

There appear to be two principal modern theories with regard to the true functions of a navy as part of the national equipment. They are clearly stated, and strikingly discussed by Admiral P. H. Colomb. One theory assigns as its function the local defence of the country itself, the other the preservation of the great lines of trade communication. Both theories are, it will be observed, based upon the fundamental idea of defence. Aggression is no part, though it may become an incident in the working out of either theory. And each theory has been formulated as part of a policy applicable to Imperial conditions. In their application to those conditions, they have almost become rival theories, though they have never lost their purely defensive character. The extreme adherents of the first have, in theory, girded the navy about the British islands to repel attacks upon their coasts. The adherents of the second have advocated the distribution of the navy along the great established ocean highways of trade, viewing the ocean commerce of Britain as the true point of attack, to be guarded at all costs, by "keeping open the great sea routes from the heart to the extremities of the Empire." As Admiral Colomb says, the great trade routes bear "the income of the nation, scattered broadcast over the ocean." The key of the position, in the application of both theories, is the channel and other waters adjacent to Britain. But in the application of the home defence theory, it is the key because those waters are the avenues of hostile approach to the land itself. In the application of the other it is the key, because in those waters converge the trade routes which bear the nations' wealth, and the theory assumes that if the communications are preserved intact, no successful land attack can be made. The weight of the best naval opinion seems in favour of this view.

The statement of these two modern theories goes far to assist in defining the functions which a Canadian Navy should be designed, under present Canadian conditions, to perform. Our conditions are not essentially similar to those which, in Imperial discussions, make the theories rival rather than complementary. Our ocean commerce for the most part at least, is borne over the same great lines of communication which bear the commerce designed to be protected by the Imperial navy, and, indeed, forms part of that commerce. To assist in the protection of those highways may, and doubtless will be, in time of war, an appropriate use to which to put a Canadian navy. But it cannot be its primary or normal purpose, under existing conditions, even in case of war. Halifax,