

THE NAVAL QUESTION

By the "present generation of Englishmen" does Mr. Cahan mean simply the Englishmen who have inherited English landed estates, or the general body of Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen who constitute the British nation, and who must necessarily inherit all the advantages of trade and commerce which result from the energies, foresight and moneys expended by their ancestors? The latter is the only reasonable interpretation, because it is absurd to contend that "only the Englishmen who have inherited the English estates for which they have neither toiled nor spun" inherit all the advantages and accumulated wealth of Great Britain. Mr. Cahan also draws the inference that the accumulated wealth of Great Britain is so great that the present generation of Englishmen should continue to bear all the expenses of maintaining the Empire. On this phase of the matter, it is interesting to compare the national wealth of Great Britain per head with the national wealth of Canada per head.

According to an article on "Imperial Defence and Finance" in the August "Nineteenth Century," the per capita wealth of Great Britain is £351, and the per capita wealth of Canada is £288. The relative expenditures on defence are as follows: Great Britain, £1 12s 3d per head and Canada £0 6s 5d per head, while Australasia, with a per capita wealth of £287, expends £1 per head on defence.

It would seem from these figures that the accumulated wealth of Great Britain is not proportionately so very much in excess of the accumulated wealth of Canada, and the figures demonstrate quite clearly that Canada is quite able to expend a very much larger sum on defence than she actually does without running any risk of impoverishing her people.

The author of the article in the "Nineteenth Century" has outlined a plan by which the self-governing colonies may be granted participation in Imperial affairs, and I would commend this article to Mr. Cahan. He will find it interesting and instructive.

As regards Mr. Cahan's objection to discharging any of our obligations—and he admits that Canada has great obligations to Great Britain—to the present generation of Englishmen, it would be interesting to know, if we are ever to discharge any of these obligations, how we are to do so except by a payment or contribution in some form which will enure to the benefit of the generation of Englishmen at the time such payment or contribution is made.

Mr. Cahan asks the following question:

But I may ask, have English Colonists committed any crime that they should forfeit for all time the pledge of equal civil rights which was guaranteed by an English King to the first English settlers on this Continent and to "their children and posterity," that they should here continue to enjoy all the 'liberties, franchises and immunities' of natural subjects of the Crown "to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within this our Realm of England?"

Will Mr. Cahan explain how a voluntary contribution to Imperial defence recommended by our own responsible Ministers and authorized by the Dominion Parliament, can deprive us of the equal civil rights which we were granted by the King?

Mr. Cahan also asks: