not rather draw us and our attention away from their main objective by despatching one or two small raids, which we admittedly could not be sure of intercepting, to points other than those selected for the landing? Our naval forces might be entangled in the pursuit of those minor expeditions, and, while we should be engaged in trying to deal with them, the main debarkation might be taking place undisturbed. (Hear, hear.) It is surely quite clear that if we have to depend upon a brief warning either from our agents abroad, or upon our scouting system on the seas, we could not be certain for some time whether we had to deal with the expedition meant to act as a feint or with the real attack. I will not now attempt to work this out in detail, but that such methods might succeed at sea, as they have repeatedly succeeded in surprise operations on land, must be quite obvious. (Hear, hear.)

But let us take the next point in connection with the secrecy essential to the successful landing of the main invasion. It must be perfectly well known to the German General Staff and the German Admiralty that we have strong reasons to believe, backed by false information than by silent secrecy. A rumor might be allowed to be spread abroad at the last moment that an attack would be made on certain points of our coast where no attack was really intended, or a raid of from ten to fifteen thousand men, or a couple of raids of that strength, might actually be sent towards those points when their object had been attained. Anyhow, my lords, it seems clear to me that we have really no guarantee whatever that our fleets would certainly succeed in intercepting the main Armada of a German invasion. It would be folly, my lords, to shut our eyes to the possibilities I have endeavored to describe; at any rate, nobody can now deny that they are possibilities, and not—as the people of the country have been assured—impossibilities. Grave responsibility rests upon any one who misleads our countrymen by encouraging them to continue in their belief that an invasion of those shores is impossible. (Cheers.) I think you must know that Lord Lovat and I have no private ends to serve, and that the safety of our country is our only aim. Therefore, when we tell you, after the most matured consideration, that it is our firm conviction that it is perfectly possible for our fleets to be effectually misled and evaded, and that this country might be invaded before having the opportunity of bringing her tremendous sea power into play, you must, I think, agree that, when a serious difference of opinion exists on such a vital point, it is wiser to place ourselves on the safe side by acting as if the danger were a reality, rather than by allowing ourselves to be persuaded by those who deny the danger to take no steps to meet it. However much we may desire peace, surely the startling events that have occurred in the near East within the last two months must have brought it home to the most careless observer that nothing can save a country which is unprepared to protect itself and safeguard its own possessions. No alliances, no treaties, avail. Every nation must depend upon itself, and if, as I have frequently said before, we continue to neglect to take the most ordinary precautions, we may some day find ourselves at the mercy of the invader and forced to submit to the most ignominious terms. (Cheers.) And I would remind those who think that a powerful navy is all we need that our responsibilities are varied, and that we might at any time have to send our home fleets, or portions of them, to distant parts of the world, to Asia, Africa, America, Australasia, or even to places in Europe, as we have had frequently to do in days gone by, while a foreign navy—with no such responsibilities—might be collected in full force in our immediate neighbourhood in a position to take advantage of the absence of our protectors.

The Growth of Germany.

However we look at it, is it not evident that the danger which we insist is becoming every day more threatening and the undertaking every day more practicable? Within one single decade Germany has created, taking ships and men together, and counting intellectual organization as well as mechanical resources, the greatest sea power that has yet existed except our own. At this very moment formidable—if perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy—measures are being taken for the further increase of that power. The German North Sea harbors are being improved. The Kaiser Wilhelm canal is to be widened and deepened. No ports in the world are so well equipped with quays and railway facilities as are the German ports. None are kept so carefully up to date. The German mercantile marine is becoming each day more efficient in respect of the number and speed of its large steamships. Day by day the period required for every stage of an invading operation is made shorter, day by day the chances of success are increased. Severe as has been the financial strain lately, there never has been in the German parliament anything like such a large majority in favor of naval developments as there now is. And the point which Lord Lovat and I particularly desire to impress upon this House and upon the country generally is that we can never be certain of defeating an attempted invasion by naval means alone. Even those who persist in believing in the improbability of such an attempt ever being made must admit that it is the improbability that constantly happens in war as in politics, and that it is the unexpected that most often succeeds in war. (Cheers.) It is calculated that there are 80,000 Germans in the United Kingdom, almost all of them trained soldiers. They work many of the hotels at some of the chief railway stations, and if a German force got into this country it would have the advantage of help and reinforcements such as no other army on foreign soil

The Command of the Sea Argument.

I will not take up much more of your time, but before I put the motion that stands in my name there are two points to which I wish to draw special attention. One is that, for the purpose of invasion, it is not an absolute necessity for a nation to have command of the sea in the sense that command of the sea is generally understood. Local or temporary command would suffice. The Germans are fully aware of this, and in General Bronsort von Schellendorf's text-book on "The Duties of the General Staff," after pointing out how in former wars "the want of a strong navy has been bitterly felt," and explaining how, in order "to co-operate effectively, the army and navy must have a common objective—namely, the rapid destruction of the enemy's forces"—he goes on to say: "the advantages of gaining the command of the sea, at least for a time, and thereby making possible the transport of troops by sea, may justify the loss of our own fleet." (Cheers). These are remarkable words, not only because they represent the best German teaching on the cooperation of the two services in war, but because they convey a warning which I most earnestly beseech you, and the country general, to take to heart. (Cheers).

The other point is that, no matter how strong and powerful our navy is, the main preventive of invasion is a numerous and efficient home army, and the main temptation to invasion is the weakness of such an army—the knowledge, in fact that the country to be invaded is dependent for its defence upon an uncertain number of inadequately trained citizen soldiers. Even if our navy were double its strength it is relatively to that of others powers, the necessity for maintaining a sufficient and efficient citizen army for home defence would still be an essential condition of peace and security as well as of public confidence. (Cheers). That citizen army must be numerically a certainty, and strong enough, and sufficiently trained, to enable it to hold its own successfully against at least 150,000 highly-trained continental soldiers. In order to do this and to meet the other many demands that would be made upon it, the citizen army must consist of a million of men. If you will bear with me for a few minutes longer I will explain why such a large number is necessary, what the territorial army now consists of, and how impossible it would be for it even if it ever attains its established strength, to do all that is needed. I expressly refer to the territorial army because that is the only portion of our military forces the condition of which affects the question at issue, for it stands to reason that there is much more chance of an invasion being attempted when the regular army is abroad than when that army would be available to take part in the defence of this country.

The actual situation, my lords, at the present moment is as follows: Strength of the Territorial Force, say 200,000 men; strength of the Special Reserve, say 60,000 (net surplus of Regulars after the despatch of the expeditionary force, which, owing to the Army Reserve being temporarily increased by the reduction of battalions and the three years' enlistment scheme introduced by Lord Middleton, now stands at a higher than the normal figure, say 53,000—total available for home defence, say, 253,000. From these figures must be deducted 15 per cent., for sick and absent, leaving about 200,000, from which again must be deducted untrained recruits, not less, I imagine, than 60,000, leaving a balance of 240,000 men available. It must be remembered also that the object of the Special Reserve is to support the Field Army, and that within a few months, possibly within a few weeks, of mobilization, its best elements may be out of the country; also that in the spring we are poorer by some 17,000 drafts (needed to keep regiments abroad to their full strength) than in the autumn. Taking 240,000, however, as an approximate figure of more or less trained men available, the requirements that would have to be provided out of that number for protecting the arsenals and naval bases, and garrisoning the principal places in Great Britain and Ireland must be noted before any estimate can be made of the force that would be available the requirements that would have to be provided out of that number for protecting the arsenals and naval bases, and garrisoning the principal places in Great Britain and Ireland, must be noted before any estimate can be made of the forces that would be available for home defence. For these requirements not less than 200,000 men would be necessary, leaving only 40,000 citizens soldier for the Home Defence Force, which, at four to one to meet 150,000 invaders, should amount to 600,000. Large as this proportion of untrained to trained men may appear, it is the proportion recognized by all experienced authorities from Napoleon's time as the smallest that can be safely relied on in war. And in a life and death struggle, such as an invasion of this country would mean for us, it would be folly, indeed, to trust to any less number of men. (Cheers). These figures are most disheartening, I may say, appalling; the more so because until the country will agree to a practical system of military training, by which Mr. Haldane's admirable frame-work can be filled in with the required number of soldiers fit to take the field, they mean that the Navy must be tied to our shores, that the expeditionary force will be kept at home by public fears, and that British diplomacy will be deprived of that armed force without which, as recent events have shown, diplomacy is of very little avail. (Cheers). Thanks to Mr. Haldane, we are now getting a satisfactory military organization, but if we are to provide against the possibility of invasion, even five years hence, we must begin at once to get together the material for a thoroughly useful Home Army. To argue that because the country is for the moment in no immediate danger we need not make any preparation is to encourage national neglect and the procrastinating weakness for which we have paid so dearly in the past—in fact, to invite national ruin.

The more I reflect on it, the more it seems to me that there lies in front of us one of the strangest spectacles that ever been witnessed in the world. Across the narrow seas, opposite our shores within a few hours' steaming of our coasts, there is a people numbering over 60 millions, our most active rivals in commerce, and the greatest military power in the world, no longer depending upon her supremacy in one arm, but adding to an overwhelming military strength a naval force which she is resolutely and rapidly increasing; while we, on our side are not attempting to take any military precautions in response. (Cheers.) Germany cannot justly be blamed for the situation; rather she should be praised and her example followed, for her people, by their industry, and by the advantageous military training which every able-bodied man receives, have made her a great nation. The Germans require outlets for their commerce and their steadily increasing population. To fulfil this requirement they recognize the necessity for having a strong navy, in addition to their matchless army, which is essential to their existence in the very centre of Europe. For more than two centuries, my lords, we have considered it necessary from time to time to increase our Navy, and instead of taking exception to Germany's action—which we most certainly have no right to do—our business is to find out in what way we are likely to be affected by this great increase of sea power to Germany and to adopt such measures as may be necessary for our own protection.

My lords, I only repeat these appeals in obedience to a most solemn conviction. Words cannot express the responsibility which lies at this time upon the shoulders of both branches of the legislature. (Hear, hear.) We are not here only, nor even chiefly, for the purposes of the moment. We are the trustees for the future of the Empire. Upon what is done or neglected in Parliament beforehand must depend sooner or later the life of England and of the British Dominions throughout the world. We are bound in this House to look beyond the bawling and brawling of the day, and to uphold Imperial policy above the clamor of selfish or shortsighted interests. Is not this indeed, my lords, the greater part of our duty? Unless we occupy ourselves most earnestly and under a sense of personal trusteeship of our country, continued from age to age, may be maintained in time to come, we cannot justify our existence over against the subversive force challenging this House today, and we shall not escape the heavy judgement of history. We are links in a living chain, pledged to transmit intact to posterity the glorious heritage we have received from those who have gone before us in this place. (Cheers.) We know that the world is altering, and, indeed, that the conditions of international politics in both hemispheres are changing with unexpected rapidity. Upon the one hand, it is agreed that naval development, in many countries simultaneously, is bringing about a fundamental change in the conditions of sea power. Upon the other hand, we, as an Empire, have the most extensive land frontier in existence, although our military resources are insignificant by comparison with those of the Great Powers of Europe, and Asia. It is the most vital necessity of our situation that we should have in the future, as in the past, not only the strongest and most powerful navy, but complete strategic freedom for that navy. (Hear, hear.) Under these new conditions we can never again enjoy that freedom without a total change in our military arrangements. The navy, under present circumstances, is fettered to home waters, as it never was before, and without a military force, sufficient of itself to make invasion hopeless, and to keep those islands secure under the initial circumstances of war, it surely must be plain to everyone—who will give the matter a thought—that our military weakness, if continued, will be the probable cause of the loss of our naval supremacy. (Hear, Hear.) This is not a party question; it is essentially a national question (cheers)—a question which, as a soldier speaking from the cross benches, I consider it my duty to lay before your lordships on both sides of this House. (Hear, Hear). My feeling and conviction on this matter are strengthened by the events which at this very moment cloud the horizon of the East of Europe, with uncertainty; and it is my absolute belief that, without a military organization more adequate to the certain perils of the future, our Empire will fall from us, and our power will pass away. (Cheers.)

Dynamited Himself.

Duluth, Dec. 17.—Claus Carison, a homesteader living near Deer river, committed suicide today in a dramatic manner. Calmly seating himself on a box of dynamite, he attached and lit a fuse and was blown to atoms. Before committing the deed he called to several friends present, "Run for your lives, I'm going up."

NO INDIAN UPRISING IS FEARED BY MORLEY

The Indian Secretary Unfolds a Plan For the Reform of Governmental Administration — To Give the People a Greater Share in the Government.

London, Dec. 18.—Lord Morley, the Indian Secretary, speaking in the House of Lords yesterday afternoon, unfolded a plan for the reform of the governmental administration of India, opening with what he described as "a very important chapter of the relations between Great Britain and India."

Lord Morley made no attempt to minimize the formidable difficulties confronting the government of India owing to the unrest and anarchy in that part of the empire, but he depreciated the alarmist views regarding the situation there. He said there was no fear of anything in the nature of an uprising, but that a panic was possible.

Lord Morley, in presenting his proposals for reform, explained that he made no pretensions of inaugurating a parliamentary system in India. What he wanted to do was simply to assign to the people of India a greater share in the government of the country without divesting the central authority of any of its powers.

To Reduce Armaments.

Buenos Ayres, Dec. 18.—It is reported that Great Britain has tendered her good offices to the Argentine Republic and Brazil with a view to securing a diminution in the armaments of these two countries. "The Nation," in making reference to this matter expresses belief that the mediation will be accepted, but says the United States through Secretary Root.

ON A DESERT ISLAND.

Three Japanese Sailors are Left For Three Months With Little Provision.

Midway Island, Pacific Ocean, Dec. 19—Stress of weather compelled the Commercial Pacific Cable company's steamer Florence Ward, bound for here and Honolulu, to run for the Lee Nermes islands, eighty miles southwest of Midway. Arriving there distress signals were observed on the island and men were sent out on a small boat to investigate. They found three marooned Japanese sailors, all suffering from scurvy.

They said they had been for three months without any food except fish and the flesh of sea birds. No fresh water was obtainable and they were compelled to drink crudely distilled sea water. The kindled a fire by the aid of a watch crystal and the rays of the sun.

The Japanese schooner Kleho Maru put into Hermes about July first and landed four men to collect the plumage of sea birds. The schooner departed a few days later, leaving a month's provisions for the men and intending to return later and take them off.

The vessel never returned and is supposed to have foundered. Soon after the departure of the schooner a terrific storm broke and huge seas swept over the island carrying away most of the supplies and effects of the marooned men. On what was left they subsisted as long as it lasted and then fish and sea birds were their only food. One of the four died of exposure and improper food. The remaining three men could not have survived much longer.

PRISONERS ESCAPE AT BRANDON

Thought to Have Received Assistance From the Outside.

Brandon, Dec. 19.—Aided it is believed from the outside Henry Woods, alias Clement, and David Moultrie sawed through the jail fence about six this evening and escaped. Fifteen minutes later Clement reached the livery barn where he was formerly employed and asked for a change of clothes. Under a pretence of seeking clothes the foreman telephoned for the police. On the arrival of Sergeant Currie, Clement fled but surrendered when the sergeant fired a revolver. Both men were serving a year each for burglary, and Moultrie had four concurrent terms to serve. The men are regarded hard characters, particularly Moultrie, for whom the town and country is being scoured. As the men were only alone eight or nine minutes and had no saws it is considered certain that they must have had outside assistance. Clement denied all knowledge of Moultrie's escape.

TROUBLE BREWING FOR C. N. R.

MacKenzie and Mann Have Paid no Rental for Union Station Privileges in Toronto.

Toronto, Dec. 13—There is every indication of trouble between the railway companies arising out of the union station here. It appears that the Canadian Northern railway has never paid a cent of rent to the Union Station company, in two years, for the use of track or office space in the main building. In addition to this the Grand Trunk shunts Canadian Northern coaches, makes up their trains and houses their engines. It is believed that at the next meeting of the company in January, action will be taken to bring the C. N. R. to time.

FATAL COAL OIL EXPLOSION.

Coroner's Jury Urge That Governments Impose Greater Restrictions.

Virden, Man., Dec. 18—The coroner's jury found that Michael Farrell came to his death by burns from a coal oil explosion. The jury added a rider that this case shows lack of governmental supervision and much carelessness in the whole matter of handling, and added that the provincial and Dominion governments should grapple with the difficulties in a more thorough and comprehensive way and additional precautions should be exercised by the wholesale and retail trade. It is understood that a charge may be laid against Scharman, who was unable to appear owing to his injuries.

WITH

PORK COMMISSION

The Park commission, w sittings throughout the pr past summer, to secure i regarding the hog industr proposed establishment packing plant, will hold session on Monday morni o'clock in the Board of T N. H. Sorenson, late of Den be present to give evidence co-operative scheme in vog mark in connection with ing plants and creameries. ensen has expert informati question and will be able t commission his experience bacon industry as it is co the Danish farmers. C. M ry commissioner of the pro be present to act as inte Mr. Sorensen.

The members of the por sion are R. A. Wallace, H chairman; James Bowen, and A. G. Harrison, Edmon

FARMERS MUST ORGA

"Organization" and "co These are the two words heard everywhere today w ers' interests are under con In the western provinces al ers in Provincial and loca organizations are keeping to the front the idea of a na eration to represent the ag interests of all Canada. T in Ontario has often been but probably in no more for ner than by President Bro recent convention of the O perimental Union:

"For years," said Presiden "all farmers have realized greatest need is co-operat union. There have been s tempts to organize, and pos Grange has done about as wards union as any other ation. However, it appears farmers must organize on lines than have yet been effe there be a grand union of the Experimental Union, Farme tutes, Live Stock and Dair ations and all other agricu ganizations, and in this gr ers' council liet as discus for a gigantic Farmers' Un co-operation as the basis. operation, or be trampled u other callings are joined in protect themselves, while w and day out plod to feed t use their brains to get our m the farm home worth protect agricultural interests worth ing? If so rally round the ation Flag. Let the College let the union proclaim it Farmers' Institutes, Live St Dairy Meetings, and agricul ganizations shout for co and union, and we will have and not until then will far fully represented in our Pa and exercise their proper infl all those great questions whi our country's welfare."

COMMERCIAL MARKE

The Saturday market prese unusual display of poultry an ed meats. The turkeys an were of good quality and sold Dressed chickens were selling in appearance, and this li ter which too many farmers forget. A bird may be go plump, but if it is discolored the skin removed in the pro scalding it is depreciated in of the consumer. A little a to this will make a differen quotations for spring chicken

The coal and wood market dull. There is no power to the consumer of coal to buy tr ter supply when the temper low. Prices now are $3.25 t per ton, and any amount is had, but people seem to pr wait until cold and stormy when the fact that the wea rough and everybody wants co the price up to $5 per ton. the time to get a supply of coal at the rock bottom price year. If coal went any low coal mines would likely lay asi shovels.

The feed market is well s but under good demand pri main firm.

Dressed Meats—Beef 5c to lb. for the best and 4c per lb. ferior. Pork varies fem 6c to coding to quality. Dressed h carcase sold at 7c per lb. Fa bear meat sold at 16c per lb.

Fish—Whitefish are quote cents per lb and trout 12c to 1 lb.

Feed—Oats are worth 25c feed barley 25c and malting ba to 40c. Feed wheat is worth 60c per bushel.

Hay—Timothy is quoted at $14; upland $5 to $10, slough $ Green feed is selling at $7 to straw at $3 per load.

Butter and eggs—Eggs are at 35c per dozen. Good but selling at 25c to 30c per lb.

Potatoes—Receipts are ligh cents per bushel.

Poultry—A bunch of live sold at 18c per lb.; chickens w thers plucked sold at 12c to 1 lb.; turkeys sold from 18c to lb.; geese 14c to 16c and chick per lb.

Coal and Wood—Market dull is worth $3.25 to $3.50 per to wood at $2 to $2.50 per load.

Live Stock—Prices are unc at steers 2½c to 3c; cows 2c t calves 3c to 4c; sheep 5c to 5½ hogs weighing from 175 to 250 5½c per lb.

SATURDAY'S GRAIN MARK

Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 20.— came lower from Liverpool a the absence of any definite ne gossip was full of rumors and but most of them had little e the markets, which were de dull and rather weak. Ther some activity in Winnipeg Dec and it closed up ¼, but Januar ed ¼ and may and July each ½ Cash wheat was unchanged little offerings; all Minneapol Chicago options had a small