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SPEECH

BY

HON. R. DANDURAND

ON

THE NAVAL FORCES OF THE EMPIRE

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1913.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—Reading certain newspapers and listening to certain orations, one would believe that Canada is about to do something immediately which will assure the salvation of Great Britain. The words pronounced are so big, the flights of imagination so high, that it would really seem as if Great Britain at this moment needed some active and material support from Canada to maintain its prestige in the world. In reality the proposal before us bears on the building of three ships to be donated or loaned to the British admiralty. This gift, or this loan, may bulge out big in the eyes of Canadians, but I share the view expressed by my hon. friend from Ottawa when he declared that it looks small in the eyes of Great Britain and the British admiralty. It would be an addition, pure and simple, of three ships to the mighty fleet of Great Britain. Mr. Churchill said in the last days of March last:

It would be ridiculous to say that one or two ships more or less make any essential difference, having regard to the rest of the fleet.

That is the true situation from a British point of view. What does it represent in

money? A sum which may look considerable in the eyes of some Canadians, but which is small compared with the budget of Great Britain—\$35,000,000—about the surplus that Mr. Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced last year. We should, I think, have a better sense of proportion. In the few remarks I made on the address at the opening of this session, I stated that my hon. friend the leader of the government would have to establish one or two things in order to satisfy me that we should enter into the policy set forth in this Bill. He would have to establish either that an emergency existed, or that the government had a mandate from the people. I will not deal with the first proposition, although my hon. friend summoned enough courage to repeat the expression and affirm that there was an emergency. I do not think this chamber needs any further argument to dismiss that contention. Should there be a pressing need, it would be in the future; it could not be a need for this day, inasmuch as it would take two to three years to build those ships. But I will be asked, 'Does not the memorandum which came from the admiralty and which was read to