

St. John, Quebec, Montreal, indeed the whole of the lower St. Lawrence River ; Victoria, Vancouver, and, in the near future, Prince Rupert, all peculiarly ours, are possible points of attack, and must be made invulnerable, if at all, not by fortification merely, but by fleets of our own, flying our flag and patrolling the waters by which these points may be approached. The prime necessity, and therefore the paramount function, of our navy, must be the protection of our trade. Our commerce must safely get into and out of our ports, and, to that end, our seaboard must be effectively protected by our navy.

The commerce to be protected includes, of course, at all times, our fisheries and our Customs.

Our geographical position is unique. Our immediate neighbour is the United States, and the border line stretches from ocean to ocean. "E. B. O.," in the "National Review," Vol. XLVIII., goes so far as to say that it would not be possible for us to defend our border against an attack from that quarter. And he advises an acceleration of our population in the great West as a practical assurance of ultimate security. But the existence of any insecurity which the tremendous length of our frontier may involve does not directly bear upon the present discussion. Until the abrogation of present treaty obligations, neither country can maintain warships upon the great lakes forming so large a part of the frontier. In the most unlikely event of a conflict with our neighbour, our possession of sea-going war vessels will certainly not be a source of weakness. Nobody suggests either the length of our frontier or the improbability of such a conflict as a ground for reducing our Army, and neither circumstance ought to affect the present question.

Then we have two seaboards, perhaps three, for who shall say that Canada is not soon to have an Arctic outlet, by Arctic ports, for her commerce ? With commercial ports upon, and with products traversing, three oceans, it seems inevitable that our equipment must include a navy, or our ports and their trade, which is our wealth, must be at the mercy of the first strong hand to strike at them. The blow, if it come, will not fall upon our merchant ships when they have reached the area of that protection which Britain gives the great lines of communication, but in and about our home ports and our home waters.

And what of the volume of trade demanding protection, its great growth, its absorbing and magnificent prospects ?