

There never was heard such a terrible curse;  
 But what gave rise  
 To such a surprise  
 Was that nobody felt a penny the worse.

What the resolution of the 29th of March last stated was that we should proceed to organize the defence of the empire—how? On the lines laid down at the last imperial conference. Well, the lines laid down at the last imperial conference, with the exception of the light craft to which Lord Tweedmouth alluded, were precisely those of the scheme which was proposed by the Duke of Devonshire, and which I am not prepared to combat. It was a reasonable scheme, I think. At any rate, I am not against our assuming that part of the common defence of the empire. But what we have to-day, I submit, is a totally different scheme, which has never been discussed before in this parliament and never has been discussed before the people. I, therefore, say that it is safe to conclude that this is an innovation, a complete change has been contemplated. And who are the originators of that change? Who, I ask this House, has been so earnest in promoting this gradual advance until at last we are face to face with this scheme, which is totally different from the two others and from the third more ancient, which began in 1862? To my mind it is largely the work, in the first place, of the Imperial Federation Society, which failed because it had no representative character and had proposed boldly in the beginning a scheme for which we were totally unprepared, political union, which is virtually comprised in this present project, and when that society failed and the new one, the British Empire League, was organized, they took it up and the members of that anti-Canadian society, I will call it such, have been ever since moving heaven and earth to bring about this very policy to which many of us at present object. Look at the active members of that league. You will find they are not representative men; they are very respectful men, but if you read their speeches you will find that they have gone to England and stated that this very scheme is popular and accepted with joy throughout the country. What authority have they for that statement? Col. Denison or Mr. Small, at one of their meetings, after congratulating the meeting that it was not open to the press, stated that it was known that war decimates sailors, the British have great difficulty in finding complements of men for their navy, and they could easily recoup themselves here, there were 75,000 men at their disposal as a naval reserve, and the people were anxious to place them at the disposal of the British empire. I say that in making these statements they had no

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authority and did not represent the sentiments of our people.

I have alleged and it has been said that this scheme, if it is properly shown to the people, will prove that it bears in its flanks the destruction of our right of self-government. I say in the first place it tends to deprive us of control of our land and sea forces. It binds us to the consequences of the external policy of the Downing street government, which we cannot control or hold responsible. It leaves us, I say, practically with large municipal powers. If you take away from a country, from any nation, the right to control, at any rate as free nations usually do, its relations with other nations, I say you deprive it of one of its most valuable inherent rights as a nation. I say in respect to this policy that it differs from the suggestion which began when we obtained responsible government in 1848; it differs essentially from the Imperial Defence Committee's report and it differs entirely from the suggestions made by Lord Tweedmouth in 1907. It is, in fact, a scheme which might be called the scheme presented to the last imperial conference by the Right Hon. Mr. McKenna, which was far more extensive and was never heard of or discussed by our own people.

There are many other things to be said in reference to this question, and if I am able to do so I shall express those views at the proper time. But I wish, before resuming my seat, to say one word in regard to the reproach which has been addressed to us in all or nearly all the newspapers of this country, a most unjust and unfair reproach, to my idea. We have been branded, those who hold the views I have just expressed to the House, as ingrates, as wretches with no other sentiment than that of selfishness and egotism, and it has been claimed that what is asked from us to-day, this, to my judgment, unjustifiable sacrifice of our liberty, we owe to the mother country. Without them we would be nothing at all in this country, nothing whatever, and I heard it said to-day that if British supremacy upon the sea was to fail we would disappear at once. It reminded me of the old saying of the fates in Rome: 'While stands the Colosseum Rome shall stand; when falls the Colosseum Rome shall fall, and with Rome the world.' I think the members of this House will admit that during weeks of denunciation, a public man cannot with equanimity see himself charged with these grave failings, of ingratitude and selfishness, and although I do not want to open or unduly extend the chapter I would say one word on this subject.

Is our indebtedness so very great? Do we owe all this to the mother country, and have we done nothing for ourselves in re-