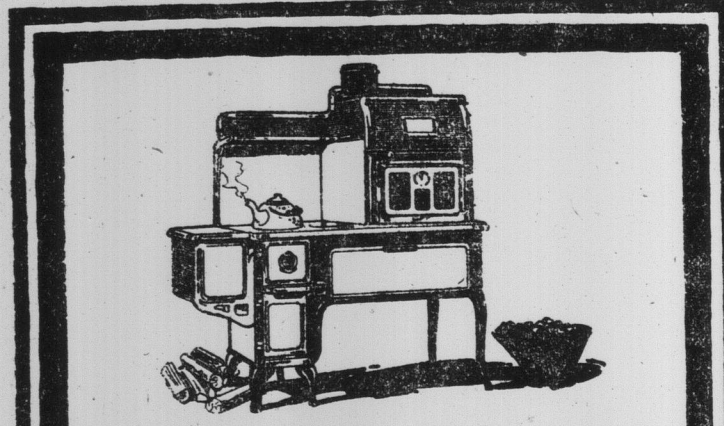


THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR. ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1917

## The Facts of the U-Boat Peril

(Commander Bellairs, M.P., naval expert, in interview.)  
The effect of the intensified U-boat warfare is to change the admiralty attitude towards the submarines; the change is all to the good. Hitherto the tendency has been to concentrate on the development and perfection of under-water craft and, incidentally only, to bring under close study the problem of



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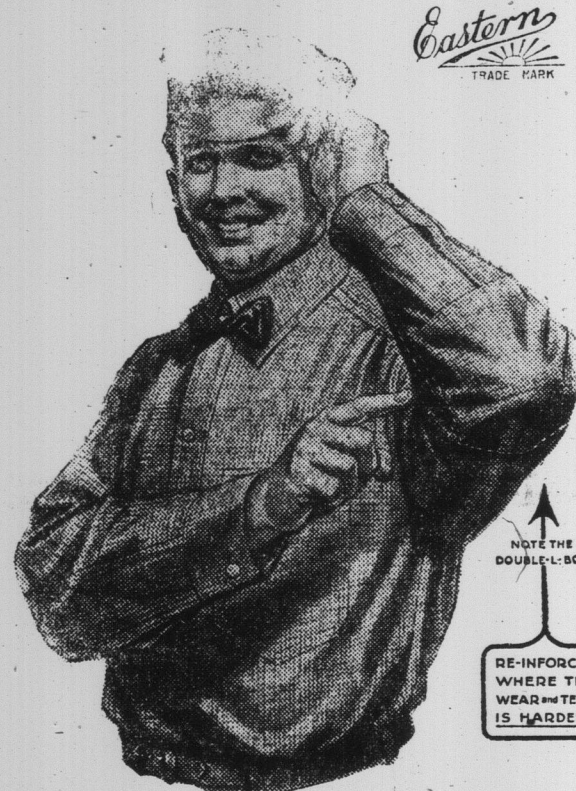
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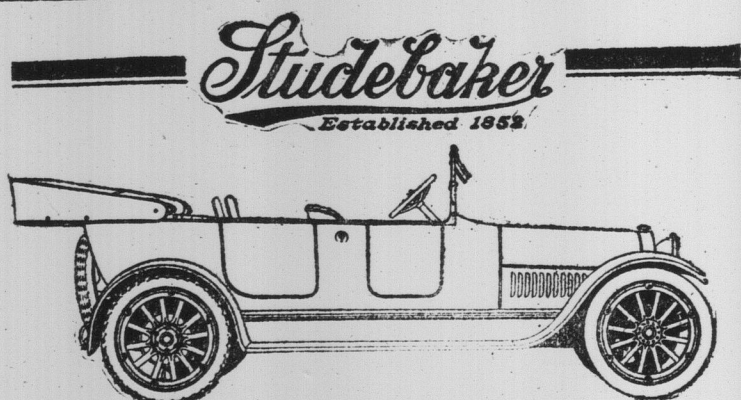
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the destruction of the submarine. Naval brains have been attracted rather by the evolution of the submarine as an offensive weapon than by the evolution of its antithesis, the anti-submarine contrivance.

Today it is clear that the most important task of the admiralty is the improvement and expansion of anti-submarine measures, and of the two the admiralty is more concerned to destroy the U-boat than to devise an E-boat better than the existing types.

The U-boat peril is serious. No good can be served by disguising that fact. It is serious because it is attended with certain results which, while falling far short of German anticipations, do considerably complicate the scarcity of tonnage. Our own shipping sails the seas as usual, losing a small but not unimportant percentage each week; but neutral shipping remains for the present timid in its harbors, and the Atlantic ports of America are congested with steel and other vital products bought by the Allies, owing to the refusal of America, and other neutral nations, to allow their vessels to sail. To that extent unlimited piracy has scored.

On the other hand Allied steamers come and go as usual, despite the 150 U-boats which the Germans are supposed to have at sea and the mines which they have sown broadcast in the trade lanes, and in the archives of Whitehall the ledger containing the list of German submarines that will never return has many new entries.

For some weeks we shall need to preserve "a square jaw" over the depredations of the submarines. It takes time to discover their newer tactics, and the arming of the merchantmen, which was so tardily undertaken, is a progressive work. But the more merchantmen that we send to sea adequately armed the less chance we give the U-boats of securing victims.

The newest of the German submarines, it is calculated, can remain at sea from fifty to sixty days, particularly if they rest at frequent intervals on the sea bottom, which is their usual custom. The admiralty then can figure out pretty accurately when the stores of the U-boats will have become so exhausted that they must return home. That is the best time for making gaps in their numbers.

The U-boat is to be fought by a happy combination of offensive and defensive measures. A most vulnerable craft, it hides from the destroyer and the quick-moving patrol ship, and fears that it looms like an under-water Zeppelin when aircraft are about. The more active and numerous our destroyers and patrols the more we compel the submarine to remain submerged, and to face the complicated factor of its low electrical endurance for under-water propulsion.

Experience has proved that the U-boat elects to attack the merchant ship on the surface and the warship below the surface.

There is, of course, a very good reason for this. The submarine carries only eight torpedoes at the maximum. If she relies on the torpedo to sink a merchantman she will soon have exhausted her supply and then is useless; she must return home to replenish. The U-boat then would be as alone away from activity as she was at work, a very wasteful proceeding from the German admiralty point of view.

As it is we find that the U-boat generally attacks with the three-inch or four-inch gun she carries, completing the destruction of the ships with bombs. An armed merchantman, however, is a nasty customer to tackle and one of two well-directed shots means quiet for the submarine, which cannot, always tell when she is attacking an armed or an unarmed ship.

Our shipping is helped by the seal with which the destroyers from the sea and air attack the U-boats in their lairs. The remorseless hunt suggests itself as the best policy. On the defensive side the use of stronger and more widely spread nets, mining and electrical, will undoubtedly have received full consideration at the hands of the admiralty.

I am very much about anti-submarine measures have been in general terms. These in the main are the steps that any nation would take to fight the peril, but over and above these measures are steps suggested by experience and contrivances devised by ingenious brains as to which the admiralty wisely chooses to remain silent. Warring with the U-boat is a much more complex business than the public imagine. We shall successfully cope with the menace not because of any one measure but by the employment in co-operation of a hundred and one measures constantly added to and improved upon.

In the Napoleonic wars our shipping was in much the same danger, and we enjoyed scarcely the same advantages as today. Our sailing ships were the worst designed in the world, and our warships inferior in build to the French. The best battleships we possessed were those we captured from the enemy. But for all that we overcame the menace, as under God we shall overcome it in the present emergency.

I notice much emphasis is being laid on the wisdom of the convoy system. The fault of this system is that it reduces the speed of the fastest vessel to that of the slowest, with the consequence that what we gain by way of extra precaution we lose by the longer immobilization of tonnage, especially as the convoy system requires waiting until the vessels to be convoyed are ready to sail. I do not like it. The target offered is large. Far better for two armed merchant ships to sail together. Then one protects the other.

A great deal can be done to expedite the loading and unloading of ships and so get the most from our tonnage. To turn them round quickly ought to be the ideal of every ship-owner and railway manager. Among the grievous sins of the past has undoubtedly been the wasteful delays at port.

This is scarcely a time for criticising the admiralty; our most patriotic duty is to help with practicable suggestion. It is patent that those at the helm must realise where faults lie and in what directions salvation is to be found, and though the next few months may impose anxieties on us, we ought to view the future with confidence. The U-boat peril must and will be overcome.

We do well neither to exaggerate nor under-estimate the power of the U-boat. Before the war it was prophesied that the submarine would be the death-knell of all surface vessels. After thirty months of actual sea warfare we now know the prophecy to have no basis in fact. Sea power still resides with the big ships, the super-Dreadnoughts, in combination with the other types that form a fleet, and to which we now add Zeppelins for scouting. In the battle of Jutland the submarines were powerless to affect the issue.

In economic warfare—the destruction of merchantmen—the U-boat has up till now had only a very limited success. This measure of success may broaden under stress of the intensified campaign, but in comparison with German aims the verdict should again be failure. Meanwhile we are learning, and must continue to learn, the science of submarine destruction—a science, be it remembered, entirely new to the present war, but as to which the men whom we trusted are terribly to blame, because they neither studied, experimented, nor prepared for it.

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### SAGAMORE AND 61 LOST

Warren Liner Destroyed by Mine Off Irish Coast — Two Boston Men Perished

(Boston Globe)

Information regarding the fate of the crew of the Warren Liner Sagamore, which left here on Feb. 21 for Liverpool and never arrived at her destination,

reached this country yesterday when the steamer Bay State arrived from Liverpool and some of her crew reported that Capt. Patrick Cummins and his entire crew of 60 men, including Michael Holloway and John Henry, firemen, of Boston, perished.

The steamer was blown up by contact with a mine off the Irish coast, it was stated.

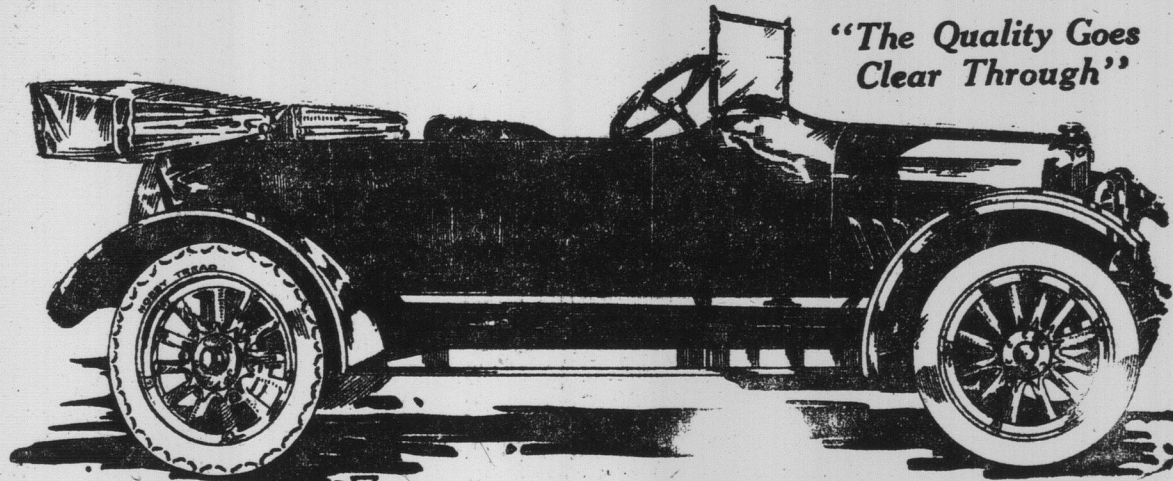
Capt. Alexander Fenton commanded the Sagamore for 25 years, but remained ashore during the trip that terminated so tragically.

No official report of the disaster has reached here from the British war

office, and German reports have not included the Sagamore in the list of the steamers destroyed by U-boats.

According to the men on the Bay State, the Irish Sea and the English Channel are strewn with mines, and many vessels reported torpedoed are in reality destroyed by striking mines.

A pair of pigeons started a home in a large chandelier in the council chamber of the city hall at New Albany, Ind. When found, the female was sitting on two eggs in the nest. The pigeons were not disturbed. They entered through a window left open for ventilation.



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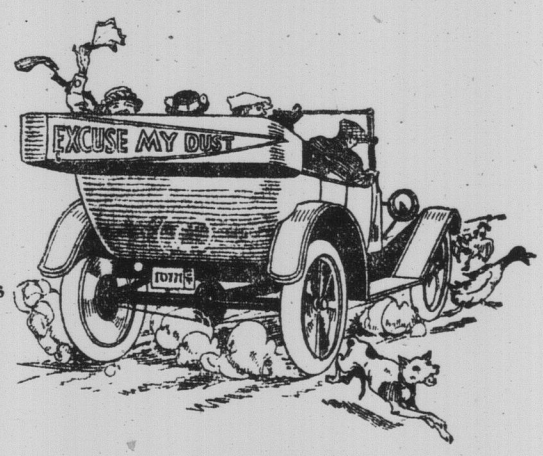
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