

be a referendum upon which the government, abdicating their responsibility and functions, will leave it to the Prime Minister to advocate an improvement of the naval policy from his point of view and larger expenditure for naval purposes, and will leave it to the hon. member for Jacques Cartier at the same time to advocate a different policy. This would mean that the Prime Minister would say to the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) and that the hon. member (Mr. Monk) could say to the Prime Minister I will wash my hands of this business and you can wash yours, and let the people vote as they please, and we will have no policy and no guidance to offer the people; this is a thing which we thought essential to the empire two years ago, but the requirements of office now tell us to cast it aside as an old garment. Sir, that is not responsible government in any way. I leave it to all those who are students of English Parliamentary History if such a spectacle as we have here to-day would for one instant commend itself on the floor of the British parliament. I leave it to the House to say whether we are to have a government without any policy at all, or whether we shall exact from them compliance with the constitutional rule. Standing there, as they are at this present moment, I think I am not criticising the course of the government in too strong language when I say that it is a scandalous and immoral violation of the fundamental rules of British parliamentary government. I beg to move, seconded by Mr. Pugsley:

That the following words be added to the address:

We beg to represent to your Royal Highness that by resolution of this House, adopted the 31st of March, 1909, it was affirmed that:

This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence.

And further:

This House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service.

That in pursuance of that resolution the late administration proceeded to adopt a well-defined policy of naval organization.

That with regard to that policy, as well as to the whole question of naval defence, there is in the present cabinet a flagrant conflict of opinion, and that some of its members have repeatedly, both before and during the last elections, denounced naval defence in any form whatsoever.

We respectfully submit to your Royal Highness that it is a fundamental principle of constitutional government that the advisers of the Crown shall be heartily in accord on all important questions of public policy, and that the inclusion, by the Prime Minister, in the present cabinet, of members holding diametrically opposite views on a question of

the highest importance to the Dominion and to the empire, is contrary to the well understood principles of responsible government and should not receive the approval of the House.

Hon. R. L. BORDEN (Prime Minister). Mr. Speaker, I join with the mover and seconder of the address in extending to the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) my hearty congratulations on his having attained his seventieth birthday, and to wish to him in the years to come during which he shall be spared—and I hope they will be many—every possible happiness.

I join with my right hon. friend in extending congratulations to the mover and to the seconder of the address. Their speeches have been characterized not only by eloquence, but by breadth of view and by an understanding and comprehension of the conditions of this country and of the problems confronting us for the future, which I am certain assure us that there presence in our deliberations will be a very great and welcome addition to the debating strength of this House.

I also desire, before dealing with other parts of the speech of my right hon. friend, to associate myself with what he has said so eloquently and so well respecting their Royal Highnesses the Governor-General and the Duchess of Connaught. My right hon. friend has expressed this so well, and it has also been expressed so well by the mover of the address, that little remains for me to say. But I would like to add just this, that it seems to me that the great distinguishing characteristic of the life of His Royal Highness the Governor-General and of the Duchess of Connaught is a high and earnest sense of duty and responsibility, and I am thoroughly confident that they have assumed their duties in this country with an earnestness and an enthusiasm which will assure to the people of Canada the deepest possible interest by them in everything that concerns the welfare of this country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come at once to some of the observations of my right hon. friend. So far as the opening portion of his speech is concerned, I have no fault to find with his observations. In fact, I am entirely inclined to agree with his frank statement in the first instance that he deemed it beyond his power to enter into any effective criticism of this government. I am sure that every hon. gentleman to-day listening to him was more firmly convinced of that after he concluded his speech than at the outset. He very properly remarked that it is not now time to comment on the measures which the government propose to introduce; but he found a great solace and comfort in the fact that an allusion, a very proper allusion, was