

of a permanent policy. As regards the creation of a Canadian navy, you have apparently decided against that. In respect to contribution, does anyone imagine that you will have only one contribution?

He goes on to say that we have the question of defence to deal with, and he discussed that at some length, and wound up his speech by moving a very significant motion which I think should be within the memory of many members of this committee. The amendment he moved was:

That all the words after the word "that" be struck out, and the following be substituted therefor:—

"This house declines to concur in the said resolution and orders that the same be referred back to the committee with instructions to amend the same in the following particulars, namely, to strike out all the words after clause (a) and substitute therefor the following:

The resolution provided for the expenditure of \$35,000,000 for the construction of three dreadnaughts as an addition to the British navy, and he was moving to strike out all the words after clause (a) and substitute the following:

"The memorandum prepared by the Board of Admiralty on the general naval situation of the empire and communicated to this house by the right hon. the Prime Minister on December 5th shows that several of the most important of the foreign powers have adopted a definite policy of rapidly increasing their naval strength.

"That this condition has compelled the United Kingdom to concentrate its naval forces in home waters involving the withdrawal of ships from the outlying portions of the empire.

"That such withdrawal renders it necessary that Canada without further delay should enter actively upon a permanent policy of naval defence.

"That any measure of Canadian aid to imperial naval defence which does not employ a permanent policy of participation by ships owned, manned and maintained by Canada and contemplating construction as soon as possible in Canada, is not an adequate or satisfactory expression of the aspirations of the Canadian people in regard to naval defence, and is not an assumption by Canada of her fair share in the maintenance of the naval strength of the empire.

"This house regrets to learn the intention of the government to indefinitely postpone the carrying out by Canada of a permanent naval policy.

"It is the opinion of this house that measures should be taken at the present session to give effect actively and speedily to the permanent naval policy embodied in the Naval Service Act of 1910 passed pursuant to the resolution unanimously approved by this house in March, 1909.

"This house is further of the opinion that to increase the power and mobility of the imperial navy by the addition by Canada under the above act of two fleet units, to be stationed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada, respectively, rather than by a contribution of

[Mr. Bennett.]

money or ships, is the policy best calculated to afford relief to the United Kingdom in respect to the burden of imperial naval defence, and in the words of the admiralty memorandum, to restore greater freedom to the movements of the British squadrons in every sea and directly promote the security of the dominions; and that the government of Canada should take such steps as shall lead to the accomplishment of this purpose as speedily as possible."

An acute difference of opinion between the government of Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party was first as to there being an emergency. An hon. gentleman in this house a few days ago suggested that no member of the House of Commons at that time could have foreseen the possibility of a war. I do not know whether that hon. member was present in the house or not, but I think no man who visited England in 1912 and was familiar with the conditions had any doubt in his mind that with the completion of the Kiel canal and the changed methods of construction of battleships, the great German empire found herself practically on a parity with England, because England had begun the construction of dreadnoughts, thereby making obsolescent a great number of her ships, and thus enabling Germany to be more nearly on a parity with her than theretofore; and having regard to the provisions of what was known as the Cawdor report, it was quite clear that a new condition had arisen. When the imperial conference of 1911 met, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier and others representing the Dominion of Canada, it will be recalled that some discussion took place in respect to these matters and that Sir Wilfrid in the resolution he moved made the declaration to which I referred. So far as I know there was no change in those declarations, and the agreement that was made by the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the creation of North Atlantic and South Atlantic areas which would be protected by a Canadian fleet still stood.

It is true beyond peradventure that the action taken by the government of Sir Robert Borden in 1912-13 made it impossible for the moment to continue the policy which had been outlined by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. But he did outline the policy, which was an agreed policy, and my reading to-night to the Minister of National Defence and the members of the committee who are of the Liberal persuasion of what Sir Wilfrid Laurier said is with the hope that there may be some measure of unanimity with respect to the action we take in connection with our naval defence. I have outlined the attitude which Sir Wilfrid Laurier then took and which he maintained even until the end. When par-

liament met in 1914, in connection with the war, on the 19th day of August, 1914, Sir Wilfrid Laurier used these words:

This session has been called for the purpose of giving the authority of parliament and for the sanction of law to such measures as have already been taken by the government and any further measures that may be needed to ensure the defence of Canada and to give what aid may be in our power to the mother country in the stupendous struggle which now confronts her. Speaking for those who sit around me, speaking for the wide constituencies which we represent in this house, I hasten to say that to all these measures we are prepared to give immediate assent. If in what has been done or in what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no criticism, and we shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front. It is our duty, more pressing upon us than all other duties, at once, on this first day of this extraordinary session of the Canadian parliament, to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the mother country, conscious and proud that she has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandisement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfil her obligations to her allies, to maintain her treaty obligations, and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and domination.

We are British subjects, and to-day we are face to face with the consequences which are involved in that proud fact. Long we have enjoyed the benefits of our British citizenship; to-day it is our duty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices. We have long said that when Great Britain is at war we are at war; to-day we realize that Great Britain is at war and that Canada is at war also. Our territory is liable to attack and to invasion. So far as invasion is concerned, I do not see that there is any cause for apprehension, for it seems to me obvious that neither Austria nor Germany, our foes in this war, can command any force able to make an attack so far from their base.

It will be remembered that Germany did lay mines from Cape Breton to Halifax.

But no one pretends that our maritime cities on the Pacific and the Atlantic are free from the possibility of insult by an audacious corsair, who, descending suddenly upon our shores, might subject them to an insolent raid and decamp with his booty before punishment could reach him. This is not an unfounded dread of danger; this is no mere illusion; it is a real and indeed a proximate danger, since it is a matter of notoriety that both on the Pacific and on the Atlantic there are German cruisers whose mission is to inflict all the injury they can upon our commerce, and even to raid our cities should they find our harbours unguarded. We are aware that the government has already taken measures, and very appropriately, to guard against this danger. We know that one

of our battleships on the Pacific has been seeking the enemy, and if she has not yet engaged him it is because the enemy has eluded her pursuit.

Then he said:

Upon this occasion I owe it to the house and to myself to speak with absolute frankness and candour. This is a subject which has often been an occasion of debate in this house. I have always said, and I repeat it on this occasion, that there is but one mind and one heart in Canada. At other times we may have had different views as to the methods by which we are to serve our country and our empire. More than once I have declared that if England were ever in danger—nay, not only in danger, but if she were ever engaged in such a contest as would put her strength to the test—then it would be the duty of Canada to assist the motherland to the utmost of Canada's ability. England to-day is not engaged in an ordinary contest. The war in which she is engaged will in all probability—nay, in absolute certainty—stagger the world with its magnitude and its horror. But that war is for as noble a cause as ever impelled a nation to risk her all upon the arbitrament of the sword.

He concluded his address by declaring that the union of hearts which exists in the United Kingdom exists also in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and that it was the inspiration and the hope—

—that from this painful war the British Empire may emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all its citizens, and a living light to all other nations.

That was at the beginning of the great war. So far as I know until the time of his death Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as leader of the Liberal party, always held the sentiments to which I have alluded. He believed, as I believe, and as I think thoughtful Canadians everywhere believe, that if possible there should be a unity of purpose with respect to the policy of naval defence. I see no reason to qualify in any sense the approval which on more than one occasion I have given, for for myself, of the words used by Sir Wilfrid Laurier at the time he supported and enlarged the resolution of Sir George Foster. The observations he made as to the position which Canada occupies with respect to the British Empire were observations which I think, in the light of his great experience and his age of seventy years at that time, are worthy of every consideration by the Minister of National Defence.

I suggest to the minister at this time that in dealing with the problem of naval defence he should bear in mind the provisions of our Naval Service Act and the language of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, which I have taken the trouble to read at some length in order that there may be no misapprehension as to the position