

# Personalities and Problems

2---Hon. John Douglas Hazen

*The Man at the Head of the Naval Service in Canada*

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

BEING Minister of Marine in Canada nowadays is about equivalent to being the Hon. Col. Sam Hughes if a war were on. There are some newspapers in Canada that are going to war with Germany, just as Mr. Hearst once went to war with Spain. They have settled beyond the phantom of a doubt that this is to be the most colossal and terrible battleship tournament that ever was. The fate of the Empire is to be settled in the North Sea. When that is all over German warships may be expected up the St. Lawrence. If they succeed in getting past the Citadel at Quebec without being raked fore and aft by the cannons of century before last, they will probably bombard the Nelson monument to smithereens in Montreal and blow the dome off St. James' Cathedral. German marines will eat weiners and drink beer on the Champ de Mars and bunk in the Armouries across Craig St. After which they will commandeer a C. P. R. train to Ottawa, dismiss the Government, and take Hons. Messrs. Borden and Hazen into the keeping of the Kaiser—on the principle that in the month of June, 1912, they had little or no business to go to England consorting with the Lords of the Admiralty.

SOME such terrifying series of adventures may have been confronting the Minister of the Naval Service when I went to see him in Ottawa a week or two ago. It was the logical inference from reading the newspapers. Building transcontinental railways had nothing to do with the case. In a couple of years, by the completion of the Panama Canal, the Dominion of Canada would be part of a huge island, just as much as either Australia or New Zealand. Now that somebody has discovered the North Pole there is nothing to prevent a marine expedition coming at us from that direction—except "Cap." Bernier and the Arctic. One sole gleam of encouragement is that Hon. Richard McBride has been telling England what ought to be done on the Pacific in case the Anglo-Japanese alliance is disrupted; at the same time putting our west naval station and fleet into direct communication with the fleets of New Zealand and Australia. Whence incidentally we become a world power—and so on.

There is never any end of ultimate possibilities when we come to contemplate the fate of Canada as the keystone of Imperial autonomy. To add to the uncertainty we have lately refused reciprocity, which has been the only clear issue between the two Republican rivals for the Presidency; and that makes it nakedly possible that the year 1912, being the centenary of the outbreak of the border war in 1812, will behold us embroiled in a very bad war with the United States.

On the whole I felt rather relieved that it was Hon. Mr. Hazen and not myself who had to shoulder the burdens of all these world complications. And the nearer I came to Parliament Hill the more I pondered on the kind of man this must be who had been assigned so tremendous a role by the newspapers, in addition to the ordinary business of administering the affairs of our waterways and fisheries.

To begin with, Mr. Hazen is one of three Maritimers in the Cabinet. The other two are Messrs. Borden and Foster. In the case of the two latter, personal character and political choice gave them the *entree*. Mr. Hazen was also designated by experience. The present Cabinet has at least four members chosen on that principle. The Minister of Militia is a soldier. The Minister of Finance is a financier. (Of course the Minister of Justice is always a lawyer.) And the Minister of Marine—well, he never was a sailor, but he came as near it as landsman could, being born in Fredericton, N.B., where he spent his youth, and a good deal of his life in St. John.

THE Hazen family date clearly back to old Northumberland, England. If we remember right it must have been twenty-eight years after the landing of the Mayflower on the "stern and rockbound coast" of New England, when some ancestor of Mr. Hazen landed in Massachusetts. But in the year before the Revolutionary War a descendant of that same John Hazen said, with thousands more, that he would have naught to do with a land that would throw down King George;

and he came to Portland, N.B. More recently Mr. J. D. Hazen's paternal grandfather was an officer in the British Army and sheriff of Sunbury Co. His other grandfather was Provincial Secretary and member of the N. B. Legislative Council.

In the course of time we come to John Douglas Hazen, who should be inordinately proud of such a line of ancestors; a youth working his way through the schools and colleges of Fredericton, into a law course, and at the end of it all getting almost as many initials after his name as Principal Peterson of McGill. Three years he was an alderman of Fredericton and for two years Mayor. In 1890 he moved to St. John, and the year of the last fight against Commercial Union he was elected member of the Commons for St. John city and county, his present seat.

In 1896, however, when the Liberals broomed the country from coast to coast, Mr. Hazen forcibly decided to stay at home. Three years later he entered the Legislature, member for Sunbury. Twice again he was elected; the second time when he himself used the broom that swept Premier Robinson's Liberals out of the Government benches at Fredericton. The score in that election was 31 to 12 in favour of Premier Hazen, who also became Attorney-General.

Whether the Capital or the chief city of the Province had more to do with his selection for the Naval Service portfolio is a matter for the psychological biographer. We may take the evidence of the poet. In Fredericton, Mr. Hazen was a fellow-

citizen of Bliss Carman, who, though he got his earliest poetic inspirations from his native town, surely immortalized the big Port long before the modern local bard did it in his ballad of Courtenay Bay. It was Bliss Carman, the school-mate of John Douglas Hazen, who wrote that almost famous poem, "The Ships of Grey St. John," which perhaps the Minister of Marine knows by heart; but in case he has missed it, we submit a few stanzas for his comfort amid the tremendous troubles assigned to him by the newspapers.

"Smile, you inland hills and rivers,  
Flush, you mountains in the dawn!  
But my roving heart is seaward  
With the ships of grey St. John.

Fair the land lies full of August,  
Meadow island, shingly bar,  
Open barns and breezy twilight,  
Peace and the mild evening star.

Once in your wide arms you held me,  
Till the man-child was a man,  
Canada, great nurse and mother  
Of the young sea-roving clan.

Past the lighthouse, past the nunbuoy,  
Past the crimson rising sun,  
There are dreams go down the harbour  
With the ships of grey St. John.

But I sight the vaster skyline,  
Wider leeway, longer run,  
Whose discoverers return not  
With the ships of grey St. John."

That poem should be engrossed and hung in the office of the Minister of Marine. It is doubtful if any other Minister could lay his hands on a poem so expressive of his early environment. A copy might also be hung in the lobby and the ante-room for the perusal of those who have to wait their turn to see a very busy Minister and kill time by reading the Ottawa newspapers.

I knew Mr. Hazen would be engulfed in business, though Ottawa herself had a much neglected look. The city which has just opened the Chateau Laurier looked like an Ontario village the day of the Sunday-school picnic. The Parliament Buildings had the air of a huge High School in summer holidays. Wherever you saw a parliamentary policeman he was so dead lonesome he was glad of a chance to discuss the beastly weather with a stranger. It was Ottawa between sessions; when even the Duke was away—and even though the "hoarse booming" of Chaudiere with its computations of horse-power for a big industrial centre might be heard up the beautiful valley just breaking forth into the green garb of spring, Ottawa that day was surely a dull town.

The Minister of Marine's office is in the left hand block as you face the main Houses of Parliament. Whether it's the east block or the west block is a matter for hydrographic survey. Ottawa is famous for fooling the compass. Cabinet Council meetings are held in the opposite block. Other government offices are scattered here and there in the vicinity of Wellington boulevard; for Parliament Hill has developed a housing problem that ought to commend it to the care of the authorities interested in the cause and cure of overcrowding.

THE left block is quite handsome without and decidedly gloomy within. That day it was ten times busier than the Parliament Buildings. Members might be home or anywhere else they chose to spend their indemnities. Ministers were as busy as ever. West along a dark corridor about seventeen doors; south about fifteen more—at the end of the hall was a red splotch of curtain, within which was the ante-chamber that led by a much-guarded door to the office. At nearly three o'clock Mr. Hazen had gone to lunch at the Rideau Club. Two other "office-seekers"—I mean men seeking the office of the Minister—gathered along the patient bench outside.

In less than an hour he came. The first man took about nineteen minutes. The third man, who wanted to catch the same train to Montreal that I did, asked rather edgily:

"How long will you be?"



"A man of infinite poise; of almost instinctive aversion to the discussion of the merely excitable."