

interfere in Canada, you can interfere in South Africa, and that is not the meaning of the declaration made in London." If Great Britain can interfere in Canada it can interfere in Ireland, and what would the Irish Free State say? The truth is that the declaration of rights is so broad that it would permit us to do practically anything. The language of this declaration really brings into force the resolution moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) some time ago in this chamber, to provide that we in Canada should be allowed to enact anything we saw fit in regard to our constitution. I am not prepared to take that stand. I do not believe the people of Canada are prepared to take that position, and I submit it as broadly, as forcibly and as clearly as I can to the Prime Minister, that if we could only see the discussion that took place at the conference we would be in a much better position to form a safe conclusion. We have not the discussion before us yet. I presume we will have it in due time.

What attitude did the Prime Minister take in this matter? What attitude did the Minister of Justice take? He is a representative of one of the provinces which in my opinion might be specially affected if this report were adopted.

Mr. LAPOINTE: And a strong supporter of this report.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I would ask the Minister of Justice whether he has taken expert legal opinion in regard to the matter I am bringing to his attention.

Mr. LAPOINTE: There were many experts there.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Has he ever considered it from the standpoint of his own province or in regard to the rights of minorities in Canada?

Mr. LAPOINTE: My hon. friend need not worry about my province.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Is he willing to take the risk of the enactment into law of the proposal in the report?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Surely.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Perhaps in a few days the minister may hear from Quebec and the report may yet have to be amended. I would not be prepared to open the door as widely as it is proposed to open it in this report. I would put in limitations and restrictions to safeguard effectually the special interests and privileges of the people of this country who may be adversely affected hereafter if this report be approved in the present form.

[Mr. Guthrie.]

I desire to refer to another phase of the matter. I admit there are some things I do not fully understand at the present time. With reference to this equality of status which is now proclaimed—the proclamation that one shall not be subordinate to the other—how can you reconcile that with the actual position of affairs in the British Empire? Great Britain is the predominant partner. She is the partner that has the power behind her. She must always be the predominant partner. Let me put another pointed instance, an extreme case. We are not of equal status and we cannot be, I submit, Mr. Speaker, under this arrangement. Let Canada tonight declare war against some foreign country; do you think such a declaration by Canada would be treated as more than a nullity? It would be looked on as an international joke. I go further. Let Canada send an armed force to invade a foreign country, would our act be treated as an act of war? I submit not. It would be treated as a criminal act, a filibustering expedition, for which our people would be punished and we would have to pay damages. I go further still: Let our naval force in a moment of anger seize or destroy the commerce of another nation upon the high seas; would that be an act of war or be treated as such? It would be treated as an act of piracy. But let Great Britain do the same thing, and how would it be treated? Circumstances might arise in some remote corner of the world where it might become necessary for the government of Great Britain to act upon the moment, as has happened before. The rights of British subjects or their property might be in jeopardy, and she might have to act instantly. Her declaration of war would involve this country as a belligerent, the moment Great Britain made the declaration. We might repudiate the war; we might say, "We will not go into it and will in no way participate," but the moment the declaration was made our shores would be subject to attack, and our commerce would be liable to be seized or sunk, and our citizens treated as alien enemies through no act of our own. Under such circumstances can it be said we are of equal status? To state such a thing makes it appear almost ridiculous. We are not of equal status. Sir Wilfrid Laurier always recognized that. He maintained that we could not be of equal status unless we agreed to share some of the burdens and assume some of the responsibility.

What was done, may I ask, in regard to burdens and responsibilities at the conference? This question has also occupied our attention previously. What was the attitude of the Prime Minister in regard to the burdens