

Germany was at the time of the first serious decadence of wooden ships, for securing a fair share of the trade of the world.

We in Canada are now in a position, if we so desire, to go into the construction of ships, whether for mercantile or military purposes. To my mind, the real question involved in this discussion may be subdivided into two questions: which is better for Canada, and which is better for the empire? Is it better for Canada that we should adopt the provisions contained in the Bill before the House, and endeavour to initiate and build up in this country a ship building industry; or is it better for Canada that we should take the money of the taxpayers of this country and send it to England in order that all the skill and genius in naval matters should be confined to the inhabitants of the little island across the Atlantic? I venture to say that there can be no question as to which is better in the interest of Canada. And in considering these matters we have a right—possibly a first right, certainly a co-ordinate right—to consider what is in the interest of Canada concurrently with what is in the interest of the empire. To my mind, the only redeeming feature in the initiation of a naval policy is the fact that not only will it secure in this country the ability to construct vessels of war, which can serve as a defence for Canada and as an aid in the defence of the empire, but it will also at the same time, and in the same shipyards, develop an ability in this country to construct merchant ships which can engage in the carrying trade of the world. If we pass money over to England, there can certainly be no such result as that. For my part, I can see no more justification at the present moment for taking twenty or twenty-five millions of money belonging to the Canadian people and sending it to England, and saying to Great Britain, build Dreadnoughts and do what you like with these, we do not want or expect any of it back, than there would be in sending to Great Britain a delegation from the government of Canada to say, we want you to give us twenty-five millions to build ships for the defence of the empire in Canada. This will make you and us more secure than we are at present. Such a proposition would be regarded in England as utterly absurd; but it does not seem to me more absurd than the proposition to send our money to the other side of the Atlantic.

Look at the imperial position of affairs to-day. What do we find? Great Britain never occupied a position of greater naval superiority than she does to-day. All the authorities agree in that. If you read the last annual report of the British Navy League, you will find the statement there made, that during the last year Great Britain has occupied a position of greater superiority in naval matters than she has ever

occupied before. If you compare the list of British men of war of various kinds, from battleships down to submarines, with those of Germany or of any of the other European nations, you will find that that is absolutely true. From the calculations made by the very highest authorities on the subject, it is stated that if Great Britain absolutely ceased the further construction of battleships until 1919, and Germany carried out the programme of naval construction upon which she has entered, at the end of that period, the navy of Great Britain would still be superior to that of Germany.

If you look at the reports, you will find that in spite of this progress of Germany, in shipbuilding, the Clyde alone produces more battle and merchant marine than the whole of Germany. And to tell us that in spite of the fact that Great Britain has nearly three battleships and armed cruisers to one of Germany, and that in the matter of tonnage and seamen engaged, she has in the proportion of almost three to one—to tell us that in spite of these facts, this is a period of emergency, that Britain is in danger from the Germans, is enough to make us despise the men who utter such sentiments. We are told that Germany can throw an army into England of 200,000 men and conquer it. Well, if the invasion by 200,000 Germans or 200,000 of any nation, can conquer England, it is about time that England was conquered and some new blood infused into her veins. England cannot be conquered in that way. The idea that she must keep standing armies and be constantly preparing for war, as though Germany and other nations had nothing to occupy them except the idea of conquering Great Britain, is absurd. Britain is not to be conquered in that way. Germany has enough to do to attend to Russia, on the one side, and Austro-Hungary and France, on the other; and it is quite sufficient for her to see that she is safe against the attacks of any of these, without making a new enemy in Great Britain. As it seems to me, the position is this. Great Britain is absolutely safe against Germany. No doubt Germany alone cannot venture to attack Great Britain, nor is she thinking of attacking her. The great thing to do is to establish a circle of protection for the commerce belonging to Great Britain and her various colonies. It is pointed out in Haslem's work 'The Admiralty of the Atlantic or the Navy League'—but each is equally strongly imperialistic, and whatever they say against any idea of contributing largely to the British navy may be taken as stronger than anything they can say in favour of it—that the only danger to Great Britain from any European combination, is the danger of having to distribute her home forces in order to protect her lines

Mr. CONGDON.