

upon the attitude which has been maintained up to the present by the two parties that now stand face to face on this question. In so far as the present government and the Liberal party are concerned, that question arose for the first time at the imperial conference of 1902. At the conference the subject of defence was very carefully discussed. The discussion revealed the fact—which indeed was not unnatural, which had often taken place before—that between the advisers of His Majesty the King in Great Britain and His Majesty the King in the dominions beyond the seas, there was a divergence of views. The Secretary of State for War requested—or I should say suggested—that the dominions beyond the seas should equip and maintain a body of troops for Imperial service, which, in case of war, would be turned over automatically to the war office. Some of the Dominions, through their representatives, to this agreed; others disagreed, among the latter being Australia and Canada. The Secretary for the Navy suggested—I don't say requested—that the dominions beyond the seas should contribute yearly to the maintenance and equipment of an imperial navy. Most of the dominions there represented to this agreed, but the ministers who represented Canada could not give their assent to this proposition. They gave expression to their views respectively before the conference, and embodied them in a state paper with which the House and the country have long been familiar. They recognized at once the obligation of Canada to relieve to a large extent in so far as at all events as the means of Canada would allow—the burden which has hitherto been on the shoulders of the British tax-payer alone. They declared that as Canada increased in wealth and population it would go further in the matter of defence, and that in everything that we would undertake in that direction, whatever might be done would be done in co-operation with the imperial authorities, but always and ever under the control and responsibility of the Canadian authorities, in accordance with our right to self-government in this as in all other matters.

This was in 1902, nearly eight years ago, and for eight years this policy of the present government has been before the country. From this policy the present government has never deviated. This policy we affirmed again at the imperial conference of 1907. We affirmed it again last year in this House when the question came up for concrete and immediate action. This policy is embodied in the Bill now before this House, and by this policy the present government stands or falls. But fall we shall not. This policy is in the best traditions of the Liberal party. This policy is the latest

link in the long chain of events which following the principles laid down by the Reformers of the old times, Baldwin and Lafontaine, step by step, stage by stage, have brought Canada to the position it now occupies, that is to say, the rank, dignity and status of a nation within the British empire. This policy is the full maturity of the rights asserted, the obligations assumed, by Canada, which inspired the imperial poet whom, after Canada had given a preference in her markets to the products of the mother country, he put in her mouth these proud words:

Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own;
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I set my house in order.

Sir, if we adopt to-day this policy, if we have put it in the form in which it is now before the country, it is because we lay it down that Canada is a nation, but a daughter nation of England. Such has been the strong and consistent course of the Liberal party from the time this policy was initiated.

And I may ask now, what has been the policy of the Conservative party? I think I am not offensive or unjust to the Conservative party when I say that upon this question their attitude has been what it is to-day—divided in counsel and divided in action. So far as this House is concerned, our policy more than once has received the assent, at least, the tacit assent, of the members of the Conservative party. It has been more than once reviewed or commented upon, but never challenged or dissented from. Outside of this House it has received the open commendation of the best and most experienced minds in the party. I am bound to say at the same time that it has been censured and criticised—severely censured and severely criticised—by those who within the party boast of their imperialism, who carry abroad upon their foreheads the imperial phylacteries, who boldly walk into the temple and there loudly thank the Lord that they are not like other British subjects, that they give tithes of everything they possess, and that in them alone is to be found the true incense of loyalty. Was it, Sir, because of the proddings of these very zealous and very officious men that my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) brought up this question of imperial defence last year? I know not? But on the first day the House met my hon. friend gave notice of a motion designed to bring the matter in concrete form before parliament and the people. I understood the motion of my hon. friend to be an endorsement of the policy which we had always pursued, and in so understanding it I do not think I did him an injustice. I