

CANADA AND THE BRITISH NAVY

CANADIAN correspondent writes to the London Times as follows: The attitude of Canadians today in respect to the problem of Imperial defence may be described accurately as that of a people who are only awaiting a plan which will permit them to give evidence of their willingness to bear, not only without murmur, but, indeed, with genuine pleasure, their share of the burden. Can it be doubted for a single instant that Canadians are loyal to the interests of the Empire when they will send their sons to any part of the British dominions in defence of the Flag? The question really is superfluous. It may then be asked: How is it that they have shown such a dilatory spirit on the question of contributing to the support of the Navy when they have the example of other colonies before them? The answer is that Canadians are a very busy people and they have not been so fortunate as to have statesmen disposed to lead them along an Imperial path which they are very willing to follow.

But recently there has been an awakening of the public conscience in Canada in regard to this neglected duty which promises well for the future. The Press of both the great political parties are agreed that the time has arrived when Canada must either bear part of the burdens of Empire, or be prepared to see that arm of defence upon which they are now dependent so weakened as to imperil their national existence.

At the present moment there is a well-defined movement on foot for Canada to take the initial step in laying the foundation of a "navy" of her own, by constructing a number of fishery cruisers of semi-warship type. Every one knows that of very necessity these craft, constructed as they will be in Canadian yards and to plans not approved of by the Admiralty, will be but travesties of fighting ships, though they will, of course, serve the primary purpose for which they are to be built. The important point in this connection is that, while they may to a certain extent satisfy the desire among the Canadian people to "do something" towards

the creation of a Canadian navy, as a matter of fact they will not advance the country one step towards participation in the work of Imperial defence.

Now, if I am correctly informed, the Admiralty every year places out of commission a number of ships which would make much better craft for the present purposes of Canada than these "cruisers" which are shortly to be laid down; and the point I would make must, I am sure, have already suggested itself. That is, that the Home government might offer to supply Canada from her retired warship class with just those ships for fishery protective purposes of which she stands in need, and thus induce Canada to take up in practical fashion the matter of the creation of the nucleus of a navy which would prove an Imperial asset.

In respect to the feasibility of this proposal, it would be necessary to give consideration to the following questions:

Is there a special service which can be rendered to Canada at the present moment by maintaining in her waters certain of the smaller type of British warships which would otherwise be placed out of commission?

Would an offer from the Home government to this end be welcomed by the people of Canada?

Would the people of Canada be disposed to instruct their government to bear the cost of the maintenance of these ships on Canadian stations?

Would such ships stationed in Canadian waters form the nucleus of a Canadian navy? Would the people of Canada ultimately demand of their government that these vessels should be augmented by others built by their own contributions?

Would the people of Canada consent to these vessels being at all times under the control of the Admiralty—to the extent of their being available for Imperial needs at a moment's notice?

No one who has an intelligent grasp of Canadian public opinion can doubt for a moment that all these questions may be answered

in the affirmative. In support of that statement I beg to submit herewith extracts from editorial articles in two of the leading papers in Canada, which came under my notice in quite a casual way and were not found at all as the result of a search for evidence to support my argument. The first is from the Montreal Gazette, easily the leading Conservative newspaper in Canada. It reads as follows:

"If the comments of newspapers throughout the country are an indication, a proposition that Canada should bear a share of the cost of the naval defence of the Empire would meet with as little effective opposition as did the resolution to send Canadian soldiers to South Africa when they seemed to be needed there. The call of that which looks like duty has its legitimate influence with Canadians."

The second is from the Ottawa Journal, and is as follows:

"Canadian cash for the British navy and a voice in the Imperial naval councils."

"Who says that the Canadian people are not willing to bear their share of the Imperial naval burden? That question should be put specifically to the test."

Let it be conceded at once that there are a multitude of obstacles to the immediate success of the arrangement which I propose. What I feel sure of is that none of them are insuperable. One the one hand, we have people in Canada loyal to the core, ready and willing to lay down their lives, if need be, in defence of the Flag, and thoroughly conscious of their duty in the work of Imperial defence; but in a maze of doubt how to proceed; on the other hand, we have a group of far-seeing statesmen in Great Britain who feel that the psychological moment has arrived when an attempt should be made to knit closer the bonds of Empire for defence purposes, and yet undecided just what steps ought to be taken. This being the situation, then, is it not opportune to inquire whether one of the two parties may not, by a stroke of policy, take the initiative in a plan calculated to achieve the very purpose both have in mind?

A disquieting phase of the present situation on the continent of America in respect to the future of Canada is so obvious that I am sure it has not been overlooked by those British statesmen who have set their hands to the task of consolidating the Empire. This is the fact that, at a time when Canada is attaining the stature of nationhood, the United States should be engaged in building up a great navy. Now, as every one knows, all Canadians dearly love the sight of a battleship. This feeling is, no doubt, born of a realization of the fact that their possessions were won for them by Great Britain's strong right arm—the Navy—and also because they in their youth imbibed some of the tales of Britain's sea glory. It is easy to understand, then, that the spectacle of a naval force in adjacent waters possesses a glamor for them which they may easily mistake for the lustre which ought only, in the eyes of Canadians, to attach to a fleet of British warships. The means for inter-travel between Canada and the United States are so accessible to the masses that there is danger lest the younger generation of Canadians, at all events, may come to admire the fighting capacity of the United States to a degree which will lessen their admiration for the might of Britain.

But evidence that the time has arrived when statesmen should exert some effort along definite lines in the direction of Imperial unity we have in abundant quantity. Let us now dismiss as unworthy of consideration all speculation as to the genuineness of the loyalty of Canada to the Mother Country, and try to devise some modus operandi for giving practical effect to an aspiration which is the common possession of the Canadian people and the people of the United Kingdom. I have herein made a concrete suggestion to that end; and a useful purpose will be served if, as a result, there shall be full and free discussion of it.

In the course of an editorial article on "Empire Builders and Empire Destroyers," the Times said:

"We are all in our degree either Empire-

builders of Empire-destroyers. It is, therefore, good to recognize on such an occasion as the present evidence that Empire-building occupies the thoughts of our kinsmen in Canada. A Canadian correspondent bears welcome testimony to their growing desire—a desire not confined to any party—to make some efficient contribution to the naval defence of the Empire. No one remembering what the Canadians did in far-distant South Africa, in a quarrel which affected them on no selfish grounds, but solely through their Imperial sentiments, can doubt that in the Canadian people the desire is abundantly present to bear their part in maintaining the great service upon which their defence in certain circumstances would depend, and to which they mainly owe it that these circumstances have not arisen. But, as our Correspondent remarks, the Canadians are very busy, and wait for leadership upon a path which they would gladly follow. There is a movement on foot at present, probably arising out of the multifarious occupations that keep them busy, in favor of creating a local navy in the shape of fishery cruisers of semi-warship type. Our Correspondent makes the sensible suggestion that, as the Admiralty is constantly discarding vessels which would admirably discharge the duties contemplated, these vessels should be assigned to Canadian marine police work. Canada would thus save the expense of constructing new ships which could never form part of a fighting fleet, and would be encouraged to invest money to much better purpose in ships fit to take their place in the Imperial Navy. It is important that there should be as little overlapping and waste as possible, and for the avoiding of which intelligent utilization of resources from an Imperial standpoint. The idea we are discussing appears to further that aim. No doubt there will be technical and official objections, but if the idea were developed on broad lines and with a due sense of the solidarity of the Empire, the results might be found both morally and financially satisfactory."

Pheasants—White, Mongolian and Some Other Kinds

(By Richard L. Pocock.)

DITOR COLONIST, Victoria, B. C. I have read Mr. Pocock's letters in your Sunday edition with considerable interest, as I am very much interested in all game life and in game and fish stories however—well, just however.

In yesterday's Colonist I noted the announcement of the arrival from Nanaimo of an albino pheasant. This is a joke. The pheasant is a white pheasant, a variety I breed in my pens. This bird killed itself against the wire of the pen. The white pheasant is comparatively little known and is somewhat rare. I count them splendid game birds, especially in places where there are snow falls in autumn, as their plumage is such as to give them great protection. They are hardy and prolific. I send a poor photo of some young pheasants, taken in the snow, in which you will just be able to distinguish some white birds, four in number, among some silvers, golden and ring-neck.

Some weeks ago Mr. Pocock, in an article on Pheasant Shooting in China, mentioned the red backs of the golden pheasant. The golden pheasant has no red on its back. The ruff is orange with black tips, the shoulder green and the back yellow or golden.

GEO. B. BROWN.

Nanaimo, B. C., Feb. 11, 1909.

The above letter called forth by the regrettable inaccuracies mentioned in it, for which I hasten to apologize, is interesting to all sportsmen who were not aware that white pheasants could be bred as a distinct variety. The news item concerning the white pheasant alluded to as it reached me was that a white pheasant had been "captured" in the neighborhood of Nanaimo, and I naturally jumped to the conclusion that it was a wild albino such as I have seen in Old Country coverts and taxidermists' shops.

White pheasants are not known in Europe as a distinct variety so far as I am aware. Tegetmeier, the recognized authority on pheasants which have been introduced into Europe, has this to say about them: "A purely white variety of the common pheasant occasionally occurs in the coverts without any apparent cause. A correspondent, who has been a pheasant rearer for thirty years, writes: 'Four years ago a nest of thirteen eggs was brought in by the mowers. All the eggs were hatched; eleven were perfectly white birds, the other two the common color. Nine of the white birds were reared—six cocks and three hens; three cocks were turned out, the others were kept in the pheasantry, pinioned. The white pheasants proved very bad layers, very delicate, their eggs very bad; and those that were hatched very difficult to rear, and there never was a white bird bred. The extraordinary thing is, that where the nest was taken up the keepers had never before or since seen a white pheasant. The three cocks turned out never (to my knowledge or the keeper's) were the cause of white pheas-

ants or pied pheasants being bred, and the three all disappeared in the second year. On another part of my estate a white cock pheasant was bred; he was considered a sacred bird, and lived seven years, when he disappeared. In the covert he resorted to I killed one pied pheasant, and I believe that one bird was the only pied pheasant (if bred through him) that ever was seen."

"By careful breeding there is no doubt that a permanent white race might be established if such a proceeding were thought desirable, which I much doubt, as white varieties are generally very deficient in hardiness. Left to themselves the white cocks are doubtless driven away from the hens by the stronger and more vigorous dark bird, and rarely increase their kind. When mated in pheastries the natural color has a strong tendency to reproduce itself; but white, or even pied or parti-colored birds, are not always to be produced from white parents. . . . The explanation of the difficulty of breeding pied birds from a white and a colored parent, and the ease with which ring-necks are produced and perpetuated, is soon given. Ring-necks are derived more or less directly from the P. torquatus, a permanent race that has a strong tendency to reproduce its like; but white and pied birds are merely accidental variations, and not even a thoroughly established breed, and therefore are not prepotent in propagating their like, but have a strong tendency to throw back to the stock from which they were derived."

Plumage of the Golden Pheasant

The description of the golden pheasant as having a red back was, of course, an error in writing, the back being really a deep yellow. The point I was trying to emphasize was the effect on my senses of the first sight of one of those most gorgeous of the tribe in full flight, which, with its mixture of red and yellow and orange, was that of a flaming missile against the dark background of trees and undergrowth with which the hills where I came across it were covered. In thinking of the general effect I fell into the blunder.

The male in mature plumage, which he does not assume until the autumn of his second year, is one of the most gorgeous of the whole tribe of pheasants, his appearance taken altogether being so remarkable as to make him look more like one of the bizarre creations of Chinese fancy than a real bird. On the head is a long crest of silky orange-colored feathers, which extends backwards over a tip of broad flat feathers of a color which in the specimens I procured (nearly a hundred) varied from almost a pure yellow to a deep orange with dark blue bars, so dark as to be almost black, across the tips; below the tip of the lower part of the neck the feathers are deep green margined with velvet black; below this again are the scapular feathers of a dark crimson; the back and rump are golden yellow; the tail is very long for the size of the bird, the two longest central feathers are covered with small, irregular circles of light brown on a dark ground, giving them a mottled appearance; the other feathers are barred

diagonally with dark brown on a lighter ground. On each side of the base of the tail extend the long narrow upper tail coverts of a bright orange crimson. The wings, when closed, show the deep blue tertiaries covering the chestnut secondary quills. The upper part of the throat light-brown, the breast and underparts orange-scarlet.

Mongolian Pheasants, Chinese or Ring-necked Pheasants and English Pheasants

As there still seems to be considerable confusion in the minds of local sportsmen as to the identity of these three varieties of pheasant I have taken the trouble to hunt up the authorities for accurate descriptions of the three varieties.

Many sportsmen here, including some who have written to and for the daily press, seem to be under the impression that the pheasants we have here are English pheasants and that Mongolian is merely another name for Chinese pheasant just as we sometimes loosely speak of a Chinese as a Mongolian.

The common pheasant of Europe, including England is, or perhaps I should say was, Phasianus Colchicus, a bird which has been introduced from its native country, Asia Minor, for upwards of a thousand years, and was very possibly brought into England by the Romans. Pheasants are mentioned in a bill of fare preserved in a manuscript in the British museum of the date of circa 1177. Until the introduction of the ring-necked pheasant, Phasianus torquatus, from China and subsequently of other varieties (Japanese, Reeves, etc.) P. Colchicus was the one distinct species or race known in Europe and was so named from its having been brought from the banks of the river Colchis in Asia Minor. Nowadays, however, it is rare to find wild pheasants true to the old type, as the different varieties, colchicus, torquatus, and versicolor (Japanese) having bred freely with one another, the common pheasant of England nowadays has the ringed neck of the Chinese variety. Henry Seebohm, writing in 1887 said: "The fact that all true pheasants interbreed freely with each other and produce fertile offspring, may be accepted as absolute proof that they are only subspecifically distinct from each other. Like all other subspecies, they only exist upon sufferance. The local races appear to be distinct enough, but they only retain their distinctive character as long as they are isolated from each other. The moment they are brought into contact they begin to interbreed; crosses of every kind rapidly appear, and in a comparatively short time the swamping effects of interbreeding reduce the two or more local races which have been brought into contact to a single and uniform intermediate race. Such swamping effects of interbreeding have practically stamped out in the British islands the two very different looking races of pheasants which were introduced into them—Phasianus colchicus from Asia Minor, and Phasianus torquatus from China. The pheasant of the British islands is, with very rare exceptions, only a mongrel between these two races, but, it must be admitted, a very healthy and fertile one."

The most noticeable difference, of course, between the old English pheasant and the Chinese pheasant is the white ring which is absent in the former. There are also other differences in body coloring, the English pheasant being generally of a rather darker plumage than the Chinese and lacking the light blue and green coloring of the rump and wing coverts.

The Mongolian pheasant (Phasianus Mongolicus) is a distinct variety from either of these and has only very recently been introduced into Europe. Tegetmeier says this truly splendid pheasant . . . is characterized by a broad, white ring round the neck, interrupted in the front by a narrow patch of color, and by having the whole of the wing coverts white, the mantle, chest, and breast bronzy orange red, the throat purplish bronzy red, and the breast and flank feathers tipped with very dark green. The species is of large size; coming as it does from the cold parts of China, the desert of Gobi, and Mongolia, it is exceedingly hardy, and suffers more from extreme heat than from severe cold.

"An unfortunate misunderstanding has arisen in the United States respecting this bird. The state authorities in Massachusetts and Oregon have in the most extraordinary manner confounded it with the Ring-neck, P. torquatus."

As to the value of these birds to cross with the existing stock in British Columbia there can be no doubt. All the varieties of the true pheasants interbreed freely when allowed to intermingle and the introduction of fresh blood of this extremely hardy variety should have excellent results. Though comparatively recently introduced in England results have been most gratifying. A recent correspondent of the Field has this to say of them:

"On the estate where I have recently been shooting, for some years the Chinese pheasant (P. torquatus) has been reared, and splendid sporting shots they have given. But for the last three years Mongolians have been introduced, and some of them have been crossed with the Chinese; the result is that the birds this year have shown better sport than ever. They rise freely to the beaters, and fly boldly, very fast and high; in fact, if flushed on rising ground they fly almost too high to be reached. On one occasion when we were shooting, there was a very high wind, and the birds were flushed on a hill side over the guns placed in the valley; no one who saw them fly could possibly say that they were 'lazy on the wing and never gave a good sporting shot'; in fact, if anything, they were too active on the wing and took such long flights that many of them went straight away out of that day's beat."

"As regards the hardness of these birds, both pure and crossed, in a letter to the Field, June 20, 1903, the Hon. Walter Rothschild stated that for two or three years he had hatched and reared in the coverts at Tring a number of young birds both pure and half-bred, and those that were shot proved much superior in flavor and size to ordinary pheas-

ants. The keeper on the estate where I have been shooting fully bears out this opinion, stating that the chicks are very hardy and easier to rear than those of the common pheasant. This is the more easy to understand when it is remembered that the Mongolian pheasant comes from the rough climate of Northern China and Southern Siberia, while the Chinese ring-necked bird comes from the north of China; the cross between the two, therefore, should be able to withstand any changes of climate found in this country. . . . All crosses between the true pheasants will produce fertile birds, and, as Mr. C. E. Russell remarks, it is only when we go outside the pale of the true Phasianidae that we obtain infertile birds."

A LEGISLATIVE CRISIS

The House was in Committee of the Whole on the Water Clauses Bill. It was the second week of Committee on this lengthy measure, and the chairman of committee, keeping himself awake by means of liberal doses of caffeine, was droning away at Clause 4-11-44. He reached the end of the clause at last, and then, delighted at the prospect of a rest, he thundered in stentorian tones: "Does this clause pass?"

There followed a silence, punctuated only by deep snores from the Opposition benches. Again the chairman put the question, and again the answer was in language that might not be construed either as "Ayes" or "Noes." Then the Sergeant-at-Arms, who had peeped in to see whether it was not time to bring back the Speaker from his long seclusion, was called in to arouse the members with his Mace of State. He went down the lines of desks, administering a mild buffet at every head in sight. But in vain! The members only stirred, mumbled sleepily, and returned again to slumber. Some of them muttered all but inarticulate words.

Said John Oliver: "The wrongs of the people! The wrongs of the people!"

Said the member for Newcastle: "I'm to be Queen of the May, Sergeant. I'm to be Queen of the May."

Said the member for Nanaimo: "When we get in, the fair sex will vote."

Said the member for Okanagan: "Peaches and Cream."

Said the Attorney-General: "Methinks that was another from the member for Delta."

Said the Premier: "I move that the House on its rising—"

Alarmed at the comatose condition of the House, the chairman hastily relinquished the chair and sent the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Speaker. As soon as the Speaker was enthroned, the erstwhile chairman announced in loud tones:

"I move that the House do now adjourn."

Instantly the House came to life. Signs of animation were evident on every countenance, and every member began to gather up his papers preparatory to leaving. The day was saved.

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