

policy, though we have not had a word to say about its framing and carrying out. How different from the stand taken by the right hon. leader of the Opposition, when he stated at the Imperial conference of 1911, and that, please note, after the putting into force of the Naval Bill: 'We have taken in Canada the view that we do not believe ourselves obliged to take part in all the wars.'

In order to allay the unanimous feeling of indignation which its policy arouses, the Government announces with a great flourish of trumpets that we are about to be granted a voice in the councils of the Empire, and that we will be at liberty to have a Canadian representative on the Imperial war defence committee.

It is with great acclamations that our hon. friends on the other side greeted this important piece of news. And the hon. Postmaster General, at St. Sauveur, in Quebec, before an audience of about one hundred people, who had come to listen to that successor of Cartier, stated with enthusiasm that we were beginning to ascend the steps leading to the temple wherein peace and war were decided.

Let us look into this. On January 17, the Prime Minister laid on the Table of the House a document of the utmost importance, which, to my mind, has not been in the course of this debate the object of the attention it should have had. That document, following on the statements made in this House by the Prime Minister and his colleagues, amounts to a qualification of the said statements, in courteous form, but in terms of unmistakable energy.

I give herewith the document in its entirety:

Canada—Confidential.

Downing Street,
December 11, 1912.

Sir,—I have the honour to transmit to your Royal Highness for the information of your ministers, copies of despatches which have been addressed to the Governors General of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Union of South Africa and the Governors of New Zealand and Newfoundland, on the subject of representation of the self-governing dominions on the Committee of Imperial Defence.

In view of the proposed publication of this despatch at an early date I telegraphed a text to you on the 10th instant.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Royal Highness'

Most obedient humble servant,

(Sgd.) L. HARCOURT.

Governor General,

His Royal Highness

The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn,
K.C., &c., &c., &c.

Commonwealth of Australia,

Union of South Africa,

New Zealand,

Newfoundland.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Kamouraska).

Confidential.

Downing Street,

December 11, 1912.

My Lord:

Sir,—I am forwarding by post for the confidential information of your ministers, a record of the proceedings at the Committee of Imperial Defence on May 30, 1911, (during the Imperial Conference), and on August 1, 1912 (during the visit of the Canadian ministers to London). This record deals solely with the question of the representation of the dominions on the Committee of Imperial Defence. (Your ministers who were present on the first occasion will remember that). The matter arose out of a resolution by Sir Joseph Ward on the agenda of the Imperial Conference, asking that the high commissioners of the dominions should be summoned to the Committee of Imperial Defence when naval and military matters, affecting the overseas dominions were under consideration. The unanimous view of all those present on May 30, 1911, was that the representations of the dominions should be not by the high commissioners, but by ministers who would be responsible to their own colleagues and Parliament, and, at the same time it was decided that a defence committee should be established in each dominion which would be kept in close touch with the Committee of Imperial Defence at home. The resolutions ultimately put forward by His Majesty's Government and accepted unanimously by the members of the Imperial Conference at the Committee of Imperial Defence, were as follows:—

(1) That one or more representatives appointed by the respective governments of the dominions, should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee on Imperial Defence when questions of naval and military defence affecting the Overseas Dominions are under consideration.

(2) The proposal that a defence committee should be established in each dominion is accepted in principle. The constitution of these defence committees is a matter for each dominion to decide.

The Canadian Government having changed in the autumn of 1911, it was necessary, when Mr. Borden and his colleagues visited England this summer to put these proposals before them as they were of course unaware of the previous proceedings. Subject to consultation with his colleagues in Canada, Mr. Borden provisionally accepted the resolutions as passed, and stated that he saw no difficulty in one of his ministers, either with or without portfolio, spending some months of every year in London in order to carry out this intention. Mr. Esquith and I had, subsequently, several private conversations with him, at which he expressed the desire that the Canadian and other dominion ministers who might be in London as members of the Committee of Imperial Defence, should receive in confidence, knowledge of the policy and proceedings of the Imperial Government in foreign and other affairs. We pointed out to him that the Committee of Imperial Defence is a purely advisory body, and is not a body deciding on policy, which is and must remain the sole prerogative of the Cabinet, subject to the support of the House of Commons. But, at the same time, we assured him