

follows at that meeting. I read from the *Mail* of March 11, 1898 :—

'Before sitting down,' said Sir Charles, 'I must take exception to some statements which the chairman has put before the meeting. No person will go further than I will in joining with every man and every class in this country in adopting such a policy as will unite the component parts of the British Empire, but I do not think it is wise, or in the interest of the object we all have in view, to present as you have presented to-day, the attitude of Canada as the utterly humiliating attitude of not doing her duty in showing that she is prepared to shoulder her responsibilities and her obligations in reference to this matter. I am very sorry that on this occasion you have referred to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's speech.

'I say that the menace contained in that speech on a recent occasion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach is not only grossly unjust to Canada, but is not calculated to promote the object we have in view. The question has been fought out and discussed very fully before the British public. A very insignificant section of the Imperial Federation League, as you know, headed by Sir John Colomb, and a young man who was acting as secretary, broke up the Imperial Federation League on this very question. They did so on a demand that the British colonies should either consent to contribute substantial support to the Imperial navy, or should leave. That position was met by other gentlemen and myself, who did not believe they had any warrant for adopting such a policy. At present we only want 30 cents a head on defence, which is a very small amount, less than a man pays for an evening newspaper.

'What are the facts? In 1865 a delegation of Canadian statesmen went to England, consisting of Mr. George Brown, Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George E. Cartier and Sir Alexander Gait. These gentlemen went from Canada to arrange with the Imperial government the measure of our mutual contribution for Imperial service, and the Imperial government on that occasion reduced the matter to writing. Although the despatch was held to be confidential, it has been long known to the world. It was that if Canada would agree to spend a million dollars per annum on her militia, England was prepared, with all the power of her empire, to maintain the interest and the security of Canada on every occasion. That which was reduced to writing has been done. Canada not only has lived up to the obligations assigned to her, but has done vastly more. (Loud applause.) In addition to providing a militia force, she has built the Canadian Pacific Railway without a dollar of contribution from Imperial funds. (Applause.) And what does Mr. Chamberlain tell you? He tells you that the construction of that great inter-oceanic highway, by which England is able to man her fleets in the Pacific, has enormously increased the importance of the mother country, and has conferred an inestimable boon upon her. (Applause.)

Now, Sir, these are commentaries of the hon. gentleman himself upon the proposition he had laid down in the magazine article I have just read that Canada had fully discharged her duty to the empire by what she had done in building the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Intercolonial Railway, and by providing for defence. My hon. friend has changed his mind—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No, no.

The PRIME MINISTER. It is of little use to argue with gentlemen who say 'no' after hearing the opinions I have just read. He said that Canada had discharged fully the duties she owed to the empire. If my hon. friend has changed his mind, I have no fault to find with him. If he thinks that, in 1889 Canada was in position to do what she could not do before, I have no fault to find. We hear much of the growing wealth of Canada and her increasing strength, and that consequently she could act more effectively than she has done in the past, not only in the way of railway expenditure but in the matter of military equipment. Again I say, I have no fault to find with my hon. friend. But he should not be so severe on others, he should remember that not every man can turn a corner as sharply as he can. My hon. friend changed his mind and his course of action, and on the 4th of October sent me the following telegram :

If war is declared I hope you will send a Canadian contingent of volunteers to aid England in the Transvaal. I know it will be warmly welcomed by the British government, and be of great service to Canada in promoting the unity of the empire. A friend of mine will insure their lives and limbs at his own expense to a million dollars. I will heartily support in parliament your action in this matter.

Sir, this was a new departure in the policy of my hon. friend; but great as is his position in this country, he is only one out of five or six million people; great as is his place in this country, valuable as is his opinion, I would not be willing to base my own opinion upon his alone. I attached considerable importance to the views formerly held by him on this subject. But I am free to say that whilst I cannot admit that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain, neither am I prepared to say that she should not take part in any war at all. I am prepared to look upon each case upon its merits as it arises; and when I considered the object for which Great Britain was fighting, when I remembered that the primary cause of the war was the refusal by the government of the Transvaal to the Uitlanders of those privileges of equal rights which we enjoy in this country, when I saw the enthusiasm manifested by the people in all parts of Canada, then and there I made up my mind, we decided to send a contingent, and it was sent immediately.

My hon. friend has recalled the opinion which I expressed in the *Globe*, and after reading that opinion he triumphantly and exultantly exclaimed that the government had been strongly condemned for that opinion. Now, I will try the logical powers of my hon. friend on this question. During all the summer the problem of war and peace