

for bringing it to the attention of the house. He made a declaration, one which I say is accepted by constitutionalists as sound, that if any part of the British Empire were at war—and within that expression, we of course are included, as is the United Kingdom—then also Canada is at war. But whether or not Canada should participate in that war is a matter to be determined by the Canadian people and the Canadian parliament.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): That is right.

Mr. BENNETT: There never has been a doubt about that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That was my fifth point.

Mr. BENNETT: I am sorry it was not put quite in that way.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That was the intention of it.

Mr. BENNETT: I think what my right hon. friend said was hardly consistent with just that view, but I will accept at once his statement that that was what he intended to say.

Now, sir, there are some lessons we might learn from the last war. How many members realize that mines were laid by the Germans within a few miles of the coast of Nova Scotia? How many realize that some of our ships were destroyed by mines laid by the Germans off the coast of Nova Scotia? The Minister of National Defence will know it because of his access to his archives. But I suggest there are very few hon. members in the house who realize that off the coast of Nova Scotia the Germans were able to sow mines, after crossing the Atlantic ocean. I wonder how many realize that batteries planted, for instance, on Anticosti Island would completely command the St. Lawrence river? I wonder how many have realized that a dozen shells fired from ten miles at sea would make the habitation of great cities impossible, through the destruction of sanitary amenities? I wonder if it is realized that, in the language of the late Lord Asquith just before he died, science has been but lispings the alphabet of destruction?

To-day we know about the great progress that has been made in instruments of destruction. We know the effectiveness of bombs. The other day a high military officer said that the effects of one bomb would be felt for a distance of fifteen miles or more. When I read that statement I regarded it as almost incredible; I think yet there must be some error in connection with it. But, be that as it may, we know from the Ethiopian campaign

the power of gas. We know for instance what bombs may do, from the recent campaigns in China and Spain. We know what submarines almost did to Great Britain. All you have to do is to read the life of Jellicoe and you will learn how nearly—how very nearly—that submarine campaign succeeded.

All these are matters we must think about very carefully. For while we may not participate in a war, let it always be remembered that the nation or nations opposed will participate against us. It is their participation I am concerned about. This parliament is not going to be able to prevent an enemy from throwing shot and shell, bombs and gas, if that enemy is at war with the British Empire. It was that point which the hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Miss Macphail) brought out the other day in this chamber in the clearest fashion I have ever heard it put. It was, sir, in essence, that because we are part of the British Empire we are subject to that risk and danger, and it is a question of balance. We must not delude ourselves. Beautiful phrases and platitudes will not save us. I wonder if anyone has forgotten the language of Chatham? No, that will not save us. We are confronted with a possibility as real as any possibility can be, and it is this, that if any part of the British empire is engaged in war, we are subject to the operations of the modern scientific devices and the forms man has created for destruction through harnessing those great inventions of the human mind for destructive purposes.

I am not thinking about our participation; that is for parliament to decide. But what I am thinking about is the participation of our enemy, and that is what we should be thinking about. Who planted the mines off the coast of Nova Scotia? Was it the parliament of Canada? Did the parliament of Canada have anything to say about it? Did the parliament of Canada raise its voice and say, "You cannot put your mines here?" No; the German high command placed their mines off the coast of Nova Scotia, and our shipping was destroyed. True, only a small quantity was destroyed, but the fact remains that the mines did have their effect. There is the record. Therefore I say when we speak of participation we can only ask ourselves this question: What shall we do in self-defence?

That is all it is, stripped of everything. It is not for this parliament to say whether or not we shall permit our shores to be invaded, our commerce to be destroyed, our ships to be blown to pieces, our population to be gassed or bombed. That is for the enemy.