

I submit that the maintenance of our neutrality ought to be a prime object in our national policy. At the present time we should be on guard against anything which might draw us into a position where it would be difficult to maintain our neutrality.

As to the President's speech, I referred to that the other day. On its face it seemed to contain a very generous and disinterested offer, but on reading more about the matter one found the fact to be that before the President made that speech he was informed by his military advisers that the defenceless condition of Canada was a menace to the United States; that if Great Britain suffered a major defeat, or even without that eventuality, enemies or potential enemies of the United States could not be prevented by any defensive forces we have from entering Canada and threatening American industrial areas. The interpretation placed by political observers upon the President's remarks was simply that the United States would not permit themselves to be threatened by the entry into Canada of a hostile force; that the undertaking to defend Canada was not the Simon Pure proposition it seemed to be. In other words, what he announced was a policy of self-defence on the part of the United States. And from the nature of the speech that the Prime Minister made in reply, I rather suspect he saw that.

My honourable friend from Vancouver South indulged in an eloquent period to which I would not reply but that it presents me with an opportunity to say something I have for a long time wanted to say. He pictured the long, undefended frontier between this country and that of our great neighbour to the south, a frontier on which there is no fortress nor gun—without reference to which fact no after-dinner speech made anywhere near the 49th parallel would be a success.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: That is quite true. I used that several times myself.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: I am sure that in his long and varied experience the right honourable gentleman from Eganville (Right Hon. Mr. Graham) had many opportunities of using that, and nobody could use it better than he.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: But with all respect to the right honourable gentleman, because of his age and experience, and with less respect to the honourable gentleman from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris), because of his youth and comparative inexperience, let me say I do not know of a more stupid statement than that. It is true that our common frontier has neither gun nor fort. The

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH.

Rush-Bagot Treaty of over one hundred years ago provided that the two countries would not arm against each other on the Great Lakes. In the meantime our boundary line has been stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The honourable gentleman alluded to it as being 3,000 miles in length, but I think it is a bit longer than that. Anyway, as he says, that boundary is not defended by a single gun or fort. That fact is used to illustrate what fine, honest, decent, Christian people we are, on both sides of the line. Sometimes the orators go on to express profound pity that those stupid, silly people in Europe who are not of our race and blood, who wear queerly shaped hats, and whiskers and mustaches which are not trimmed according to the fashion current here—that those people cannot be as gentle and reasonable towards one another as we are over here. And it is asked why they cannot get along without guns, fortifications and the like. We get a good deal of "kick" out of statements like that.

But what is the fact of the matter? The fact is simply that here in Canada we have a population of 11,000,000, sprawled over a tremendous territory, while in the United States the population is some 130,000,000. We do not build any forts against the United States because we have not money enough to build them or man them; and the United States are so strong in comparison with us that they do not need to build any forts. That is the fact.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: That may be the honourable gentleman's view, but it does not alter the fact that the boundary is undefended.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: The United States build no forts against us because we are too weak to threaten that country.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: The two countries are good neighbours. They are the same people as we are.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: That may be. But of course in Europe—

Hon. Mr. GORDON: My honourable friend cannot say that of some countries in Europe.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: The reason we do not build forts against each other does not lie in the fact that we are superior people—

Hon. Mr. McRAE: Of course we are.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: —or that we are a more Christian or more humane people.

Hon. Mr. McRAE: Of course we are.