

Reply to the argument that we need the protection of the British navy as against the United States may be found in Volume I. of these Papers, at pp. 301-1.

4. A fourth reason often urged is that the British navy protects our commerce. To this there are several answers:

(a) As we shall have no wars of our own, the only danger to our commerce is that war may be brought upon us by the United Kingdom, and *for her own sake she must keep the ocean clear*. She would make no difference between Argentinian and Canadian wheat ships, and as between American or Russian food ships and Canadian lumber vessels, she would (quite properly) protect the former rather than the latter.

(b) If Canadian independence were not only real (as it is) but also acknowledged internationally, our commerce would, in case of a British war, be in danger only as neutral and not as enemy traffic. We should be no worse off than anybody else.

(c) But there need be no danger to commerce at all, if the United Kingdom would only agree to accept as international law the rule with reference to the immunity from capture of private property at sea that all nations now accept with regard to private property on land. The United Kingdom, being the strongest naval power, feels that she has an advantage over other nations. She wants to be at liberty to destroy private property at sea because of the effect upon the enemy's *morale*, and financial ability. It is a bit of barbarism that many of her own people are ashamed of, but probably any other nation in her position would do as she does. At the second of the Hague Peace Conference, adoption of the better principle was strongly urged by the United States. Germany, Austria-Hungary and seventeen other states supported the proposal. The United Kingdom, her allies France and Russia and eight of the smaller states opposed it (a). As long ago as 1856, Lord Palmerston said:

"I cannot help hoping that in the course of time those principles of war which are applied to hostilities on land may be extended, without exception, to hostilities by sea, so that private property shall no longer be the object of aggression on either side" (b).

(a) *American Addresses at the Hague* by James Brown Scott. See also *The Two Hague Conferences* by Dr. W. J. Hull, pp. 126-141.

(a) Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 9.