

thing, for the defence of this commerce. Every nation in the world not only has the right but the duty to defend its own. This commerce of ours is a part of our country, and it is just as necessary to defend it as it is to defend our shores. At present, we depend entirely for the defence of that commerce upon the British navy. We know that that is a sure dependence. But, in accepting it, we occupy the position of a child in swaddling clothes, though we are boasting day after day and year after year that we have grown to manhood and are strong enough to take care of ourselves. Now, we have three positions before us as a country—to remain as we are, or to become independent, or to be annexed to the United States. Let us consider for a moment what would be the position under these several circumstances. If we should be annexed to the United States what would be our position with regard to the defence of our trade? We should be called upon to pay our proportion of the cost of the United States navy—about \$6,500,000 a year. If we became an independent nation—and there is a small body of men, and I am glad to say only a small body in this country, who seem to believe that this is our ultimate destiny and that we should prepare for it—we should be obliged to provide a military equipment and a navy. The smallest nations that have a coast line and a commerce to defend have to keep a navy proportionately expensive—in fact ours would be more expensive than if we were to pay our share of the British navy on the present basis. Seeing that there is but a small part of our people who would advocate either annexation or independence, and that the great bulk of us desire to remain as we are, a part of the British empire, why should we not be prepared to pay at least a small part of the cost of defending the empire? Why should we not be prepared to pay a part, even though a small part in the defence of our own commerce and our own trade? I regret exceedingly that political parties in this country seem to be afraid to take up a question of this kind. It is a question that is bound to come to the front in the near future and must be discussed by political parties. We must decide whether we are to play a part in the British empire. Why should we not make a small beginning? If we were to pay our proportion towards the cost of the British navy the expense would be about \$7,000,000 a year. Great Britain has about twenty ships stationed on the eastern and western shores of Canada, and their proportion of cost is about \$7,000,000. I do not propose that we should go to that length, but I say we should make a beginning, we should take the first step. If the Minister of Militia, in bringing down his proposal to improve the militia system, had proposed the first step toward the making of a Canadian navy, so far as I am per-

sonally concerned I should be very glad to support him.

Another question mentioned in the speech from the Throne is the Alaskan boundary award. I am sure that enough has been said with regard to this matter. I cannot see what particular good can be done by discussing it at length in this House. It has proven a cause of soreness to many Canadians. I feel sure that, had not this matter been made, to a large extent, the football of political parties in times gone by; if before the award, the people of this country had studied and known the question as experts have done, there would not have been that soreness. I feel sure that whatever may have been the cause of that award, whether it was made judicially or diplomatically, Lord Alverstone, the senior member on the British side of the case, decided the question as he thought it should be decided according to the evidence, and that he did good service to his country in settling that dispute in some fashion once for all.

The other question that is mentioned in the speech from the Throne is the amendment of the Grand Trunk Pacific bargain. This will be one of the main questions that will come before us this session. It was discussed at very great length last session, and will be discussed, I am sure, at very great length this session. The Bill as at first proposed was a very important one, involving an enormous expenditure of public money, an expenditure not asked for by any large section of the people and entirely unjustifiable. The bargain as it was presented to the House a year ago was a very bad bargain for the people of this country as well as for the Grand Trunk Railway Company. A bargain may be bad for both sides, and this was such a bargain. Now we have the amendments of this Bill making it still worse for the people of Canada, still more expensive and still more disastrous. I claim that it is the duty of the government to appeal to the people on this question. I feel that the government has no right to pledge the people to such a bargain, a bargain which, it is evident the people of Canada do not want. We have had a number of by-elections, and in every one the main question discussed was the Grand Trunk Pacific bargain. The result of these by-elections must convince every one who wishes to judge of the matter fairly that the people of this country are entirely opposed to the agreement. What is the result of these by-elections. Not less, but rather more than 4,000 of a reduction in the vote for the Liberal party in eight constituencies—500 on the average, for each constituency. What does that mean? It means that, in a general election, the hon. leader of this House would come back with a following of less than fifty men.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth).