

which it is essential they should take. They would continue, as now, absorbed in their local affairs, and, even if they felt their obligation to the empire as a whole, they would rest content to have discharged it by such a contribution. The contribution, under these circumstances, would probably not be large, but that is not really the weakest point in such a system. Its fatal weakness is that the participation of the self-governing states in Imperial affairs would begin and end with the contribution."

Now, Sir, from all this I think I can safely conclude that the true policy which should be followed, even from the primary point of view of the British empire, is not a contribution, but the development of our naval strength, as we contemplate to do under this Bill.

This point being settled, I now come to another which has been a source of strong objection made against us, that is to say, who should have control of our navy. Upon this point I stated the other day that the parliament of Canada would have control of the navy, and would declare when it should or should not go into war. Upon this point we have been assailed right and left, assailed in Quebec and assailed in Ontario. We have been assailed in Quebec because there it is said that under no circumstances should Canada ever take part in any war of England, assailed in Ontario, because there it is said that under all circumstances Canada should take part in all the wars of England. The position which we take is that it is for the parliament of Canada, which created this navy, to say when and where it shall go to war. The other day when introducing this measure, I stated that when England is at war we are at war. In saying that I have shocked the minds and the souls of many of our friends in Quebec.

Some men tore their hair and their garments as if I had uttered blasphemy, as if I had uttered some new and fatal proposition which never had been heard before. The truth is that in making the statement that when England is at war we are at war, I was simply stating a principle of international law. It is a principle of international law that when a nation is at war all her possessions are liable to attack. If England is at war she can be attacked in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Africa, in the West Indies, in India, and, in short, anywhere that the British flag floats. If France is at war she can be attacked not only in France but in her possessions in Cochinchina. If Germany is at war she can be attacked not only in Germany, but also wherever the German flag floats. It does not follow, however, that because England is at war

we should necessarily take part in the war; I will come to that presently. But, as that proposition which I laid down has been challenged in some parts of my native province, may I be permitted to recall to the memory of the members of this House an incident which is hardly ten years old? In 1898 the United States declared war upon Spain. The object of the war was to free Cuba from Spanish domination. The Cubans had been insurgent for many years. The congress of the United States decided to come to their assistance and they sent an army to Cuba in order to help the Cuban insurgents to free Cuba from Spanish domination and they did free Cuba from Spanish domination. But, at the same time, they sent a squadron to the Philippine Islands in the Pacific, a Spanish possession, and took possession of those islands. The same thing can be done again. If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say that we shall always be attacked, neither do I say that we would take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be determined by circumstances, upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce and will have to decide in its own best judgment.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Can it be that there are men in this House so lost to the sense of responsible government that they will deny such a proposition? Let me illustrate my point by history. I appeal to history and I trust that I will be able to satisfy every hon. gentleman in this House. During the nineteenth century England has been more than once threatened with war. In 1861 she was nearly at war with the United States—luckily Providence averted it—when the United States ship 'San Jacinto' took from a British mail steamer the two delegates, Sildell and Mason, who had been sent to Europe as the agents of the southern confederacy. It was an act of war on the part of the United States so interpreted and rightly interpreted, but luckily the United States gave way and war was averted. If war had been declared immediately we would have been drawn into it and it would have been our duty at once not only to defend our territory but to help England in that struggle. There was another instance. England was at war in the Crimea with Russia. For myself I do not hesitate to say that if that war were to be undertaken by England under similar circumstances, I would hesitate very much before I would give my consent that we should take part in any such war if conditions were the same as they were then. But, they are