

Britain's Navy an Instrument of Peace



R. McKenna, M.P., recently addressed a meeting in St. Andrew's hall, Glasgow, the Lord Provost presiding. Mr. McKenna said that it was with the material of the navy that Glasgow had most concern, and it was on this side that the Board of Admiralty were confronted with the most insistent problems. In practically all the changes occurring within little more than a decade, which had operated in the development of the modern battleship, the Admiralty had been in the position of pioneers, so far as the navies of the world were concerned. Foreign nations, as a rule, paid us the compliment of preferring to follow rather than to lead us. The British Admiralty had, in consequence, at every stage, to take bold and far-reaching decisions, for their aim was, and always should be, to obtain the maximum of naval power from the expenditure of the resources at their disposal. The great multiplicity and complexity of questions concerning material, their cumulative importance, and the time which was known to be spent on their consideration had given rise to opinion among certain very able critics of Admiralty administration that too much stress was laid on the material to the neglect of the Navy's personnel and of the art of war. That opinion had no solid foundation. (Cheers.)

Nobody disputed the contention that the study of the art of war and the training of personnel were not less but more important than the refinement of material; but the larger problems presented in the one branch of administration were much more frequent and urgent than in the other. The invention, for instance, of improvements in gun-mountings might enable a heavier type of gun to be handled with approximately as great ease and accuracy as a lighter type, thereby increasing the range and volume of shell which could be thrown with precision in a given time. In such a case the whole question of the armament of capital ships might have to be reconsidered; but when we were dealing with

the art of war, or with the personnel, the important problems which presented themselves for decision were necessarily few. The principles of naval strategy were constant, and the essential qualifications of the officers and men remained the same through all changes of material. Whether the motive power which drove the ships was steam and machinery or wind and sails, whether the guns were loaded at the breech or at the muzzle, the ships remained floating platforms for gunfire; and, though the expert knowledge was of different things and technical skill was differently applied, knowledge and skill and the same qualities of courage, quick decision, and endurance were needed as much today as they were at the Nile and Trafalgar.

Whatever estimate, Mr. McKenna continued, may be made of the merits of our personnel, it cannot be subjected to positive proof today, as the only final and unanswerable test of a sailor's qualities is his behavior in actual war. It may be said of the Navy, in a very real sense, that it is always on active service. The element of danger is never absent, and we have remarkable evidences constantly recurring of presence of mind, discipline, daring, and resources under conditions which, though not the same as, are not very dissimilar from those of war. (Cheers.) Nothing during my brief experience of the officers and men of the Fleet has struck me so much as the vitality of their fighting spirit. I do not refer to individual pugnacity. (Laughter.) Nor do I wish to suggest that the proverbial British pluck is anywhere on the decline; but I think that it will be admitted, as a remarkable fact, that, although there has been no serious naval engagement for 80 years, the temper of all ranks is such that we might be living today on the morrow of Trafalgar. (Cheers.)

It is as true today of Britain that the Navy is the first line of defence as it was of Greece when the Delphic oracle told the Athenians, who were confronted with the great Persian invasion, that they should trust to their wooden walls. But the time has long since

passed when the function of the Navy is one of the mere defence of our shores from invasion—of keeping clear the narrow seas. The growth of our Colonial Empire has been made possible only by the predominance of the British Fleet, and his Majesty's dominions have no certain connection with this country except through the continuance of that predominance. Although, as Nelson said with regret, wars cannot be concluded upon the sea, naval superiority assures the power to defend, with all the resources of the Empire, any constituent member which may be attacked. There is, however, another duty of the Navy, which every year becomes more important for the teeming population of our islands. The protection of our commerce and our food supplies is vital to our being. It is sometimes assumed that our commercial prosperity was founded on naval strength, but, though there is a close relation between the two, this is an inversion of their historical development. The Navy is, in fact, not the parent, but the child of maritime commerce. It is true, however, that without the power of the Royal Navy always standing behind it, our commerce could never have attained the height of prosperity which it reached in the 18th and the earlier decades of the 19th century. Although in modern and happier times, when the great navies are not so readily used as weapons of commercial aggression, a great and growing overseas trade may perfectly well be maintained without any concurrent need for naval superiority, we are in the habit of speaking of the protection of our commerce and of our food supplies in one breath. I did so myself just now as if there were no real distinction between the national need for protection in the one case and in the other, but the protection of food supplies stands with us on quite a different footing from that of commerce. With other nations land transport, though perhaps at greater cost, provides a ready substitute for carriage of foodstuffs by sea, but since the end of the 18th century, when the population of Great Britain was

under 11 millions, the home territory has ceased to be self-sufficing in the production of food, and an open seaway has been an absolute condition of the life of our people.

There is no doubt that any maritime nation to which in time of war the sea routes are closed will suffer much hardship and great commercial loss; but it would not be brought to its knees as would be our fate by imminent starvation. It is a trite saying, but one which is apposite to the present argument, to quote Mr. Cobden's declaration that he would vote 100 millions sterling rather than allow a foreign navy to be increased to a level with ours. (Cheers.) It will be observed that what Mr. Cobden had in mind was a peace preparation, which might have to be renewed annually, according to the exertions made by a possible enemy, and in view of our absolute dependence on overseas supplies of food, no responsible minister could abate anything from Mr. Cobden's resolution. I know that it is said that we could secure ourselves from this particular danger by accepting an alteration of the rules of international law which would exempt merchant ships from capture in war, but the life of a people must rest on something stronger than the adherence of a belligerent to technical rules made in peace. We know too well that if the decisive issue of victory or defeat depended upon their breach, plausible grounds would be found, probably on the pretext of reprisals, for breaking a law which had no other sanction than the authority of a paper agreement. I have said enough to show that the maintenance of our Empire and our very independence itself as a nation rest upon the supremacy of our Navy. It is, indeed, a truth so obvious as hardly to need stating. No foreign rival could deny our need for such superiority, and provided that it is never abused, our supremacy ought not to be a source of grievance. But it is evident that it must be a condition of the continuance of our naval predominance that it should be used as a means of defence and not of aggression. It would be an intolerable claim

for any nation to advance, that it should be permitted to overawe the whole world with an oppressive power, employed not to defend its rights, but to menace the rights of others. We can claim that our Navy exists for the protection of our coasts, our commerce, our food supplies, for the security of our Colonies, and for the enforcement of our international rights. A century of British naval predominance has shown the world that our maritime power is an instrument of peace. (Cheers.) It must not be forgotten, however, that in estimating naval power we have always to regard it as a matter of relative strength. Our duty is to make sure that our Navy is strong enough to meet successfully any foe or reasonably probable combination of foes. The British Navy today is, out of all comparison, stronger than it was 30 or 40 years ago, but this increase of strength is due to the growth of rival navies.

The worst possible policy for us to pursue is to fall behind in our naval equipment, as we should thereby risk the safety of our country, but the next worst policy is needlessly to make the pace in expenditure on armaments. By doing so we should set the fashion in large naval expenditure, we should exhaust ourselves prematurely, and we should reduce our power to expand when occasion required. As the calls upon our Navy are such as we have to build ships on a scale to ensure what is known as the two-Power standard of strength, any rise in the general level of naval power throws a heavier burden on us than on any other individual country, and it is the height of unwisdom in us to invite foreign nations to increase their expenditure by any uncalled for parade of our own overwhelming strength. Suffice it for us that we have, and mean to have, a Navy strong enough for absolute security, and let the history of the last hundred years declare for itself that if Great Britain has wielded the trident it has been in her hands an instrument of peace, securing the freedom of the great highways of the seas. (Loud cheers.)

President-Elect W. H. Taft

FOLLOWING are extracts from a sketch of the newly-elected President of the United States, written by the Rev. Lyman Abbott, and printed in the Outlook just before Mr. Taft's nomination:

William H. Taft's interest in men, not in theories. It was this interest in men which led him to abandon his chosen judicial career and fling away the opening for certain preferment which lay before him and go to the Philippines to organize a Government and attempt what had never before been attempted, to teach an Oriental people to become self-governing. It was this intensely human quality of Mr. Taft's which made men wish that he might be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. For our courts need humanizing. They need to realize that they are dealing with living men and women, not with abstract problems in political economy and legal construction. And there is no man who could do more than Judge Taft to humanize our courts, and no place in which he could do so much as on the Supreme Court Bench.

It is this human quality in Mr. Taft that gives him his popular sobriquet of Bill Taft. He likes men, and he likes all sorts of men except those that are dishonest or disloyal. He was the most popular Governor the Filipinos have ever had. He was the personal friend of the Filipinos; he believed in them, defended them, befriended them, trusted them, and danced with them. This last fact, I am inclined to think, went as far as any, perhaps as all of the others combined, to make the Filipinos idolize him; as they certainly do. Judge Taft is in the best sense of the term a Democrat. He is as free from race and class prejudices of every description as any man I have ever known. He is thoroughly a believer in the motto, "A man's a man for a' that."

Mr. Taft's intensity is expressed by his activity. He is not as quick in his motions, either physically or intellectually, as the President; but he is not less a master workman. The day he was to start for Cuba he was at his desk finishing up some last details. His assistant gave him, warning, "Train starts in half an hour." "All right," was the reply. Presently a second warning, "Only fifteen minutes left, sir." "All right." Finally, "You've only three minutes left, sir." "All right," came back as serenely as before. And in two minutes the alert Secretary of War came out of the office door smiling, calm, imperturbable, unhurried.

If Mr. Taft's intensity is expressed in his actions, his bonhomie and his sense of justice are both expressed in his face. That this quality of attractive and unshakable integrity is manifest in Mr. Taft's face was apparent to a writer in the American. "If the boat were sinking and he could swim and you couldn't, you'd hand him your \$50,000—if you had it—saying 'Give this to my wife,' and she'd get it if he lived to get ashore."

Mr. Taft's good nature, his indifference to self, his apparently infinite patience, enable him to get along with men, however cold or acerb or crotchety—provided they are honest.

"He can get along with some men," said the President to me recently, "that I can't get along with. We were together in Harrison's administration. I was civil service commissioner. Taft was solicitor general. I got on Harrison's nerves, and whenever I came into the room he set his fingers, drumming on the desk before him as though it were a piano. But Taft had no difficulty. And yet he was always a man of highest ideals."

Mr. Taft has been for a number of years the consistent advocate of the policy of government regulation of the great interstate commerce corporations. He was the first judge to summon railway receivers into court on a charge of rebating. Nine years ago, acting as United States Circuit Judge in Ohio, Mr. Taft discovered that the receiver of the Toledo, St. Louis & Kansas City Railroad Company (popularly known as the Clover Leaf) was giving rebates extensively. Judge Taft sent an auditor of his own selection to the receiver's office in Toledo. Upon the auditor's report, verifying the suspicion, Judge Taft sent for the receiver and insisted upon his resignation forthwith.

It is fortunate for their health and happiness that both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt have a keen sense of humor and can laugh at the aspersions of certain unintentionally comic papers which take themselves quite seriously in their statement that Taft is but an echo of his chief. I first met Judge Taft at the American Bar Association in Detroit, in 1895, where he made an address in which he embodied, in his own judicial fashion, the principles concerning the relations of the Federal Government to the organizations of both labor and capital, the adoption and enforcement of which by the present administration have brought upon it so much of praise and so much of blame.

These principles were stated in a carefully prepared paper by Mr. Taft at a time when Mr. Roosevelt was acting as president of the police board in the city of New York and had given no public utterance of his opinions on the question of great corporations, and their relation to the Federal Government. Mr. Roosevelt would be the first to disavow the notion that he discovered or invented the principles which he has so vigorously and so admirably interpreted. Mr. Taft remains faithful to judicial principles which he declared six years before Mr. Roosevelt became President.

Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt have been warm personal friends ever since they first met in Harrison's administration in 1890. They were equally and simultaneously interested in the colonial problems in 1900, when Mr. Roosevelt was Governor of the State of New York and Mr. Taft was first president of the Philippine commission. And from that time, the four—McKinley, Root, Roosevelt, and Taft—agreed in the two propositions, the Philippines for the Filipinos, and capacity for self-government must precede national independence.

Ever since, in 1878, Mr. Taft was appointed salutatorian by the Yale faculty and class orator by his classmates he has been known as an effective speaker. His style is

Websterian; he is persuasive and convincing rather than electrifying. He compels attention rather than wins applause. He is not without humor, but the characteristic of his addresses is serious purpose.

Mr. Taft always likes best to give to his auditors opinions which they do not possess, and to which they are not naturally inclined. Returning from his tour around the world and speaking in Boston, the cradle of the so-called anti-imperialism and perhaps the most conservative financial centre in the United States, in the morning he tells the clergy why he thinks a long process of self-government must precede the independence of the Philippine Islands, and in the evening he tells the merchants that the cause of hard times is partly worldwide conditions, partly unscrupulous speculation in American financial circles. It is in the same spirit that he has discussed, sometimes before unfriendly audiences, during the last five years—to go no further back—and always with absolute frankness, so that there is no mistaking his opinions, such themes as Our Eastern Policy, The Currency Question, The Tariff and Tariff Revision, Criminal Law, Local Option, Sunday Legislation, the Race Question, Panama, Labor and Capital, The Great Corporations, Railway Rate Regulation. No defining of his position on any important question is now necessary. The American people know, or can know, where he stands on all national issues.

Of what Mr. Taft has accomplished in Panama, Cuba, Japan, China, the Philippines, I do not here speak. For I am not attempting to tell the story of his life, but to give a pen and ink silhouette of the man. He appears to me to be as independent as Mr. Hughes, and to have had a larger experience, possibly not so good a lawyer as Mr. Knox, but a better judge, as human as Mr. Cannon, and possessing ideals which Mr. Cannon disavows possessing, as courteous as Mr. Fairbanks, with a power of action, and at times of splendid wrath, of which Mr. Fairbanks has shown no sign; as truly radical in his advocacy of human rights as Mr. La Follette, but, unlike Mr. La Follette, equally determined to defend them whether the assailant is democracy or plutocracy.

To define him in a sentence—Mr. Taft is a great brain and a great heart in a great body.

A PILGRIM SONG

Oh, little Inn of Sorrow,
What of thy bitter bread?
What of thy gloomy chambers,
So I be sheltered?
Thou but for a night, the dreight
That guests on thy cold hearthstone
Tomorrow my load and the open road
And the far light leading on!

Oh, little Inn of Fortune,
What of thy blazing cheer,
Where glad thrills the festive evening
Thy bright doors be open clear?
Sweet sleep on thy balsam pillows,
Sweet wine that will thirst assuage—
But send me forth o'er the morning earth
Strong for my pilgrimage.

Oh, distant End of the Journey,
What if thou fly my feet?
What if thou fade before me
In splendor, wan and sweet?
Still the mystical city leureth—
The quest is the good knight's part;
And the pilgrim wends thru the end of the ends
Toward a shrine and a Grail in his heart.
—Charlotte Wilson, in Scribner's.

Australian Naval Defence

THE following is a summary of the appendices to the official correspondence regarding Australian naval defence. The first appendix deals (I.) with the numbers of officers and men required; (II.) with the establishments necessary in Australia; (III.) the training establishments in England; and (IV.) the system of reliefs. So far as the first part of this appendix is concerned, the substance of it was contained in a Reuter's telegram from Melbourne, which was published September 25. The second part is as follows:

It is assumed that all repairs will be carried out by contract, but that the Naval Establishment at Sydney being still maintained for Imperial purposes, the Commonwealth flotilla will, as far as possible, be afforded facilities there in the matter of boat slips, storage of stores, etc. If, however, Government docks, etc., are established for the depot ships, destroyers, and submarines, it will be necessary to make other arrangements for the working of the Naval Establishment at Sydney than exist at present, and it would be desirable that the views of the Commonwealth Government should be stated before any steps are taken in this direction. As the active service officers and men will form part of the Imperial Navy, no training establishments will be necessary at Sydney.

The third part of the first appendix explains in detail the proposed arrangements for training the officers and men and for raising the Australian seamen. In order to apportion the cost of training which should fall on the Commonwealth Government, certain estimates are supplied. The substance of the suggestions will be found in the following extracts:

The officers appointed to the Australian submarines must be included with the "Submarine" service as a whole, and therefore the submarine service establishment of officers must be increased by, say, 25. The additional numbers to be trained annually on this account, apart from the provision of the initial numbers required, will not be sufficiently large to be taken into consideration in estimating the expense, and this applies also to the gunnery, torpedo, and navigating lieutenants. Leaving the higher ranks out of account, the number of extra lieutenants and engineer officers to be provided to cover the Australian service is about 50. As it takes about 944 years from date of entry for a cadet to become a lieutenant, this number of lieutenants would be attained in the ordinary course by an original entry of 65 cadets. An entry of five annually should be provided to keep the number up. As far as the lieutenants go, with the prospective state of that list there should be efficient available by the time the Australian Service is started, and, in these circumstances, no entries are necessary to supply the initial numbers, leaving out of the question the fact that, if entered now as cadets, it would be 10 years before they would be available for service. The numbers of medical and accountant officers are so small that they need not be taken into account in the matter of training. The warrant officers can also be provided by promotion of the numbers required from the

lists of qualified candidates; the establishment may or may not have to be slightly increased.

The Australian entries (of men) must be either in the continuous service, or non-continuous service systems, modified perhaps in some respects to meet Australian conditions. As it is evidently the wish of the Commonwealth Government that they should furnish the Imperial Navy with Australian seamen, etc., to an extent at least equivalent to the additional numbers required on account of this service, it seems necessary to start a recruiting office in Australia. The men and boys would be entered in the usual way and sent to England for training, etc., to be drafted to the Australian ships as opportunities offer, and as frequently in the course of their career as can be arranged with due regard to the requirements of those ships and the maintenance of an alternation of service between the Imperial and Australian navies. The numbers of all classes to be entered annually on the basis of continuous service to maintain the Australian force at a strength of 1,125 will be 70 to 80. As regards the establishment of the Recruiting Office, a very small recruiting staff would be necessary—say, one warrant officer pensioned, one pensioned petty officer recruiter. A room would have to be hired at Sydney as headquarters, and the warrant officer would travel as required. Pay and allowances to be granted as for recruiters at home.

The fourth part deals with the system of reliefs:

Retention for a continuous period of five years in special work of this kind distinct from the general service would be prejudicial to the prospects of officers and men. Except in the case of the officer in charge, and who would be a senior captain, and whose term of appointment might be for three years, it is considered that the only efficient system will be to limit the period of service of officers and men to the duration of a ship's commission, i.e., two years, and with the object of maintaining continuity in the work of the flotilla to effect the relief of half the officers and men each year. This could best be done by freight. In the matter of advancement of ratings the Australian service would be on the same footing as a foreign station, and the advancement of the various ratings serving in the Australian vessels would follow the general rules of the service.

The remaining appendices deal with the first cost and annual maintenance of the vessels, and the annual charges in connection with pay, allowances, etc., of the personnel.

The estimated capital cost is as follows: Six destroyers, £473,500; nine submarines, £496,000; two depot ships, one for destroyers and one for submarines, £308,000; total, £1,277,500. Annual maintenance and depreciation, total, £186,000. Personnel: 70 officers, 1,125 men; annual cost, £160,000. Grand total, £1,623,500. This includes pay allowances, victualling, etc., and also non-effective pay, and is calculated on the assumption that pay in active service will be the same as in the Imperial Navy, and that officers and men not manning the flotilla will be serving in the Imperial fleet.

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