

But it is for us to say: Shall we defend ourselves? That is what we have to say,—and how shall we do it?

I wonder if my fellow members from Quebec realize how great an achievement was that of Sir George Etienne Cartier in the framing of the Militia Act? It is true he was defeated; but he left behind him a Militia Act which is practically the act of to-day. What does it provide? It does not provide for a foreign policy being made by parliament, for parliament never makes a foreign policy. His majesty's advisers make the foreign policy of the country and parliament approves or disapproves. Parliament says yea or nay. That is the old constitutional practice, a practice as old as the hills themselves. Ever since our institutions have developed to what they now are we have provided that his majesty's government, always with a majority in the commons, shall initiate and formulate policies—foreign policies. It is not given to me nor to any private member of this house to indicate the foreign policy of Canada. You can express your views, as I am expressing mine; you can offer your criticisms, as I am, but the declaration of external policy in this country must come from his majesty's advisers, the government, the crown in reality. You will find the matter much discussed in the speeches that took place in the time of Palmerston. It is the crown's policy. The crown no longer speaks as the sovereign; the crown speaks on the advice of the ministers of the crown, and the policy is the policy of the government of the day.

Let us see how that was exemplified in the Militia Act of long ago. Let us see how it still finds its place in the statutes of our country. The Militia Act is chapter 132 of the revised statutes of Canada, of which section 63 reads:

The militia or any part thereof, or any officer or man thereof, may be called out for any military purpose other than drill or training, at such times and in such manner as is prescribed.

Then follow the sections which recognize that the foreign policy of the country is the policy of the crown as advised by the government of the day. Section 64 reads:

The governor in council may place the militia, or any part thereof, on active service anywhere in Canada, and also beyond Canada, for the defence thereof, at any time when it appears advisable so to do by reason of emergency.

The true significance of this section is to be found in the words, "and also beyond Canada, for the defence thereof." I have endeavoured to make clear the point that participation in war was determined by our enemy and not by our

[Mr. Bennett.]

parliament, and that the question to be considered was the question of the defence of our country. The government of the day is clothed with authority to defend this country. It may be that defence will be made, as it was, in the fields of France, or Flanders; it may be on the high seas; it may be somewhere in Africa; it matters not where it may be as long as the government of the day risks its life and stakes its fortune upon the policy of defence of Canada beyond her shores.

But it is not left to chance that parliament shall control. I accept the statement of the Prime Minister, although I do not think he made it quite clear, that at all times since the passing of the Militia Act this parliament has been in control. Section 66 of the Militia Act reads:

Whenever the governor in council places the militia, or any part thereof, on active service, if parliament is then separated by such adjournment or prorogation as will not expire within ten days, a proclamation shall be issued for the meeting of parliament within fifteen days, and parliament shall accordingly meet and sit upon the day appointed by such proclamation, and shall continue to sit and act in like manner as if it had stood adjourned or prorogued to the same day.

It must be within the memory, Mr. Speaker, of some hon. gentlemen present this afternoon that that is just what took place in 1914. There is a provision in the Militia Act for a levée en masse, for the calling up of every able-bodied man under the age of forty-five years and over the age of eighteen, I think, for the defence of the country.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Eighteen years and upward, and under sixty years.

Mr. BENNETT: I thought it was under forty-five years?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Sixty years.

Mr. BENNETT: Thank you. That being so, let us recall what happened in 1914. At that time the government of the day took appropriate steps to offer to defend this country abroad and to raise a contingent for that purpose. Parliament had not assembled when Sir Robert Borden sent that cable. He thereupon called parliament to meet at once. Notwithstanding the fact that parliament may formally stand adjourned to a day far beyond the fifteen days, this section provides that it shall be called together within fifteen days. So parliament met and many of those who were present will never forget the unanimity with which parliament approved of the action taken by the government. For my own part