

previous Government. It is fourteen months since they took office, and they have been before the country, since the opening of this Parliament on the 21st of November, with a declaration that up to date they have not been able to decide upon any policy for the permanent naval defence of Canada, or for the co-operation of Canada in Imperial naval defence. Their haste in cancelling the policy of their predecessors may fairly be contrasted with their delay in providing a policy of their own.

They have come before Parliament with a demand that it shall vote \$35,000,000 to be expended in Great Britain for vessels which are to be, in practice, and to all intents and purposes, the property of Great Britain. And they justify this very remarkable proposition on the ground that there exists an emergency in the condition of the British Empire. I need not repeat, Mr. Speaker, that so far as this debate has gone, it has been demonstrated, and redemonstrated, it has been stated and reiterated, and there has been no evidence brought to the contrary, that there is no such condition as calls for such remarkable action on the part of the Government of Canada. That is to say, there is no condition that forms an excuse for this Government not coming before this House during this session with a statement of what their proposals are for the permanent naval defence of Canada, and for the co-operation of Canada in the defence of the Empire.

Let me point out, Mr. Speaker, if I may, the important difference between the policy which these gentlemen took the first opportunity to reverse, and the proposal that they have placed before the House. Taking the letter in both cases, and taking the arguments in support of each case, the great point is that the naval policy of the previous Government was a policy that essentially involved personal service, and it is the essential policy of the proposal of this Government, now before the House, that it shall not involve personal service. It seems to me the height of the preposterous that this proposal, which is, above everything, a negation of loyalty to the Empire, should be put before this country with assertion and acclaim as being especially, and solely, and only a policy of loyalty to the Empire, put forward by the only men who have any right to claim loyalty to the Empire. I ask you, of what value is loyalty to any cause, or to any interest, that does not involve personal service, and personal sacrifice? I ask you in what position does the British Empire stand to-day as a result of the proposal that this Government has placed before this House and the country. It stands to-day in the position that its strongest, largest, oldest, and wealthiest dominion has not a man who will give personal service in the defence of the Empire. That is the declaration of the Government;

Mr. OLIVER.

it is the declaration of the Prime Minister, of his colleagues, of his supporters, and of his press throughout the country. I ask you, is that the way to maintain the prestige of Great Britain on sea or on land? May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that such a proposal is not less an injury to the Empire than it is an insult to Canada and Canadians.

I will make allusion to the assertion vociferated so loudly last night and so repeatedly since this debate began that the danger to the Empire lay in the North sea. If the danger to the Empire lies in the North sea, it is in the North sea that we have hitherto looked to see the prestige of the Empire maintained, and no evidence has been brought before the House during this debate to lead us to believe that the honour, prestige and power of Britain on the North sea are not as safe to-day as they ever were. Britain's interests are more than in the North sea. Britain's interests are in every sea because British commerce is world-wide and on the British possessions the sun never sets. Wherever British commerce floats, or wherever the British flag is raised on land or sea, there is the need, or there may be the need, for military or naval protection. It is this feature of the life of the British Empire, of which Canada forms no unimportant part, that the arguments of our friends opposite absolutely ignore, although it is a condition essential to the existence of the Empire and to its maintenance. It is just as necessary to protect the flag of Britain in the Falkland Islands as it is in Canada, or in India, or in any other part of the world; because, if it can be pulled down in one place, it can be pulled down anywhere. When Canada, as one part of the British Empire, comes forward with a proposition, as Canada did come forward with a proposition under the late Government, to provide for her own naval defence, Canada was doing her part just as Britain was doing hers. If Canada can depend upon Britain to do her part, so Britain ought to be able to depend on Canada to do hers. Under the policy and administration of the late Government, that dependence might well have been placed, but I am sorry to say it cannot be so placed to-day. I need not remind the House, as it has been reminded on previous occasions, that the Prime Minister and his most able, though now not his first lieutenant in the Government, themselves, on their own account, claiming credit to themselves for it, took the position in this House and the country, not once or twice or three or four times, but continuously, for the Conservative party, that Canada's duty to herself and to the Empire was involved in a scheme or system of Canadian naval defence, in the establishment of a Canadian navy and in the personal service of Canada in defence of the Empire. But we have heard the Prime Minister at this session of Parliament, and we have heard his ex-first