

crown, must consider. And they finally conclude to give their advice. That advice is not the advice of one man; it is the advice of the government as one government, the government as a whole, the advisers as one of the crown. Upon that you have your indication of policy. I submit there can be no successful denial of that fact. Every day this government has been formulating its foreign policies. It has been formulating its policies external to Canada and within the British Empire by orders in council, by the advice tendered and reduced into form by those orders in council. This parliament, if it had so desired, could have taken action to indicate its disapproval of the action thus taken. It seems to me that is the basis of the whole of our position.

It is quite obvious, without tiresomely reiterating and restating it, that with respect to most nations of the world this country cannot develop a foreign policy until we are in position to be recognized as a power, about which I shall speak again when the estimates of the Department of National Defence are under consideration. All the nations of the world, even those with populations half that of ours, even those with populations one-third that of ours, have found it essential to provide themselves with those means which are necessary for self-defence. That is the reason why you find them able to speak through their consular agents at various places, whereas we have none. We have our trade commissioners, but we have no consular agents. We rely upon the assistance given by other members of the British commonwealth to help and sometimes even to guide us in our new ventures or endeavours. It seems to me that is all that need be said so far as those factors are concerned.

I should like to summarize my own appreciation of the situation, and I think I can do this by stating a few propositions. First, it is the duty of government from time to time, in the light of facts as ascertained, to determine its policy and to submit that policy to the judgment of the House of Commons, within which at all times it must be able to command a majority. Second, with respect to matters affecting our external relations with foreign powers, as well as with other members of the commonwealth of nations, I submit that we have committed ourselves, and properly so, to consultation and cooperation. From free association there arises the duty and responsibility of consultation, cooperation and maintaining at all times the fullest possible information with respect to every matter that has to do with

the welfare of the Canadian people in connection with foreign countries. And with respect to the nations that comprise the commonwealth, the same may be said, although it is impossible that the same results may accrue in the one case as in the other, from failure so to do.

The third proposal is that so far as it lies within our power, having regard to the obligations of free association which we have assumed, we should maintain our neutrality to the fullest possible extent, remembering that there can be no neutrality, in so far as being involved in conflict is concerned, where any part of this commonwealth of nations becomes involved in war. And lastly, that participation in any conflict always rests with parliament, which means the people. But no action that we can take while still remaining within that empire or within the commonwealth will preclude or prevent those who are opposed in conflict to the empire or to any part of it from taking such steps against us as they may be advised and think desirable as belligerents.

I conceive this to be not an unfair statement of our position. Far be it from me to indicate that it is a policy. It is not a policy at all in the narrow sense of the term because I have pointed out that policy changes from day to day in the light of events that control policy. But it is a broad statement of the position which the Dominion of Canada occupies in the northern half of this continent.

We have our alternative. We have always had an alternative. There is no power that keeps Canada within the British Empire or within the commonwealth of nations. Canada has had the right to withdraw from the British Empire, and successive British statesmen have said that if we so desired they would not raise a finger against our starting our own household and setting up our own establishment. It was said as far back as the days of Mr. Gladstone and it was said at one time by Disraeli, who modified his statement in his later days. It has been said by more modern statesmen. But let it not be forgotten for a single moment, that this must be the free choice of the Canadian people. For myself, I do not believe that in my lifetime they will make such a choice. I cannot speak for another generation.

I believe we were endowed with riches that were purchased at great price by men who gave their lives and their treasure to accomplish these things. It must not be forgotten for a single moment when we speak of our great mineral resources, as the Prime Minister did this afternoon, that at one time they were