

we find the abolition of the Indian navy as the most striking event of our recent Imperial naval history. Passing from this cursory review of colonial and military changes, let us now throw a side glance at the development of the trade of the four great groups of our Colonial Empire during nearly the same period. In 1859 the total value of exports and imports of Australasia was £18,000,000 odd; in 1876 it was £38,000,000 odd, or nearly double. That of our West Indian Islands was £3,000,000 odd, while in 1876 it was over £11,000,000. It is needless to multiply proofs of the enormously increasing dependence of all parts of the British Empire on the freedom of the sea roads except for the purpose of impressing all Englishmen, home and colonial with the ever-increasing responsibilities of naval protection. We appear to be in some danger of forgetting the purely military defence of our Empire as a whole must ever be secondary to its naval security. No amount of military force can swim, and therefore in an Empire such as ours it can only move to defence or attack through the agency of our mercantile marine under the shelter of sea-power and efficient naval strategical arrangements.

The British navy is furnished, paid, and maintained exclusively by the United Kingdom, but a very large proportion of British sea commerce it will have to protect in war belongs to other parts of our Empire. For example, the number of vessels registered at ports of the United Kingdom is 25,090, with an aggregate of 5,338,360 tons, while the number of vessels registered at ports of the British possessions is 13,158, with an aggregate of 1,797,477 tons; the rest of the Empire, therefore, has of the register of its ports half the total number of ships and about one quarter of the aggregate tonnage of the total British mercantile marine. The gross revenue of British possessions is about equal to that of the United Kingdom; and while the revenue of the United Kingdom is annually charged with some £10,000,000 for the naval protection of British mercantile marine, British possessions are not chargeable with any sum whatever for such protection. India, however, contributes about £69,000 a year on account of the expenses of the fleet on the Indian Station; but the rest of the Empire bears no share of the naval expenses incurred or to be incurred for the protection of its sea commerce in war.

The extraordinary commercial development, progressing by "leaps and bounds," must sooner or later force upon all Englishmen's attention the question of mutual responsibility and mutual effort in the really imperial matter of sea defence. Every year's delay in coming to a common understanding on the subject may possibly render solution more difficult, and there is but too much reason to fear that neglect may now lead the United Kingdom ultimately either to attempt high-handed measures which would surely end in disastrous failure, or towards a blind repudiation of responsibilities which would be the beginning of a lament. It is earnestly to be hoped when this question receives the popular attention it merits that no ill-considered effort will be made to settle it off-hand by any simple "pound, shilling, and pence" arrangement. There are other grave questions behind which forbid such mode of dealing with so complex a problem. The strength of the English race does not rest on money bags; it lies deep in the hearts of a great and free people, who, above all things, love fair play. If, therefore, the extraordinary anomaly respecting naval burdens of the Empire is ever to be a thing of the past, it can only satisfactorily result from friendly consultation and reasonable compromise. We must not ask our colonies simply for cash; but we must enlist their active sympathy and practical help in a common effort for a common good. If the foundation stones of any real system of truly British naval defence are ever to be laid, the colonies must be called into consultation on the matter. We on our part must show real desire to join with them in carrying out, not only systematic and well-defined preparations for ensuring in war the safety of those great water-roads common to us all, but we must do more. We must show our determination to secure them their due proportion of the honour and prestige attaching to a great and noble service,

as well as those more solid advantages arising from the expenditure of capital and labor incidental to its maintenance.

Is the whole British Empire in combination, with its gross annual revenue of some £158,000,000, too poor to raise a loan sufficient to protect the points which, in a strategical sense, command its water-roads, and, from a naval point of view, are vital to the power of locomotion both of its war navy and its huge mercantile marine? Let it be remembered that we cannot in war "go down to the sea in ships, nor occupy our business in great waters, save under the fostering care and shelter of armed ships, now absolutely dependent on coal for efficient protective power.

Finally, it is to be observed that when attempts at invasion are, in a naval sense, possible, attempts to cut our sea communications are more than possible; they are even probable, because in the existing state of our naval arrangements and defined naval principles, the operation involves the application of a much smaller naval attacking force. We have, by the creation of purely military forces, and by the erection of great home fortifications, given in the past twenty years the most ample practical proofs of our national belief in one danger, while during the same period our neglect of naval principles is a striking memorial of our utter disbelief in the other, perhaps the more real of the two.

To be continued.

Militia Items.

—Lt. Col. Strange, R.A., D.I.A., accompanied by Major Taschereau, have been on a tour of inspection at the West.

—The various Deputy Adjutant-Generals and Brigade Majors composing the Militia Staff of the Dominion have received notice from the Government of an intended exchange of stations.

—The startling news from Afghanistan announcing the annihilation of General Burrow's brigade creates the deepest feeling of concern. How necessary is it for the arms of a country to be efficient. Casting our eyes towards past Fenian raids, fanatical and labour disturbances, and our Indians in the North West we may rightly say—"vigilantibus, non dormientibus," "subveniunt,"—a man must be awake on his post as well as on a march.

—On the 14th ult., the Cobourg Battery of garrison artillery, commanded by Capt. Dumble, was inspected by Lt. Col. Strange, R.A., D.I.A., when gun practice was also carried out, Major Heber, C.A., acting as range officer. The physique and intelligence of the men composing this corps was everything that could be expected, but the rule of only permitting garrison artillery to drill for six days in two years renders efficiency impossible. Capt. Dumble is a civil engineer by profession, and so fairly fitted to command an artillery corps. His second in command, Lt. Mac Nechtan, is an experienced rifle shot, and distinguished himself at Wimbledon some years ago.

—On the 28th ult., the Collingwood Garrison Battery, commanded by Lt. Col. Hogg, was inspected by the Inspector of Artillery, who also superintended its drill.