

of commerce. But if we contribute a powerful assistance and leave the navy of Great Britain in the North sea, where it can readily protect the empire against any European enemy, we will be contributing all that is desirable and can be required from us for the defence of the empire at present. The best authorities I can find on the subject indicate that the great danger to the British empire is not immediate. The danger is that Germany may secure preponderance over Britain in naval matters by becoming able in her shipyards to produce ships faster than Britain can. The danger is that in the race for superiority, by reason, as she thinks, of her workmen and iron and steel and other matters of that kind, Germany may be enabled to outclass Great Britain, and in a given time turn out a greater number of ships. For shipyards are the roots of the navy. Without them you can have no navy. By the policy of the government, we shall not be contributing to the defence of the empire merely for the day. The great objection to the policy of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition is that it is a make-shift policy and contains no provision for the future. Whereas the policy of the government is one which decides the way in which, for all time, we can contribute to the defence of the empire. We certainly would be contributing immensely to the strength of the British navy if we were able, within five or ten years, to point to three or more naval yards in the Dominion, where we would have material superior in quantity and equal in quality to any in Germany, and have that material ready at a moment's notice to be utilized in building ships of any character we might require. It seems to me absurd to imagine that the whole genius and skill of the British empire are to be centred in those little islands, and that no encouragement or outlet is to be given to the genius and ability of the people of the rest of the empire. They are not to be permitted to qualify themselves at all; they are not to be permitted to utilize their own resources in the defence of the empire. No, the only people, apparently according to the leader of the opposition—if one properly reads the implication of his resolution—the only people who have the skill and ingenuity to build ships are to be found in the British islands, and those descendants of Britain who have crossed to this side, and our other people, have lost all genius and skill in that regard. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not my opinion. I believe that the best interests of the empire will be served, not by contributing to the building of ships in the British islands and the development of the skill and genius to be found there, but by enlisting the abilities and skill and genius to be found in all por-

tions of the empire, and utilizing them in the constructing of a great system.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Hear, hear.

Mr. CONGDON. This may appear inconsistent with the views I expressed on a former occasion, when my hon. friend from Yale and Cariboo (Mr. Burrell) quoted the language of Cobden. I do not think that my hon. friend read any portion of the context, but simply took his quotation from the annual of the naval league to the effect that Cobden was ready to contribute £100,000,000 to the defence of Great Britain if he thought she was to be made the object of attack. In that regard I agree with Cobden. I agree with the whole school of England peace lovers who are willing to go to any sacrifice to guard their country against contemplated attack and secure its defence. But they do not see in every move of every nation a design and determined attempt to undermine the liberties of the British people.

There is one feature of this that I think is not worthy of attention. I believe there are promising signs that the time will soon come when there will be something approaching international peace. We have to-day an exhibition in the nations of the earth of something that did not exist in former times, and it is the glory and the boast of democracy that more than any other form of government it has contributed to the development of what may be called a national conscience. If you study the history of the world you will find that under absolute monarchy or aristocratic oligarchies, there was nothing approaching the semblance of a conscience. You have to come down to modern times when the great heart of the people is engaged in the government of the country, before you can find anything approaching a national conscience. In our own time, and within a few years, we have seen an exhibition of national conscience utterly inconceivable to warriors and statesmen of olden times. We have seen the United States, in its impulse for freedom, taking part in a war to liberate Cuba, and then, after it had succeeded and could have made Cuba a part of the American republic, restore Cuba to its own people and refuse to aggrandize the United States by adding Cuba to its own territory. That shows something approaching national conscience in the United States. We have seen something of the same in the case of Great Britain. We are proud to boast that the magnanimity displayed by the United States in regard to Cuba has been paralleled by that which Great Britain has shown in her treatment of her conquered subjects in South Africa. She has exhibited towards them none of the suspicion which some hon. gentlemen