

in 1896. A weekly service of twenty-one knot boats at a cost of three-quarters of a million of dollars to the Dominion annually would be jumped at to-day, if it were in sight. The service aimed at now is a dual fortnightly service of sixteen and twenty-one knots respectively, which would be little, if anything, better than the existing service, but at largely increased cost. This is invariably the result of any piece of constructive statesmanship that the present government attempts, and strongly reminds one of the antics of the Liberal party thirty years ago in connection with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway—their water stretches in the one case, and their bottle-necked ships in the other. If the men who governed this country from 1873 to 1878 had not been driven from office at the right time, it is highly improbable that we would have a Pacific railway to-day, and I think it just as probable that until the gentlemen who now govern the Dominion meet a similar fate, and men with the traditions, the policy, the foresight and constructive genius of the old Conservative leaders take their places, a fast Atlantic steam service is only one of the many things necessary to its progress that Canada will have to do without.

To my mind there is no more important subject referred to in the Speech from the Throne than that of home and imperial defence, brought prominently to our notice last year by the conference of colonial premiers, of which the colonial secretary was chairman. I do not think that the attitude assumed by the prime minister of the Dominion—however, admirably he may have borne himself otherwise as our representative—in refusing from the outset to even discuss the question of defence—was creditable to Canada, or truly represented the patriotic feelings of our people. He threw his great influence against the accomplishment of a grand scheme of imperial defence, of which the people of Canada would have heartily approved, and which must be brought about in the near future. Our position towards the empire on this all-important question must be clearly understood at no distant day. It is so manifestly unfair and unpatriotic that Canada—now strong, wealthy and prosperous—should receive the protection of the empire, and share in its prestige and glory,

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at the sole expense of the taxpayer of Great Britain and Ireland, who struggles under burthens far greater than we are called on to bear, that this state of affairs cannot and ought not to exist any longer. We ought to be ashamed of trying to perpetuate the immunity we now enjoy from participation in the burthens of the empire as well as of the meagre returns we make for the priceless blessing of absolute self-government conceded to us by the motherland.

Our duties in connection with the question of defence may be divided into two classes—one military, including fortifications; the other naval, including our just obligation to contribute to the support of the imperial navy. With reference to the first, not many now think the scheme of defence outlined for old Canada in the able letter of Col. Jarvis, addressed to the Secretary for War in 1865—especially in regard to fortifications—would meet the approval of the people of this country to-day. Since 1865, we have expanded wonderfully and extended our southern boundary to the Pacific coast. To fortify even strategic points of this enormous boundary would be a hopeless undertaking, altogether beyond the means of the Dominion, and would be comparatively useless if accomplished. An invading force could give our fortifications a wide berth and still find plenty of points of ingress to our country.

What Canada requires is a well trained militia, an effective and formidable force, not on paper only, but existing in reality, and at all times ready for home defence, or volunteering for foreign service in the defence of the empire. This is the direction in which Canada should be prepared to expend more money than she does at present, in raising, drilling and equipping an efficient militia force, if we want to give proof of the sincerity of our professions on the question of defence.

We are told that our militia is to be re-organized, and placed on a more efficient basis, and if this work be done under the supervision of the distinguished British officer now in this country, it will no doubt be ably and efficiently done. In this connection, I may remark, that the assistance Canada should give the empire in wars outside the Dominion should be mutually understood, without being defined by any