

Canadian Navy. This sounds good enough to be true. I have no apology to make for the Canadian Navy. Perhaps if we had one I might apologise. But I do want to say this much here—that I think I know Canada well enough to be able to say that on the whole she has no desire to remain a parasite in the matter of Imperial defence. It is not our desire in this matter of a navy to be satisfied with a little tin affair of our own, for we understand that our strength and usefulness in the future and our influence upon the world will depend upon our being a self-supporting, self-depending, self-defending part of that great unit—the world-empire of the British race.

Many Americans are slumbering comfortably in the fool's paradise that the efficiency of their navy will be doubled by the Canal. Whatever else it will do for the American Navy it will double the despatch with which that navy may leave the whole Atlantic coast defenceless. But unless the United States has two navies—unless the British Empire has two navies—California and British Columbia will receive little benefit in the way of defences from the Panama Canal, and without adequate defences their sway is done. Should the United States or Great Britain become engaged with a foe in either hemisphere or on either ocean, the other hemisphere or ocean is all the more liable to attack or to the humiliation of enforced compromise. The very idea of world-empire is inconceivable without that of a world-navy. In recent times there has been no more humiliating illustration of this fact than in the behaviour of Japan in Asia toward every British interest in the Far East. The deliberate slamming of the open door in our complacent faces by our altruistic and honest ally, and that without a protest from us because we are otherwise too much occupied, is one of the tragic episodes of recent political history and one which promises to project results further than I for one dare to look.

You will excuse me, I am sure, if I seem to be in earnest on this point. For frankly I am. British Columbia is the index finger of the British Empire. But that is the finger which is being pinched between the door and the jamb. The situation to-day is not hopeful. I know, of course, what are the compelling causes of our humiliation on the Pacific where we have been sacrificed to the menace of the North Sea. We do not blame you. But whatever the causes, the results are the same—and as disastrous. There is raised here no word of blame. But there must be a word of warning. The cold facts are serious. Facts are things not to be blamed but remedied. The old Greek said: "Don't kick against the facts—you can't do them any harm." So that it is not in the spirit of a captious critic, but in that of a mournful historian, that I tell you that you have dismantled our land defences, and failed to give us new ones. You have abandoned one of the best harbour defences in the Empire at Esquimault, and you have withdrawn your fleet from our hemisphere. You have left us to the tender mercies of your altruistic ally, your little brown brother, who has already learned to crowd British citizens off our own sidewalks with impunity into British mud. All in all you have accorded us what Burke might have called "a wise and salutary neglect." Should you get into trouble over here, and if Japan becomes aggressive over there—and she is far too aggressive even while you are both sitting amicably under the umbrella of your ill-fated alliance—there is but one recourse—for British Columbia to look to Wall Street for protection (I have not forgotten that Washington was once the capital of the United States), and sometimes we may have to say to the great American Syndicate: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

This is not a pleasing outlook. Wall Street has some of the characteristics of the fraternity of the late Captain Kidd. The principal difference is that the modern institution has divested itself of the last shred of romance. The earlier buccaneers