

That was part of his speech. Proceeding to deal with the question of there being no emergency, he said:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we went on with the execution of our policy. We asked for tenders, with the intention of having ultimately a double unit, one on the Pacific ocean and one on the Atlantic ocean; we asked for tenders for four cruisers and six destroyers, which would cost \$11,280,000. We did not choose to award the contract, in view of the impending change of government . . .

Yes; we thought as the general elections were coming, that it would not be fair, in a matter of this kind, which was at issue between the two parties, to award the contract in case there might be, as there was, a change of government. I say now that the government in power would have been better advised if they had awarded the contracts, and, had they done so, we would at the present time have under construction on the stocks in Montreal four cruisers and six destroyers.

He proceeded further, and dealing with the building of ships in Canada said there was a better way than making a contribution—let us have a Canadian navy as soon as practicable and have all our ships built in Canada. Then came these words:

I now come to another subject, which I would not have mentioned at all were it not for some observations made during the debate on the address by the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Nickle). During the last electoral contest, I heard it many a time, and I read it many a time, that our Canadian navy was a separatist navy, and that it was, on account of something which was to be found in the act, liable to be neutral in time of war. I have been too long in the fight to care very much for what may be said of me during an electoral contest; but when a thing is repeated upon the floor of parliament within my hearing, I owe it to myself to take notice of it. And, just here, apropos of this, let me recall a classical and historical incident.

Then he gives the classical story of the conditions on the eve of the battle of Salamis, of how when the commander would not listen to what was said to him Themistocles said, "Strike, but hear me first." And he concluded with these words:

I do not entertain, at the age of seventy, many of the ideas I had at twenty, or at thirty, or even at forty; but I trust I have not lived in vain, and that in the course of my long career I have learned something from observation and experience. Let the matter be settled once and for all, not only for myself, but for my friends here and outside, by my declaration: That any thought of separation from Great Britain, if any such thought exists anywhere, and I do not believe it does—would be a folly and a crime. As to the contention of my hon. friend from Kingston that in case of war our navy would be neutral, I have only this to observe. I said a moment ago that I hope I have not lived in vain, and I hope I am to be given credit for some common sense and some knowledge, and my answer to

that contention is: when England is at war, we are at war, and the thought of being neutral would be like the command of King Canute to the sea to recede from his feet. No action of ours could bring that about. When England is at war, we are at war; but it does not follow that because we are at war, we are actually in the conflict.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier: We can be in the conflict only through two things, namely, actual invasion of our soil, or, the action of the Parliament of Canada. That seems to arouse the hilarity of gentlemen on the other side of the house.

Mr. Graham: They have not read much history.

Then Sir Wilfrid proceeds to deal with other questions relating to stories of the wars, and various wars in the world, and participation in the Boer war, to which I shall not refer. On page 1035 he continued:

Some objections have been made to our Naval Act, because it was said that the British admiralty could not count at all times upon the support of the Canadian navy. I simply say that the admiralty can count at all times upon the Canadian navy, because last year we passed an agreement with the admiralty, whereby naval stations were created for the Canadian navy. The Canadian Atlantic station would include north of 30 north latitude and west of the meridian of 40 west longitude. The Canadian Pacific station would include north of 30 north latitude and east of the meridian of 180 west longitude. So the admiralty knew that at all times in those bodies of water there were Canadian ships to guard the waters; and the moment the ships of an enemy of England appeared in those waters it was the duty of our navy to pounce upon them, to grapple with them and to sink them, in the same manner as if they had been in the harbour of Halifax. That is the interpretation placed upon that act. My hon. friends, however, have to-day the administration of the act; they can interpret it themselves; but surely they will not interpret it in the way it is said they could. They can amend it as they please; but, whatever they do, if they are sincere, as I hope they are, they cannot put any other construction than the construction I put upon this act.

That act is still in force in the terms in which it was passed. There have been no substantial changes in it during revision or otherwise. It has had placed upon it by Sir Wilfrid Laurier the construction to which I have referred.

Then, dealing with armaments in Europe, he proceeded to say:

The problem that you have to deal with is one which demands a permanent policy—a policy for to-day, for to-morrow, and for every day, so long as the armaments grow in Europe; and the duty which you owe to yourselves, to Canada, and to the empire, is the enactment