

CANADA AND SEA POWER

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649408207

Canada and Sea Power by Christopher West

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Cover @ 2017

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CHRISTOPHER WEST



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON
J. M. DENT & SONS, LIMITED

1914

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TO MISS
AMBROSE

INTRODUCTORY.

THE political relations of Canada to Great Britain and to the other dominions of the Empire are in some respects just ready to be re-shaped, in other respects they seem to be without form, and a certain darkness is on the face of the deep.

One of the grave questions now before us is, What is the duty of Canada to the world upon the sea?

Soon—perhaps all too soon—the thoughts of the people will descend from the realm of airy speculation and become incarnated into national action. It is a fearful thing to think that the course steered by Canada in this sea of doubt may mean the downfall of Empires. Or our ship of state may be a pilot leading other nations into yet uncharted but less troubled waters.

If ever there was a time when we should ask Him, to whom the sovereignty of the sea belongs, for wisdom and open-mindedness, that time is now. We shall do well if we first empty ourselves of our prejudice in order that enough of this wisdom may flow in to lead us to a safe decision. Every lover of his country should seek to get at this truth at whatever cost to national pride. It is thus that we may serve the best interests of the world, for the British Empire is not worth preserving unless it is a faithful trustee for a better ordered civilization.

Taking a backward glance at their history, the Canadian people may say they have not wounded any

nation's self-respect by wars of aggression. Indeed, if it had not been for the one exception of the Boer war they could wear the white flower of a blameless national life, for all their other wars have been waged in the defense of their own soil. They may be humbled with the thought that by a special Providence rather than their own superior nature they have been blessed with a national record clean from aggressive violence. They should have the consciousness, at once inspiring and sobering, that the next leaf to be turned over in their history will display an example for the other British dominions to be followed to their common shame and misfortune, or to their happiness and honor.

New forces are gathering in international affairs, and the suggestions and facts of this book are presented in the hope that they may lead fellow-Canadians to a closer study and a better understanding of these forces.

PART I.—THE ECONOMICS OF WAR.

CHAPTER I.

EVOLUTION OF MODERN INDUSTRY—DIVISION OF LABOR AND ITS EFFECT ON INTER- NATIONAL RELATIONS.

WAR, and more particularly naval war, may be considered from three aspects: first, the economic or industrial; second, the political or international; and third, the moral or spiritual.

In considering the economics of war let us for the time divest ourselves of nationality and race, and approach the problem with the mind of one seeking only to discover the effects of the changes now operating before our eyes in the business and industrial world.

Canada, having no navy of her own construction, has not established those special industries by which modern navies are built. We will, therefore, have to go to such a country as Great Britain to learn the economic relationship of these industries to the people and the government. Since the days when the primeval oak forests of Britain were ravaged to build the wooden walls of the fleets of Drake and Nelson, navy building has undergone a remarkable transformation. The highest skill of the metallurgist, the most ponderous tools and most powerful machinery employed in any branch of engineering, the most expert mechanics and the most skilful designers are all called in to assemble the component parts of a battleship, cruiser, torpedo destroyer or submarine, and when ready for sea these ships can

only be trusted to the most intelligent engineers, the ablest commanders and the bravest and most devoted crew the country can furnish. They assemble the best mental, physical and material endowment a nation possesses, and then, on occasion and at the call of some man or men, whether inspired by duty or instigated by motives of ambition, political power, greed of trade or mere enmity, use these wonderful instruments of material power to destroy the like works of human genius built by some other nation and manned by equally capable and equally devoted men—men on both sides who but a week before may have exchanged friendly salutes or sat at the same table singing the same song of home and loved ones. And yet, such is the intimacy of the trade and social connections between the more civilized modern nations that the successful bombardment and blockade of a seaport might inflict as much damage on the trade of the blockading nation as upon the blockaded, throwing as many hands out of work and causing as much suffering among the people owning the victorious fleet as among the enemy. Moreover, the financial loss might be even greater on the side of the victor, owing to the extent and ramifications of its foreign investments.

These are changes that have come about within the last four decades unrealized by most men, and they open a new chapter in the history of the great nations. Of a certainty, they tend to diminish the factor of physical force in international politics and some students think they will soon close the last chapter in the long history of wars of conquest.

We need not go far into economic history to understand that profound changes have in recent years taken place in the methods of providing for our wants. Men not yet past middle age can remember when the older provinces of Canada were dotted with "custom" woolen mills, whose owners took wool from the farmer to spin and weave, returning it as finished cloth to

the farmer. These are now practically extinct, and even the farmer whose ancestors spun their yarn on the hand spinning-wheel and wove it on the hand-loom, now buys clothes made up in a big factory, and if the cloth were imported it would have passed through half a dozen processes in as many different mills, not one of which had any direct connection with the man who raised the wool. At the same period there were also hundreds of small grist mills grinding wheat with the old "upper and nether millstones," taking wheat from the farmer and returning it to the farmer without any money passing between them in the transaction; now the farmer takes his grain to the elevator, and sees no dusty miller, but goes to the store for his flour, which has been ground with steel rolls and refined with elaborate machinery in a mill capable of producing five thousand barrels of flour a day. So, also, there were in every village a blacksmith, wagon-shop and foundry, where the farmer might get every implement for his farm use made or repaired; now the village foundry and machine shop is in ruins, and the implements the farmer uses may come from a dozen different shops, each making, perhaps, but one or two classes of implement. The town or village of to-day, therefore, is no longer a self-contained unit, but trades and industries have been divided up, each one confined to special lines, and each depending on neighboring towns for the things it does not itself produce. This process has gone on in the mechanical industries, in the trades and professions, and even in the field of finance. Not only has this division and specialization of labor gone on through the territory of each industrial nation, making each class and each district dependent on the reciprocal work of the other, but, in spite of the obstruction of tariffs and of national prejudices and of differences in methods and customs, the same interdependence between one nation and another is resulting from the special advantages