

(November 28, 1921.)

Admiral Earl Beatty*

Mr. Chairman, your Honor, and Gentlemen,—I thank you for the very great reception that you have given to me to-day, and in the words of your chairman I will accept that reception as your appreciation of the personnel of His Majesty's Navy, the navy of the British Empire. It is not only the navy of the British Isles; it is just as much a part of the Dominions, of this great nation, and just as much a part of the defence of the other nations which go to make up the British Empire as it is of Great Britain itself.

I should like first of all to take this opportunity of expressing to you, gentlemen, and through you, to the men and women of Canada, our deep appreciation in the navy of the British Empire for the extraordinary gallantry, the extraordinary resolution and determination with which Canada joined with the Mother country, in protecting civilization during the last war. It was a matter which went straight to the hearts of every officer and man in that great service which binds the Empire together. We had the task of ensuring that your gallant sons and brothers and your gallant selves were carried across seas to take part in the great events on the other side of the Atlantic. It was our proud privilege and our proud duty to see that you were carried to and fro in safety, just as much as it was our duty and our proud duty to carry over every unit of the British Empire, where it was required in the defence of civilization, and that was a task which the navy has always to perform, to ensure that the communications between our world-spread Empire are maintained. And it is a task which I am perfectly certain is fully recognized as one which we cannot pass on to anybody else to perform for us. It is well known to all of you that the Empire is made up of nations spread all over the world and lines of communication on the sea, and the sea is policed and guarded by the Empire's navy. It was by the sea that the Empire came into existence. It is by the sea that the Empire exists, and if there ever comes a

*Admiral David Beatty, Earl of the North Sea and of Brooksby, had just come from the Washington Conference on limiting the navies.

day when we are short-sighted enough to lose sight of that fact that day will see the end of the British Empire.

Well now, gentlemen, as regards the navy itself and the work that it accomplished, it had many duties to perform besides that of acting as convoy and securing the safe passage of all those glorious and gallant soldiers which came across the seas. We had to contain the sea forces of the enemy. And there is a little spot of water called the North Sea which was the field of our operations. I don't know whether any of you gentlemen are fully acquainted with it, but if you are not I advise you never to be, because it is a wonderful place. Unless you are a sailor and like bad weather and blizzards and heavy gales and thick fogs you won't enjoy it. But that was the field of operations for the greater part, in fact practically the whole of the British Navy, during the war. Our duties consisted of patrolling those seas and of containing the enemy's forces in and around about them, and, with the exception of the enemy's submarines, I think we can claim that we were fairly successful. Upon the success or failure of our work depended the maintenance of those millions of gallant soldiers, all of whom were our brothers, our comrades, blood relations in many cases, but in any case our comrades, who were fighting so gloriously and gallantly on the battle fields in many spheres. It was up to us to see that whenever they wished to cross the seas, either for duty or for leave, or wounded and coming home to recuperate and to regain their strength, our duty was to see that their passage was secure. And when I tell you, gentlemen, that over the British Channel alone 12,000,000 men were carried during the course of the war I think you will agree that the navy did its part in that matter.

Well now, the navy besides having to confine the enemy ships to their ports and sink them when they come out, holding the lines of communication, has other duties to perform, duties which are connected with peace. I may say here and now that the navy is not an aggressive force. The navy is purely an Empire defence force, and during those brief periods of peace—and we hope they will be long—the navy has many functions to perform.

In the first instance we are the ambassadors of the Empire. We help to maintain the relations in the Empire itself and amongst other nations. We are always travelling over the seas, and we are always going to the uttermost parts of the world. We are always meeting with our brothers in the far stretched portions of the Empire, and we are always meeting with our friends in other nations. And I can assure you,

gentlemen, that the task which the navy performs in this matter is not a small one. We are the ambassadors of good-will. We are the ambassadors which help to establish warm and good relations between the British Empire and other nations. We have worked together in peace. We have worked together in war. And I can assure you, from my own experience both in peace and in war, that when we have had to co-operate and work together with the representatives and the navies of other powers we have never failed to succeed in establishing a relationship which has been beneficial to both countries. By close community of thought and by the necessities of the moment we have learned to understand each other and know each other to such an extent that we have been able to realize each other's points of view and come to decisions and conclusions, and—I am talking of peace, not of war, having had experience of both—we have come to conclusions which have been eminently satisfactory to both. Well, gentlemen, what it was possible for sailors to accomplish, who are not diplomats, but who are plain simple men, surely it is possible for the same good relationships and the same good condition of things to be arrived at when the affairs are in the hands of great and experienced leaders of the respective nations who are meeting to-day in conference at Washington.

I have attended that conference, and I can tell you that all goes well. That conference, as you all know, was brought into being by the President of the United States, who must earn the undying gratitude of the world for so doing. It was brought into being to do something to assist the already overburdened nations of the world from the burden of armaments and to advise if possible a means by which the shoulders of the tax-payers can be relieved of some of those burdens so that the money and the efforts which will be realized can be expended in promoting industries of peace, the prosperity of the world, and the contentment of mankind. The world is full of hope that something real, something tangible, is going to be accomplished and that hope is nowhere greater, I am sure, than in the minds and the hearts of the members of the British Empire.

You have all read the statement with which the Secretary of State, Mr. Hughes, opened the conference. You were all, no doubt, greatly surprised at what seemed to be the drastic measures that were proposed as a first step towards achieving the object aimed at. And I am sure that a shudder went through the minds of a great many members of the British Empire, and they wondered what or where it was going to lead

us, because the burden of the song was directed at that great force, I might say that great institution, which has been described by a very eminent American citizen as the greatest institution the world has ever seen, and that is the British Navy.

Well, gentlemen, as the professional head of that navy, I think I am in a position to be able to assure you that out of this great conference there will be nothing derogatory arising to the British Empire. I feel sure that you will agree with me when I say that the spirit which pervades the conference is one of preserving the *status quo*, and not one which is adverse to the British Empire. Only to-day as I stepped into this hall, I received a letter, I only read the first two lines and the last two lines. But the first two lines said; "Why should England and the British Empire be dictated to by the United States?" And the last line was, "An Englishwoman." Well, gentlemen, let me say at once that we are not being dictated to. Moreover I do not believe for one moment that there is any man who is responsible for the conduct of affairs in the United States who has any desire or wish to dictate to us. We are wholly and entirely out to do something in conjunction which will assist mankind, will assist the world, and enable, as I said before, the industries of peace to be increased and multiplied for the betterment of the conditions of life. Our conversations have been of the kindest, the wholesomest, and of the most direct character. The principles have been accepted, as suggested by the Secretary of State, and that all is going well is indicated by the fact that I am here to-day.

Those of you who are members of the Navy League might have it in their minds—I don't know Mr. Jarvis whether you have—that the work of the Navy League is about to cease. But that is not so. The British navy is a world-wide institution which is going to last, and as long as the British Navy lasts there is work for the Navy League. I believe that there is not a single person in the whole wide world, except those who have bees in their bonnets, who do not believe that if the British Navy disappeared the world would be a much worse place to live in. And, in considering our relations with that great country which is at your frontier, surely, gentlemen, the relation between Canada and the United States is the finest example that the world can possibly see.

When you look at the map and you see a great frontier line, stretching over 3,600 miles, and you scratch your head and say, "Well, what is defending it?"—Nothing but the sound common sense, the sound good-will of two practical nations.

That that is recognized can be well illustrated by a short

story which was told me in Chicago, by the same gentleman who declared that the British navy was the greatest institution that the world had ever seen. And he described how they had arrived at deciding the frontier line between these two great countries, and after much talking and a great deal of consideration they went away without deciding anything at all. Those who were responsible sent other commissioners back to meet, and they met, armed with a brass band and a case of whiskey. The brass band could only play two tunes. One was, "God Save the King." The other was, "Pop Goes the Weasel." The relationships between them were so good, and such an understanding created, that when the case of whiskey was finished they did not know whether the band was playing, "God Save the Weasel," or, "Pop Goes the King."

Well, gentlemen, that spirit has endured up to the present time, but owing to certain laws which have been passed in both countries some other means will have to be provided to keep up that feeling of neighborly relations. However, as it is, that spirit of neighborly friendship exists, and it exists not only with the nation of Canada, but between all the nations of the British Empire and the United States. And I believe that the feeling and the spirit which is shown in carrying out the conference to-day is a clear indication that whatever comes out of this great conference, it will bind the English-speaking nations of the world together.

I thank you, gentlemen, for your great courtesy in giving me this great welcome to-day, and for the tolerant manner in which you have listened to me. As you will have observed I am not a practised speaker, and as I understand there are a good many opportunities in Canada to-day, and there will be for the next week, in which you will have occasion to listen to orators of the highest standard, I will say no more, but thank you on behalf of the British Navy, which I call the navy of the Empire, for your kindness to me to-day.