

right hon. friend, in consulting this eminent constitutional work, has, after all, misread it and that its authority might be turned against him.

Let us look for a moment at the position of affairs to-day. The question which we have to consider is undoubtedly a very important one. It is the question of organizing the forces of the empire for defensive purposes in naval warfare. The question which is before the House to-day is simply as to whether the proposition as embodied in the policy of the government and as embodied in the Bill is one which can fairly recommend itself to the people of the country. In the first place, my right hon. friend has referred to the resolution of March, 1909. I distinctly understood from the clear terms of that resolution that any proposal to this government should follow the suggestions of the admiralty made in the year 1907, and I say without the slightest hesitation that in the most important respect of all, the control of the naval forces of the empire in time of war, the Bill of the government absolutely departs from the suggestions of the admiralty and therefore absolutely departs from the resolution unanimously agreed to in this House in 1909. What was the suggestion of Lord Tweedmouth, First Lord of the Admiralty, on that occasion? The suggestion—indeed it was more than a suggestion, it was an absolute declaration—was that, so far as the naval forces are concerned, there must be unity of control in time of war. It does not require experience, it does not require naval knowledge to understand that in time of war the whole integrity and future of its empire may depend upon that unity of command and control. What did Lord Tweedmouth say in his address to my right hon. friend and the other delegates? He said this:

I have only one reservation to make, and in making it I ask that, as we have proved ourselves successful in the past, you should put your trust in us now. The only reservation that the admiralty desire to make is, that they claim to have the charge of these strategical questions which are necessarily involved in naval defence, to hold the command of the naval forces of the country, and to arrange the distribution of ships in the best possible manner to resist attack and to defend the empire at large, whether it be our own islands or the dominions beyond the seas. We thoroughly recognize that we are responsible for that defence. We want you to help us in that defence. We want you to give us all the assistance you can, but we do not come to you as beggars; we gladly take all that you can give us, but at the same time, if you are not inclined to give us the help that we hope to have from you, we acknowledge our absolute obligation to defend the King's dominions across the seas to the best of our ability.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

Could there be anything more definite, specific or emphatic than that declaration. But that is not all. Let us take the declaration of Mr. McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty at the recent defence conference to be found in the English state paper brought down, pages 22 and 23:

If the problem of imperial naval defence were considered merely as a problem of naval strategy, it would be found that the greatest output of strength for a given expenditure is obtained by the maintenance of a single navy with the concomitant unity of training and unity of command. In furtherance, then, of the simple strategical ideal, the maximum of power would be gained if all parts of the empire contributed, according to their needs and resources, to the maintenance of the British navy.

Further on he said:

If the fleet unit maintained by a Dominion is to be treated as an integral part of the imperial forces, with a wide range of interchangeability among its component parts with those forces, its general efficiency should be the same, and the facilities for refitting and replenishing His Majesty's ships, whether belonging to a Dominion fleet or to the fleet of the United Kingdom, should be the same.

And I especially invite the attention of the right hon. gentleman to this:

Further, as it is a *sine qua non* that successful action in time of war depends upon unity of command and direction, the general discipline must be the same throughout the whole imperial service, and without this it would not be possible to arrange for that mutual co-operation and assistance which would be indispensable in the building up and establishing of a local naval force in close connection with the Royal navy.

I also invite the particular attention of my right hon. friend to what follows:

It has been recognized by the colonial governments that in time of war the local naval forces should come under the general directions of the admiralty.

Not only in 1907, but also in 1909 we have the clearest and most specific statements from men who know infinitely more about these matters than any man in this House, that unity of control and unity of command in time of war are absolutely essential to successful action. There cannot be any question about that. There are many continents in the world, but only one sea. That sea is a great highway. It is the highway of British commerce. It is the highway of the commerce of Canada because the greater part of our exports are sea borne. It is the highway of the world and especially of the British empire. That sea is one, and it would be absolutely impossible for the different local units of the empire to co-operate successfully under any circumstance, in time of war, unless there was absolute unity, command and direction.