

# PROGRESS

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## Progress

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT.

### The Dreadnought and the Government.

Nothing could be better than the Government's offer of a battleship or two to the British Government, unless it is the resolution with which the confederated representatives of the Chambers of Commerce of the Dominion approved the offer. Commerce is the interest mainly threatened by war with any Power at all strong by sea. Left to itself, without the Empire's forces to rely upon, the commerce of this country would soon cease to belong to this country. Commerce, therefore, has no difficulty in declaring that the dependencies stand by the Empire. Therein commerce enjoys a common patriotism with the rest of the community. Hitherto we have paid but a bagatelle towards the immense cost of maintaining security in the face of the world. The time has come, however, for us to show that we are ready to take our proper share of the cost for the upkeep not of our trade alone but of that which is far greater than any trade, namely, the Empire. The Dreadnought which we have offered with the almost unanimous consent of the whole people of the Dominion is not yet built. She is, nevertheless, carrying round among the maritime nations a flag inscribed with the meaning attached to the Empire of Britain by the children of Britain in remote lands. The Prime Minister is in the high place from which he is expected by the

people of this country to send out such a flag at such a time without waiting for permissions, which are sure to be given, or troubling himself about costs, which are certain to be provided. Sir Joseph Ward has done the thing expected of him in the spirit of the Constitution. The necessary technical irregularity will be brushed aside by Parliament as a matter of course. No one opposing need cherish extravagant hopes of a successful political career. The Dominion has no time for the disloyal, and no respect for the lukewarm.

### The Naval Situation.

What the chances may be of war or peace it is perhaps difficult to say exactly. But one thing is certain. It is that if war does come from the side of Germany it will not come for some years. So much is evident from the figures published in another column which show that Germany has not at present any Dreadnoughts in the water, or rather had not last October, and does not hope to be equal with Great Britain for some time after the equipment of the first Dreadnought of her programme. If war comes within that time, it must come from Britain on the ground that the enemy must be scotched before he grows up to equal fighting condition. This might have been done and done readily by such statesmen as Chatham, Palmerston, or even Salisbury or Beaconsfield. But with the present administration it is unthinkable. The German explanation (published elsewhere in this issue) of the situation would be a provocative to men differently pledged. Britain is not thinking of attacking Germany, never thought it possible that war could arise with Germany on any pretext. Yet the German apologist accounts for the accelerated programme of German building on Dreadnought lines, by explaining that it is Germany's object to deter Britain by a display of force from attacking the innocent German lambskins frisking about so prettily among the dockyards, and the sand dunes of the coast. To statesmen of the old downright stamp this would be the same as insolently cynical confession of aggressive intentions at the proper time. The men at the head of the Japanese nation who showed their initiative under heavy responsibility in 1904, would have replied with a squadron bombarding the enemy's fleet off Kiel. It is fortunate for us that a less sensitive government is in power. But it may not be so fortunate for the next generation.

### The Roar of Retrenchment.

It was an expression once very loud all over the land. Reviving to-day it sets thoughtful people cogitating a little apprehensively. There is a unanimity about the newspaper cry for economy which makes one suspect lest a mad political rush may not bring disaster to some important interest. Economy is the life of the army as the soldiers of the old school used to say. But saving money is not the sole duty of governments. Their duty is to carry on the King's service, and when the supply of money provided proves insufficient, from any reason, it is their duty not to lie down hopeless before the position but to promptly devise means for getting the money necessary to carry on the necessary work. For example:—if anything goes wrong with the education upkeep within the next six years, the roar of retrenchment will be drowned in another roar, of the kind which makes your average politician turn pale and pray to the heavens to cover up the traces he has left in the public records of voting. It is the same with a department that is not yet in full working order or at full strength. If the afforestation of the country is interfered with by the retrenchment policy now leading the political pack in full cry, some of these hounds will get a taste of the lash which stings their kidney more than any other. Whether money is plentiful or whether it is scarce, there must be timber in this Dominion for all time; the people of this Dominion must be always on an educational level, technical as well as literary, with every people that sets store by enlightenment; the agricultural community must never want for the information and guidance which are vital in the race against the world. For these reasons we should like to hear at the present juncture something more about the efficiency of the service and something less about its retrenchment.

Up to June 1, 1908. £14,589,600 had been expended on work on the Panama Canal by the United States, exclusive of the purchase of the French undertaking, indemnity, &c. The amount expended in construction work and engineering was £5,666,593; for plant, etc., £6,020,466; on municipal improvements, £1,129,269; and on sanitation, £1,324,128, the remaining £429,115 having been expended on civil administration—a total of £39,159,171.

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Mattresses made with paper shavings are in use in Germany for soldiers' beds.