

But now we are told that in matters of naval defence we are to abdicate the principle of responsible government; we are told that we can have responsible government in everything else, we can make our own laws, we can administer our own affairs, and even have control of our land forces, but that in matters of naval defence we should have no powers of our own. I need not say that this principle is one to which we on this side of the House cannot agree. We are told that the only way in which naval defence can be carried on is by contributions to the imperial navy. I have to submit that this idea of contribution seems to me repugnant to the genius of our British institutions; it smacks too much of tribute to be acceptable by British communities. The true conception of the British empire is the conception of new, growing, strong and wealthy nations, each one developing itself on the line of its own needs and conditions, but all joining in the case of common danger, and from all points of the earth, rushing upon the common enemy. But, Sir, the point is no longer arguable. The point has been settled at the last conference.

Many and many a time upon the floor of this House in the press of this country, we have been assailed, and our action has been compared with the action of Australia, who, in 1902, agreed to give a contribution for the maintenance of the imperial navy. But, Sir, let us look and see what has recently taken place in Australia. Australia has abandoned the position it took in 1902 and it has come to the position taken by Canada. Australia to-day, like Canada, is building a fleet of her own. And, Sir, there is something still more significant; it is not Australia which is paying a contribution to Great Britain for the purposes of the Australian navy. It is Great Britain which is paying a contribution to Australia for that purpose. Need I say more? All the best men, even in the ranks of the Conservative party, who have given any attention to this question have come to the way of thinking of the present government. That veteran statesman, Sir Charles Tupper, once the pride and strength of the Conservative party, has given unqualified adhesion to our policy. Need I say more? If there is an imperialist of the imperialists now living, it is Lord Milner. Lord Milner was here last fall, and you will pardon me, Sir, if I recall to the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite what were the opinions of Lord Milner upon this question. In Vancouver he spoke as follows:

"I have said that Canada is not unique in being a great country. But she is unique in being one of a group of countries, which has a strong foothold in every corner of the world. That group only needs to hold together and to be properly organized in order to command, with a comparatively small

cost to its individual members, all the credit and all the respect, and, therefore, all the power and all the security which credit and respect alone can give a nation among the nations of the world. No doubt Canada if she is to take her place in such a union, will have to develop, as I believe she will desire to develop, her own fighting strength. But not to a greater extent than would be necessary in any case for the adequate development of Canadian self-respect or beneficial to the manhood of her people and certainly nothing like to the same extent as would be absolutely inevitable if she desired to stand alone."

Again at Toronto he made use of language even more significant:

"But no doubt the general position would be much stronger if all the self-governing states were to adopt the course which Australia seems disposed to adopt of creating a national militia, and laying the foundations of a fleet. And I for one should welcome such a policy, wherever adopted, not as adding to the strength and dignity of the empire as a whole, its influence in peace as well as to its security in case of war."

It is not a question of shifting burdens, but of developing fresh centres of strength. For this reason I have never been a great advocate of contributions from the self-governing states to the army and navy of the United Kingdom, though as evidences of a sense of the solidarity of the empire such contributions are welcome, and valuable, pending the substitution of something better. But I am sure that the form which imperial co-operation in this field will ultimately take, and ought to take, the form at once most consistent with the dignity of the individual states and most conducive to their collective strength and organic union, is the development of their several defensive resources, in material and in manhood. I know that it may be argued—it has been argued that individual strength would make for separation. But I have no sympathy whatever with this point of view."

Later he goes on:

"The profession and technical, not to say the strategic, arguments for a single big navy of the empire are enormously strong, so strong that they might conceivably overcome, as they have to some extent overcome in the past, the political objection. But without wishing to be dogmatic on a subject which requires a great deal more careful study on all hands than it has yet received, I must say that, speaking as an imperialist, I feel the political objection very strongly."

If the self-governing states were going under our present constitutional arrangements, merely to contribute to a central navy, whether in money or better still, in men and ships, I do not think they would take that interest and pride in the matter