

to which there has been no expression of it, then I think we are justified in trying to find what that public opinion is.

Hon. GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear.

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS. (Middlesex) Now, will any harm come? And there is the point where I had some difficulty in reconciling myself to this position. Would any harm come? Suppose there is an emergency and this Bill is rejected to-day; to-morrow morning hon. gentlemen can provide for that emergency just as easily as they could if we passed the Bill and the Governor General signed it.

Hon. GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN: And better.

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS (Middlesex). The Bill does not help the emergency one iota. It is utterly useless for that purpose. The old Act of 1910 is fully capable of meeting an emergency or any other condition of things—war, insurrection, invasion or anything. So when we ask the Bill to stand over we are hurting nobody. Let me say, too, if there was no other way of helping the empire—if there was an emergency—I am afraid I would have to vote for this Bill, for we cannot allow the empire to fall, no matter what happens.

Hon. GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear.

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS. I do not think it is in danger, but if parliament had no other authority than the present Naval Bill to help it, then I would have to consider seriously whether I should reject such a Bill. To reject it means nothing to the empire, but to reject it means a great deal to Canada. Sentiment, construction of a navy at home, employment of our skilled workmen, the inspiration of doing something for ourselves instead of hiring somebody else to do it. So I propose to follow the course pursued by my hon. friend in 1910. I am just going to do as he did. I am going to follow the course pursued by Mr. Borden in 1910. I am going to do as Mr. Borden said in his speech in Montreal he would do if there was any necessity for it. I am going to take the advice that Mr. Borden gave to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1910—if parliament did not approve of the Bill, to appeal to the people. That is the position I propose to take. How I shall be supported remains to be seen. There is another point. The hon. member claimed that he had a mandate for this Bill. I do not know on that point. I am a little short of information. As far as I can recall the election of 1911—for I was out of the country very shortly after it took place—I think this was the situation: The Naval Bill was not discussed except in the Province of Quebec. I think I am right in that.

Hon. MEMBERS: Yes. No.

No Mandate.

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS. One member outside of the Province of Quebec admitted that the naval question was an issue in the last election. Thirty-eight members supported the Laurier policy from the Province of Quebec, so that province did not give any mandate for a change of policy. Will hon. gentlemen bear that in mind? And if they did not get the mandate from the Province of Quebec they got it from nobody, because the matter was not discussed in any other province. As I understand it, there is no mandate for this Bill; and if you will allow me to say it, there are times when we do not care whether there is a mandate or not. In an emergency we would not