

"Oh, about seven minutes and three-quarters—if I get off to a good start."

"Well, cut it as short as possible."

But once inside the headquarters of the Naval Service there was no such feverish haste. A comfortably elegant room, with a desk endwise towards the door, facing a fireplace over which was the model of a ship—Niobe or Arctic, it didn't matter which; rather heavy curtains with generic effect of dull red; and all as quiet as a church. I realized that from here the Arctic had officially gone on her grand tours of champagne; here had come the correspondence affecting the Niobe and the Rainbow; here in the session of 1909-10 had been the peaceful centre of the maelstrom of Commons debate on the Naval Bill; somewhere in Mr. Hazen's files were letters from Rear-Admiral Kingsmill on the Niobe and from the Rainbow at Esquimalt, and the reports of the Harbour Commissioners at Montreal. Here also after the sinking of the Titanic was the official bridge-room for the Mackay-Bennett and the Montmagny. Here in a few days no doubt would be the genial Pacific personality of Richard McBride.

BUT at present here was John D. Hazen, who I am bound to say is one of the most comfortable and cordial Ministers that ever took oath under the King. A trifle older in looks than I had fancied him, but in the prime of activity, with fuzzles of grey in his once black, somewhat curly hair, and a pronounced moustache. I reminded him that just before the New Brunswick elections of 1908 he had written a brief note to Toronto promising to beat the Liberals out of their long stronghold at Fredericton. He smiled to remember it.

"Yes, I've been a quarter of a century in politics," he said, with an affectionate accent. He likes politics, being born to it, as many Maritimers are. I knew that Ottawa, with all its under-currents and icebergs and contrary winds, had no chilly aspect to a man born and bred in the vicinity of old St. John.

"Though I must say I sometimes miss the sea," he said. "We're a long way inland here. Ottawa, however, is a most interesting place, most of the year. I like it."

"And is there any other portfolio you would sooner have taken than the Marine and Fisheries?"

"I can't think of one. The problems of the Naval Service are as interesting as any, and much more than most."

He admitted that living along the Atlantic had given him some instinctive feeling for naval matters. When he was a lad the ships of grey St. John had been most of them sails, and the fishermen then were as much of a factor in national and international politics as a few months ago some of them down New England way were to President Taft after the reciprocity pact got out.

BUT the main thing now was not fish; neither the hydrographic surveys, nor the Hudson's Bay ports, nor the St. Lawrence route, nor the grain routes on the great lakes—no, not even the Georgian Bay Canal and Sir Robert Perks. One overwhelming issue had faded all these to a haze.

"Well, we may as well be candid about it, Mr. Hazen. Most of us outside of politics nowadays are thinking about war with Germany."

He smiled, and did not say what he would say to the Lords of the Admiralty in July.

"Now, sir, if you will look back for a moment to last September—do you observe any logical connection between bucking reciprocity in the name of a majority of the Canadian people and mapping out a more strenuous programme for the Canadian end of the Imperial Navy?"

"Well, if you conclude that refusing reciprocity was tantamount to endorsing the Imperial idea, I daresay there is some connection," he said.

But he spoke guardedly.

"And did that vote mean that the people also endorsed what they knew about the naval programme of the Conservatives?"

"I don't think the naval programme was a clear-cut issue at all. The election was won on the anti-reciprocity-pact ticket. The navy was secondary."

One always thinks that a maritime man speaks with more practical emphasis about reciprocity matters; since for long before even the C. P. R. began to define the issue on the western plains, Maritimers were tussling about the advantages of better trade relations with the United States. And the Hazens were evidently all fighters for liberty of one kind or another.

Mr. Hazen remembered the Naval debate. He was then Conservative Premier of New Brunswick. No doubt he endorsed all that Mr. Borden said about the Navy; no doubt he still does. Quite surely



Old-Fashioned Home of Hon. J. D. Hazen, in St. John, N. B.

he credits even Liberals with a constructive desire in the matter of naval defence—though he did not say so; nor did I ask him what he now thought of the Nationalists, who think there should be—

But then what under heaven do Nationalists think anyway? It really didn't matter. Mr. Hazen has all he can ordinarily attend to, looking after the commercial end of Marine and Fisheries politics. But be sure—that at present he has no objections to taking his summer holidays over in the neighbourhood of the Admiralty in London. There is a glamour about Imperial navy problems that makes a fine brain massage for a Minister who may be temporarily weary of hydrographic reports, wireless stations, buoys and light-houses and canal tolls. In fact I expected Mr. Hazen would agree when I said:

"Don't you really think that Canadians have been rather too much engrossed in the merely commercial side of Imperialism? For instance our three great transcontinentals—"

"Well of course a transcontinental railway is a direct contribution to Imperial defence," he said. "Troops must be transported and an army must be fed."

No, I was not likely to catch Mr. Hazen handing out any Whitneysque criticisms of the Grand Trunk Pacific, or any other item in the programme of the late Government.

"However—look at New Zealand and Australia. The Zealand, for instance, is put at the disposal of the Home Government to be used where they most need her. And Australia—"

"Yes, but of course there is some difference between those two Dominions and Canada. Those who keep an attitude of unconcern, or pretend to, about the duty of Canada in Imperial defence, have as a stock argument that the island colonies are in direct need of ships for their own protection against the encroachments of the Orient; whereas our only close competitor is the United States, and a war with her would surely be a land war—as it was a hundred years ago this year."

FROM one whose great-grandfather had gone back on George Washington this was a most guarded utterance. I wondered what Mr. Churchill would do to Mr. Hazen; if he had read any of the numerous books by German and English authors showing how Germany is lying in wait to make a meal of Britain; if he had even seen "An Englishman's Home" or read the—I won't say what paper in a certain big city, but it's bound to make a war minister of Mr. Hazen if possible.

"Really, though, don't you think it's significant—all these signs and symptoms and portents concurring?"

"Precisely what and which?"

"Well, look at Mr. Balfour's vision of an Imperial parliament. Doesn't that shed some light on the consolidated naval scheme?"

"Oh, I've no doubt that when we get an Imperial Parliament all the colonies will be as well represented in the navy of the Empire."

There, again, he contented himself with mere conjunction. He had omitted saying which was to be cause and which the effect; because if the colonies are game enough to go ahead and put millions into ships, taking chances on whatever "rep. by pop."

they get in the next thing to the "Parliament of Man," why—

However, there was no time for discussion; only for asking questions; and I observed that Bonar Law seemed also to be on the *qui vive* in this matter of Mr. Balfour's, besides looking for corroboration to a Canadian minister.

"Referring to that speech of Mr. White, when he said that whenever it came time for a Council of the Empire, Canada would be ready to take her part with other dominions for the transaction of empire business, I suppose you endorse both Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. White?"

TAKING it all in all Mr. Hazen did not deny the significance of all these signs and symptoms converging. But for a man who has lived all his life by the sea he seemed pretty thin on superstition. In fact he appeared to be a man of infinite poise, of orderly intellect, almost instinctive aversion to the discussion of the merely excitable or the hysterical. Inwardly he might be as much concerned as any editor about the imminence of war; he might be engrossed with the ever-present problem of deepening canals and improving harbours; with the St. Lawrence route and the Hudson's Bay route and the effect of the Panama Canal on the expansion of Vancouver; with the discovery of new territories in the far north, and the establishment of meteorological stations in Labrador and Baffin's Land.

But he had time to talk about the development of his own home city of St. John, where Hon. Messrs. Pugsley and Brodeur had left quite enough to keep the present Ministers of Marine and of Public Works busy on the development of new schemes commensurate with the expansion of the country. He spoke with immense enthusiasm of St. John. He eulogized the Province of New Brunswick. He believed that there were great potentialities in the Maritime Provinces that as yet had not begun to be developed. To him it was not all-important that immigrants and the native-born should go west according to custom. With great heartiness he approved the recent Farm Lands Act passed by the New Brunswick Legislature, to provide ways and means whereby immigrants and native Maritimers could acquire lands in that Province on terms almost as favourable as homesteading in the far west.

The conversation might have been prolonged. But the Minister had a sea of troubles ahead of him in the matter of work; other people were outside in the ante-chamber. Before June 28 there were heaps of matters to attend to in the Canadian Admiralty. Deputy-Minister Desbarats was away in England. Some of the Conservative and Independent newspapers were booming a war with Germany. Liberal editors and correspondents were playing tag with the movements and intentions of Premier Borden and the Minister of Marine.

Fortunately Mr. Hazen has the philosophy of politics so compacted in his brain that the vagaries of newspapers have largely ceased to bother him. When he comes back from England in the fall he will be able to say much more about what is really expected at the Admiralty in the way of a war. But it's doubtful if he will say more for publication than he did a few weeks ago.