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## THE NAVY

Rarely is it our duty to touch upon controversial political subjects, and it is with some diffidence that we approach the topic of the Canadian navy. While it is by no means our intention to discuss the merits or demerits of the lately introduced Naval Bill, yet there is one passage in the Rt. Hon. Mr. Borden's pregnant speech that demands comment.

In expressing so positively his opinion that Canada could not prepare herself for the construction of a navy within a quarter or even half a century, we are profoundly convinced that the Premier erred. And we shall proceed to give our reasons for this conviction.

Within the past two decades Canada has built up a strong, modern, and well organized iron and steel industry. In Nova Scotia the Dominion Steel Corporation has an enormous plant. The Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company possesses at Trenton, near New Glasgow, a steel forging plant that represents the last word in modern practice. Raw material there is in plenty. Labour is obtainable as needed. The splendid harbours of Sydney and Halifax are commodious enough for any purpose.

On the Pacific coast, whilst the necessary industries have not been established, there are abundant sources of fuel, flux, and ore. In short, Canada possesses every natural facility for establishing shipbuilding industries on any desired scale.

As for the length of time in which such industries could be established, it is our opinion that, with suitable direction, not more than five, or at most, ten years would be consumed in preliminary work. There is no hidden mystery in shipbuilding. English and Scotch engineers could be engaged to direct the work. The fact that for some years the cost of construction would be higher here than in Great Britain is of no importance whatsoever. The gain to Canada would be immeasurably greater than any added expenditure in building. Employment would be given to thousands of men, new communities would spring up, the Maritime Provinces would be incalculably benefitted, and the whole industrial life of the nation would be strengthened.

Canada does not and will not for a moment regret the contribution of \$35,000,000 to the British navy. This is but one meagre step in the right direction. But it is wrong to postulate as a reason for this contribution our inability to build our own ships. We have the ability, though we have not now the equipment. Problems as large as this have been solved in Canada by Canadians. The building of the Canadian Pacific Railway was, in many senses, a more arduous task. The construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific was probably more costly. The