

whilst preserving to all the self-governing Dominions complete control of their own forces, is intended to render assistance more effective, should the need arise and the Dominions decide to participate.

Repeated efforts have been made by one or two British statesmen in England to have Canada, by one means or another, commit herself in advance to participation in wars in which Britain may be involved, without reserving to herself any say as to what course she should pursue as the need arises. These efforts have always failed, because Britain naturally has been unwilling to relinquish the exclusive control she exercises over foreign policy, and Canada has been equally unwilling to part with any measure of self-government.

The British Government, on the one hand, has strongly maintained that any body on which Canada, or the other Dominions, may be represented in matters of defence, shall be advisory and consultative only, and that matters of policy affecting peace and war must be exclusively the prerogative of the British Cabinet, subject only to the Parliament of Great Britain. Canada, on the other hand, has as resolutely maintained the position that she should not be asked to sacrifice in any particular her rights of self-government and should be permitted to say, as the need arises, the extent to which she will participate in international conflicts, unconnected in any way with her own territory or policies, and which may arise because of circumstances wholly beyond her knowledge or control. In imperial affairs the difference as between advocates of different systems of organization in matters of defence has been between centralization and co-operation: and thus far both the mother country and the self-governing Dominions have regarded co-operation as the only basis on which imperial unity and local autonomy can be maintained.

In naval defence the whole course of development has been along identical lines. A complete departure, however, is involved in the announcement of Mr. Borden on December 5th, 1912, of the proposal of his Government to present to England, at a cost of thirty-five million dollars, the three largest battleships in the world, this either as part of a permanent policy of contribution, or in addition to some other permanent policy to be announced later. These three largest battleships in the world are, to use Mr. Borden's own words "to range themselves in the battle line of the Empire" and to be "maintained and controlled as part of the Royal Navy." This means that there has been reserved to the people of Canada who are being taxed thirty-five million dollars for their construction, and who may later on be called upon for further contribution, no kind of control as to the ends they may be made to serve, or with respect to the conflicts in which they are to participate.

It will thus be seen, that Mr. Borden's policy is a complete reversal of the attitude assumed by Canada ever since Confederation with respect to defence both military and naval. It is a reversal of the position which, with the full concurrence and endorsement of the British Government, Canada, in common with the other self-governing Dominions, has maintained in respect of the right of control which, as a self-governing Dominion, she is entitled to exercise over expenditure for military, naval or other purposes and with regard to the outcome of policies with which she has had nothing to do, and which may or may not meet with her approval.