

states are organizing merchant fleets, and as a direct consequence, war fleets. Our age will witness the competition of a number of maritime states for the trade supremacy of the world. There are to-day thirty states out of forty-eight going into the maritime trade, and the destinies of the world can no longer rest under the power of a single state. The world's richness is no more to be the easy field of exploitation by a nation having a few thousand daring mariners protecting a great many more thousands of thrifty factors, merchants, traders and shippers. Every state seems ready to send its young men and even its older citizens to conquer the wealth of the unexplored, or undeveloped countries. A universal thirst for business and its profits, for gold, is manifest in every quarter. And in every state there is—and it is quite natural—a tendency to equip on the seas, a fleet of both merchantmen and warships to defend its interests; the one cannot go without the other. States of to-day are getting more and more commercialized and are preparing themselves to compete for the partition of the universal wealth of the world. But such competition, while it may be friendly at the start, must prove eventually hostile. After the tariff wars, one may easily foresee the wars in which predominance is to be determined by the guns of warships. England is confronted to-day with such a condition of affairs, and Canada cannot longer ignore the situation. The so-called German war scare is but one of them, though I must remind you, Sir, that amongst German officers to-day it is customary to offer a toast to 'The Next Meeting,' meaning on board of the first captured English battleship.

It is at this turning point in the life of England and Canada, that we are invited to consider the possibility of future political difficulties. To make Canada ready for any emergency, several policies are proposed. What are they? The first is: the presentation of two Dreadnoughts now, and then, resting on our oars to await adequate results from an unknown policy of defence. The exponent of the policy is the honourable the leader of the opposition. The second is: Canada is to play the 'manly part,' and very naturally its sponsor is the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster). The third proposed is to do nothing until a plebiscite is had, with a declaration of unalterable devotion to the British Crown as an assurance policy; and, according to the words of that official publication of the late Mr. Hansard, its father is the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), who, after a six months' canvass, has found a few thousand persons, mostly youths, out of 2,000,000 in the province of Quebec, to support his views. Under the fourth head may be classified ten or twelve other varied and variable

policies, that I beg leave not to expound, as they are mostly founded upon newspaper quotations, poetical recitations, and historical misapplication. Are all those plans as clear and terse and patriotic as that of the government? I venture to say, Sir, they are not. The first two policies are undefinable, impractical and, therefore, negligible. The third one is illogical and illegal, as it is a denial to this House, acting upon a five-years' mandate, of the right to spend one-thirtieth of the revenues of Canada for its defence, when this House might if it chose waste the whole revenue in buying peanuts. That proposition is antiparliamentary; it is useless, public opinion on that question being well known; it is dangerous because it is of such a nature as to create a conflict between Canada and the metropolis. The cabinet, in order to meet the wishes of England, now proposes to this parliament to vote an expenditure of \$12,000,000 to build ships once and for all, and to pay for their maintenance yearly, something less than \$4,500,000. This, therefore, means a yearly expenditure of one and one third million dollars for maintaining and manning ships, the construction of which has cost \$4,000,000.

The purpose of the government plan is obviously to provide a plan of defence for Canada and of help to England, according to the wishes, amounting almost to demands of the latter, which I take to be expressed, conclusively, in the reports of the Naval Defence Conference of 1909, and the circumstances surrounding the same. Canada cannot reasonably refuse the parliament of England itself to express such a desire.

Now, Sir, should we resist these desires of England? I have waited, a long time, before giving my very modest view about the solution of this problem, for a great political and economical problem it undeniably is. I say at once, that it is a question to be decided, not according to race, nor religion, nor historical prejudices, but according purely and simply to the teaching of reason, of law, and of devotion to the best interests of our dear country. To begin with, I must, according to my mind, explain the political status of Canada, in relation to the foreign states of the world, and to England, and the definition of that status will go a great way to show that Canada is not free to reject the requests of England. I must say, that I do not agree with most of the speeches, writings and editorials, which have been written, during the last half century about the great amount of independence enjoyed by Canada. I admit that England has been good enough, during that long period, to let our authors, newspapermen, and orators, tell the people of Canada that they were perfectly free and independent of England,