

(December 8, 1919.)

Admiral Viscount Jellicoe

Mr. Chairman, your Honour, and gentlemen of the Canadian and Empire Clubs;—I regret exceedingly that I have got to begin by contradicting the chairman, as I had to contradict His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor last night. The British Navy did not win the war. The British Navy made it possible for the armies to win the war. The British Navy could not have won the war, because a war must be finished on land. If the British Navy does its job it makes it possible for the armies to do theirs; and right well did the British army, assisted by those splendid forces coming from overseas, do its job. And amongst Canadians, I may make you blush, but it is true that Canada did her part at least as well as anybody else; and one of the proudest souvenirs which I have of the war, one of the most prized souvenirs, is a stick made out of the wood of the Cloth Hall at Ypres. I am not sure that there is not more than one. Anyhow I have got one which was given to me during a visit to France last year by some of the members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

I suppose that most of you know the reason for my visit to Canada. I have been invited here. I am not an uninvited guest. But why I am in Toronto I really do not know, except that again I have been invited to Toronto. The object of my visit to Canada was a matter of duty. I am not quite so sure that I can say that my visit to Toronto is altogether one of pleasure. It is a real pleasure to make the acquaintance of the Toronto people; but it is not a bit of a pleasure to talk to them, as I have had to do since I have been here and as I have still got to do for the remaining hours of my stay.

I have earned my lunch; or rather, perhaps, I have got to try to earn it.

Well, perhaps, as there is some dispute between the chairman and myself as to who won the war I had better begin by saying what I conceive to be the duties of the British Navy during war. And I take it that those duties are three-fold; first, the

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destruction of the enemy's armed forces if you can get at 'em; secondly, to free the seas of enemy vessels and to deny the seas to the enemy's merchant ships; and, thirdly, to make certain that the seas are quite clear and are defended for the use of our own vessels.

As to the first of these objects; of course if the first is achieved the rest follow automatically. But it is not always quite an easy matter to destroy a fellow who does not want to be destroyed, and there is quite naturally a feeling on the part of the other fellow if he does not want to be destroyed to stop in a place of safety, and the Kiel canal is quite a safe place in war. On one or two occasions, perhaps on four occasions, portions of the enemy's armed forces showed themselves in the North Sea, but they did not stay long enough to be wiped out. And there, again, I think they were quite wise.

As regards the second task, the clearing of the enemy's ships from the seas, you may remember perhaps that at the commencement of the war there were 915 German merchant ships abroad; and of that number 156 got home, the majority of them being near home when war broke out. The remainder disappeared off the seas in a few days. They mostly sought shelter in neutral ports, some of them were captured at sea and taken into British ports. And the German warships also disappeared in a few months, but not until they had inflicted some loss upon mercantile marine and some loss upon the navy.

The principal loss which we suffered in the navy was, of course, the loss of Admiral Craddock's gallant force at Coronel; and in that action four Canadian midshipmen gave the supreme sacrifice. The result of that action was due, first, to a very considerable inferiority of force on the part of the British squadron, and secondly, to the fact that the squadron was a hastily mobilized squadron when war started, manned by reservists largely who had not had the opportunity of being trained in the ships in which they fought; and they were up against the two finest shooting ships in the German navy. And Admiral Craddock knew all that, but he felt that it was his duty to endeavor to inflict such damage on those ships as would prevent their getting into the Atlantic before we had forces to deal with them; and in carrying out his duty he went down, taking with him all his gallant comrades.

The result of that action was due to the inferiority of our overseas forces at the commencement of the war; and I think it is a lesson to us in future that we ought to maintain, not

only in the main theatre of war but in every part of the world, forces which are sufficient to deal with any possible enemy.

In the task of guarding the sea communications of the Empire the Navy was faced with two separate and distinct wars—first, the war on surface vessels, and, secondly, the war instituted by submarines. So far as the first description of war is concerned, the navy in spite, I think, of the inferiority of our overseas squadrons, has reason to be satisfied with the result. We lost some 106 or 107 of our British merchant ships during the four-and-a-half years of war by the attack of the enemy's surface vessels, and if you compare that with other wars there is reason for satisfaction. In the two years after Trafalgar, when if ever the navy had command of the sea, it was then, we lost over 1,000 merchant ships. During the Civil war in the United States two Confederate cruisers in 22 months accounted for 129 Northern merchant ships. The majority of the ships which we lost were lost by reason of the work of the disguised enemy raiders, and they were a class of vessels with which it was very difficult to deal.

Our first experience with them was in the action between the raider *Grieffe* and the armed merchant ships *Alcantara* and *Andes*. The *Grieffe* was trying to get out of the North Sea and she was sighted by the *Andes* and *Alcantara*. She was flying Norwegian colors and she appeared to all intents and purposes as a peaceful trader. It was necessary, of course, to board her to ascertain her true character; and the *Alcantara* closed near to board. Whilst she was hoisting out her boat for that purpose, the *Grieffe* threw down her bulwarks concealing her guns, fired a torpedo from her submarine tube and opened fire on the *Alcantara*. The torpedo took effect, and in the first few moments the gun fire was very effective—until the *Alcantara* replied, and with great effect. The torpedo itself finished the *Alcantara*, which sank; but not before she had finished off the *Grieffe*.

That experience made it very difficult to know how to deal with vessels of that nature in the future, because you must board a vessel to find out what she is like. The Germans showed, of course, great ingenuity in the disguise of their raiders, and the greatest example of ingenuity was that in the case of the *See Adler*. The *See Adler* was a sailing ship with auxiliary power, and on Christmas day of 1916 she was sighted by another of our armed merchant vessels and was brought to. The description of the captain of the *See Adler*

is one of great interest. He has written a book which some of you may have read. It gives some idea of the ingenuity displayed and the difficulties with which you have to deal in tackling vessels of that nature. I will tell you something about her.

She was some months fitting out. Her captain spoke Norwegian. She fitted out as a Norwegian vessel and when she sailed she adopted the name of a Norwegian vessel which was sailing at the same time; and she had all her papers made out to show that she was a Norwegian vessel, in case she was boarded. The captain was taking no risks and until he got clear of all cruisers and well out in the Atlantic he kept his guns in the hold covered by cargo. He had the decks of his cabins fitted to disappear, in case of necessity, by means of a hydraulic system, lever-operated in the cabin. The idea was that if the British boarded him and put an armed guard on board he would get them into the cabin, pull the lever, and they would find themselves down below with some gentlemen with pistols at their heads.

He was anxious that one particular portion of the cabin which contained the apparatus should not be examined, so he dressed one of his younger officers up as a woman and explained when the boarding officer got on board that his wife was very ill and he hoped she would not be disturbed. The boarding officer went on board, went down to the cabin and examined the papers; and found everything, as he thought, satisfactory, so the lever was not pulled, and the sick wife was duly sympathized with. Meanwhile, a gramophone on deck was playing, "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary." No suspicions were aroused and the vessel was allowed to go, and I don't think that anyone can blame our officer for being spoofed.

Well, now, the submarine campaign is not a matter for congratulations so far as its results were concerned; because our losses as you all know were exceedingly heavy. But neither the Germans nor anybody else, including ourselves, recognized quite the capabilities of the submarine before the war. Capt. Persius, a German Naval writer, who spends a good deal of his time now in abusing Admiral Von Tirpitz, has complained that Admiral Tirpitz did not recognize before the war the capabilities of submarines; and Persius thought he ought to have built a great many more. Well, he was not alone in that. Nobody had tumbled to the fact that submarines could keep

the sea for the time that they succeeded in doing during the war, and that they were independent of overseas bases. Our strategy in the earlier days was rather adapted to capturing what we imagined the Germans must have for bases, either floating or on shore, from which their submarines were operated. And we had an excuse for that feeling, which was held by many officers for three or four years until it was realized how great a radius of action submarines had.

When the Germans realized the capabilities of submarines if put to the inhuman use to which they put theirs, they started with an immense advantage over us. In the first place the whole of their shipbuilding capabilities could be devoted to building submarines; and German ship yards are very efficiently equipped and they made great use of them, although Capt. Persius complained that they did not build enough. There is a very hot argument going on now between Admiral Von Capell and Von Tirpitz as to which built the most. Our job, of course, was to find counter measures.

Counter measures before the war did not exist. The first and most obvious counter measure was to gather our trade into convoys in order that the submarines would have to approach a guarded convoy in order to attack. It was an easier matter to concentrate our merchant ships into convoys than to get them through the submarine zone, provided always that we had enough vessels to guard the convoy; and, of course, for the first three years of the war we had not.

Then, all the brains were at work in endeavoring to find some other counter to submarines in the way of offensive measures. Of course, the obvious remedy was to prevent the submarines getting out of their ports. But anybody after studying the exits from German rivers and German bases would see that in order to block these exits you would have to sink the greater part of the British Navy and the British mercantile marine at the entries. And having done that, there is still the back door out through Poland and the Sound or the Baltic into the Scaggerack; and it is impossible to block these exits because they pass through neutral waters. That remedy was not a possible one. And the brains got to work for remedies, and here I want to say that the Admiralty has great reason to be grateful to Canada for placing some of the brains which Canada did place at the Admiralty's disposal. Toronto itself has reason to be proud of the share which Toronto's representative took in that business. I won't name him be-

cause he is far too modest to like it. I don't mind naming a Naval Officer who had a great deal to do with it, Captain Robert York, of Rosythe.

Another remedy which had to be found was safety against the mines; and for that a naval officer, Lieut. Burney, a son of my old second-in-command in the Grand Fleet, gets the credit for finding a cure. Remedies produced, of course, all took time.

In the first half of 1917 our losses, as everybody knows, were appalling, nothing more or less. From that time on, as naval officers and the scientists produced remedies and the manufacturers manufactured the remedies, which was a long operation, we commenced to get the upper hand of the submarine menace; and by the end of 1917 the thing was pretty well in hand. I ventured once upon a time upon a prophecy—I was a great fool to do it. I prophesied in an extempore speech—I had to say something,—when you are caught unprepared and you have got to say something you sometimes make foolish remarks. At any rate, at the beginning of 1918 I prophesied that the submarine menace would be well in hand by August of 1918; and I was not far out, I think. I made the prophecy on my knowledge of what was in hand waiting for the German submarines as the manufacturers produced it.

Well now, can I take it that I have earned my lunch? I think we might turn our thoughts to the future. It is a dangerous thing to talk about future wars nowadays, and nobody wants to think about future wars at all. Everybody hopes that future wars are never coming, that the League of Nations is going to so operate as to prevent altogether any chance of future wars. At any rate, everybody hopes that the League of Nations is going to do a great deal towards minimizing the danger of future wars—when the League of Nations gets to work.

There are some members of that League of Nations who are dependent both for their lives and their prosperity upon the safety of sea communications. The United Kingdom, for instance, is dependent for its life upon the safety of sea communications. Some portions of the British Commonwealth overseas are dependent for their prosperity upon the safety of those communications. And we, in the United Kingdom anyhow, think it well to insure against the risk of the cutting of those communications.

As I drove along here I noticed a sky-scraper with the title, "Ocean Accidents—something or other." I imagine it was an insurance business against ocean accidents. Well, if we insure against ocean accidents and insure against fire I think we are wise to insure also against interruption of our communications in war. And it might interest you to know what the mathematician on my staff works out is the United Kingdom's premium in that direction. The Navy Estimates, as I understand it,—I have no authority, but I have seen it stated in the press, that our Navy Estimates are sixty million pounds; \$300,000,000, with the pound at a reasonable figure. The value of the overseas trade of the United Kingdom is something like fifteen hundred million pounds; again when the pound is happy. And the insurance, therefore, taking the population of the United Kingdom at some forty-five or forty-six millions—the insurance works out at 26 shillings a head, per man; which is a premium—I hope I am right in my figures, I am not responsible myself—which is a premium of four per cent. Well, I am not an insurance agent, but it doesn't seem to me to be an unreasonable premium; and I thought it might interest you to have that figure. And that is all there is time for me to say.

I know that you are all very busy men. I think it must have been the dullest of things to have watched us feeding whilst you were looking on, and I am exceedingly grateful for the great honor which you have paid to the British Navy in coming here to listen to a man who cannot talk and who hates talking. But I feel that you have done it because you wish to do honor to the navy; and if the navy knew of it, if they could see this great assemblage, every officer and man would feel exceedingly grateful that people should be found in Toronto who would give up so much valuable time to do that honor. And I feel all the more because I know that amongst this great audience there are many, many members of that gallant expeditionary force, the members of which we look upon in the navy as our brothers. Thank you, gentlemen.