

structure in the building of which we have so freely expended every present resource, and have with such high confidence pledged the resources of the future.

But it is no longer possible for any Canadian to deny to his country the status and dignity of a nation. British ideals and practice assure to us the continuance and growth of the powers of self-government with which we have been so long entrusted. Our connection with the British Crown, though informed by the deepest and most strenuous loyalty, is a connection which involves no economic fetters, and which is rapidly tending in all foreign relations towards freedom of contract and full powers of management, in respect of Canadian affairs. We make our own laws. No attempt is made at Imperial control of our trade tariffs with the world, including Britain. It seems no longer possible to withhold from us the right to make our own treaties, even in cases which may indirectly affect Imperial interests. British garrisons have been withdrawn, and Canada manages, without review or appeal, her military affairs. The great fortified harbours of Canada, which Britain deemed an essential part of that great maritime system by which she maintained her naval supremacy and effectively policed the world, have been assumed by Canada. In her outlook towards Britain, Canada, while loyal, is independent. She faces the rest of the world, in every essential sense, a free, autonomous, and Imperial Power.

The time has, therefore, come when this, and every other problem which nationhood presents, press for solution upon an adult country, whose leading strings are essentially severed. And the solution, to be acceptable and permanent, must be reached by applying Canadian minds to questions which are primarily of Canadian moment. Of these none is of greater interest or presents greater complexity than that of a Canadian Navy. It is not difficult to understand and appreciate the historical reasons for the interest we have always taken in the improvement of the Canadian Militia, while comparative indifference has marked our treatment of Canadian naval questions. Our geographical position and vicinage have hitherto accounted for the one and served in some degree to excuse the other. While we have had long frontiers, we have had little property at risk upon the seas. Our possessions have not attracted attention, or been likely to excite cupidity elsewhere than among our very good neighbours to the north. Such of our seaports as seemed vulnerable have been fortified