

The question of the general utility of Esquimalt as a naval station, a coal depot would naturally depend upon its advantages as a pure and convenient harbour, a suitable base for supplies and facilities for repairing ships of war damaged at sea. The first of these better fulfilled there than would be probable at any of the other Sea Islands, while the completion of the graving dock would fill the latter. As a coal depot, however, the safety of Nanaimo, where the mines are situated must always be a most important consideration. Lieut.-Colonel Strange, alludes pointedly to this, did Lieut.-Colonel Irwin, and from my own knowledge I have no doubt the place presents facilities for easy defence against a naval attack. The above considerations however seem almost of secondary importance in view of the proposed railway terminus at Burrard Inlet. To any one who has seen the shipping at San Francisco, and noticed the business done by the Union and Central Pacific Railway, it must seem to be a matter of the very highest political and military importance to possess a naval station at what will be eventually the terminus of the great British American highway of commerce from beyond the Pacific.

The position of Esquimalt with reference to the Straits of San Pedro de Fuca, the Channels of Haro and Rosario, the entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the general configuration of the locality, seems admirably adapted for protection and command. Once the railway is working order, the question of supplies, reliefs, &c., will receive the most satisfactory solution, and its otherwise unprotected position at Burrard Inlet seems to furnish the strongest arguments in favor of retaining Esquimalt, and rendering it thoroughly secure as a naval station and marine arsenal.

It is almost a doubt whether the value of the coal supply of Nanaimo is yet thoroughly understood or appreciated, either on this or the other side of the Atlantic. In 1875 for instance, the output was valued to be 110,000 tons; three companies at work with plant, including eighteen engines, six steam pumps, and tramway to the mines, which are 500 feet long, and sufficient depth of water for large ocean steamers.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway will eventually render the conveyance of reinforcements easy in time of war, and may be expected the ocean terminus will in time be located at Esquimalt or Barclay Sound; thus the present inadequate force of one battery of artillery and two infantry companies at Victoria should be soon relieved, but we must always rely also upon the Royal Navy, for Great Britain cannot possibly neglect the advantages Esquimalt affords as a strategic naval base in the North Pacific.

We should not overlook the progress in naval strength and resources which the Russians are rapidly developing at Petropavlovsk and Amour River; the former only 4,500 miles from Vancouver, the latter only 500 miles further. In the event of war, Russia might be in a position to harass not only Hong Kong and the China and Japan trade, but to send a squadron across the ocean in thirty days to attack the western sea board of the Dominion. This, unless properly fortified, would in the absence of the British squadron, be in some measure at the enemy's mercy. What the result would be of such a hostile descent upon these shores, where so many monuments of British industry and enterprise exist, must awaken grave thought. Great Britain cannot afford to withdraw her protection from her North Pacific possessions, which the Dominion has conjointly already spent a large sum in partially fortifying.

Naval history proves anything, it proves that the commander of a sea-going squadron must have full discretion, and that his success will be proportionate to his self-reliant genius, to restrict his quality may not be advantageous. Telegraphic communication on the other hand, is a very important element which cannot be overlooked; although it might not be prudent to send a continuous stream of instructions to the commander of a squadron, yet a telegraph must play an important part in future naval warfare. The telegraph wires running across the continent on British territory render it all the more important, that Vancouver should ever continue the naval base in the North Pacific.

On the opposite side of the continent Halifax is the imperial fortress, designed, heavily fortified and maintained as an important base in the North Atlantic. Our North Pacific fleet, struggling about a telegraphic base, without a secure and well fortified depot, dependant perhaps on an island in mid ocean for its land supplies, might sometimes be in a precarious condition. It must be foreseen that in a long naval war it might not be always possible to protect it. Were Esquimalt navy yard given up to an island in mid ocean substituted, the Pacific squadron could rely for coal upon New South Wales, England, but notably not upon Vancouver, perhaps all three. Wherever it comes from must be carried by colliers to its island point, and how many of the colliers might fall into the enemy's hands en route, supply them at sea with the dry material most needed. Now, where a dockyard and arsenal already exist, a graving dock for disabled ships in progress, unlimited coal deposits abundant forces at hand, and bye-and-bye by railway to be reinforced twelve days from Ontario, land batteries built and easily supplemented, a telegraph terminus, and perhaps not the least noteworthy feature, where a loyal and a brave people can be thoroughly drilled on to rally round, appears to stamp Esquimalt before other places in the Pacific as the proper naval base and coaling station.

If we withdraw from it might run the risk, in time of war, of being shut out of the Pacific, and supposing such a thing possible, and the enemy in possession of our stores and coals at the important base, Vancouver: he has shut us out entirely until a powerful squadron got round Cape Horn to recover our supremacy; and on that would that squadron have to depend, without any coaling base and at great disadvantage, in trying to recover that which we would never run the risk of jeopardizing. It would be wrong to decrease forces at a number of points of little use in a great war, an important position on which the supply of and communication with the North Pacific depends, must never be left to an enemy, nor yielded in any way.

The importance of Vancouver as a naval base and the consequences of losing it, renders the railway across the Dominion especially concerning the whole Empire; and for those reasons it is a desirable one. Vancouver Island should never be abandoned for our ships of war. Esquimalt is available for ships of any tonnage or draft of water to run into in a gale of wind by day or night, where they can anchor in from seven to nine fathoms in a landlocked basin.

It will be kept in view that Russia is the power against which we might have to take precautions, for with respect to our friendly neighbors over the border, we need hardly have any anxiety. It is true the United States frontier has been advanced, so that the channel entrance to Nanaimo from the southward can be commanded by American guns from the Island of San Juan, which we have allowed to become American ground. There is a military post, formerly the barrack of our Royal Marines, on the Island within sight of the City of Victoria, another at Port Townsend, about forty miles up Puget Sound, and another at Fort Vancouver, on the Lower Columbia River, the entrance to which is defended by heavy batteries near Astoria.

The United States are keenly sensible that fleets without well defended coaling stations and fortified bases accessible to the telegraph, and in military occupation, are dangerous to trust to in modern warfare, and hardly reliable alone to protect fixed points. But America is peopled to a large extent by descendants of our own race; she has the same language, the same traditions and aims as ourselves, developing amazingly side by side of our own family. Proud of our history as reflecting upon herself, she imitates and rivals our institutions, and she will, like ourselves, never encourage the art of war with a view of promoting that which she knows full well never can follow in the wake of a purely warlike policy, namely, wealth, social progress and material development for her people and her industries.

It was stated that during the recent Russo-Turkish campaign, there were eleven ships of war flying the Russian flag in San Francisco Harbor, all in first-rate order, carrying about 2,000 men, and more guns than in all our squadron from Chill to Vancouver. Their object may be taken to attack British possessions and commerce if we had been drawn into war. Might such an event not be possible in the future, and should not Esquimalt be thoroughly armed as a great naval base, telegraph and railway terminus in the North Pacific, and as a standard of efficiency and support should not at least one hundred marine artillerymen under the Admiral, and on the ship's books of the squadron, be stationed there?

Dominion Artillery Association.

CIRCULAR No. 39.

In accordance with a resolution passed at the meeting of the Council of the Dominion Artillery Association, on the 4th March, 1880, by which it was resolved that the prize presented by His Excellency the Governor General, be held this year by the officer commanding the most efficient Field Battery. The following scale of marks by which the efficiency of each Field Battery will be tested is published for general information.

Marks will be given by the Inspectors of Artillery at their annual inspection, as follows:—

Clothing and accoutrements	8
Guns, carriages and equipment	8
Horses.....	8
Harness and harnessing.....	12
Marching past—walk, trot, gallop.....	12
Standing gun drill and answers to questions on artillery, by N. C. Officers.....	24
Field manoeuvres	15
Selection of fighting positions and answers to questions from Field Artillery Manual on fighting tactics, (by officers)...	24
Each officer or man with S. G. certificate, 1st. to 4th.....	4 to 1
Each man with an efficiency badge, (1/4)....	25
Sword drill with mounted officers and N. C. officers.....	5
Dismounting and disabled ordnance	8
Discipline (including camping details).....	10

One tenth (1-10th) total score at competitive practice.

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President of Council, D.A.A.

Quebec, 21st April, 1880.

THE twenty-first annual prize meeting at Wimbledon of the National Rifle Association will begin on Monday, the 12th July. The camp will be ready for occupation on Saturday, 10th July. It is the intention of the council to revert to the custom of opening their gates to the public free of charge after evening gunfire during the meeting. The council will be glad to receive contributions in kind to be added to the list of "extra" prizes.