

in saying that a great many of those hon. gentlemen are not in favour of a naval policy. As I said in my remarks some few days ago whispers came from a certain caucus—as whispers seem to come from a number of caucuses these days held by my friends opposite—that there was a division of opinion as to this naval policy and the Minister of Naval Affairs was told by his followers exactly what they thought about it.

Now, Sir, we have in the city of Halifax another paper, the Evening Mail, which treats the naval proposition of the minister as a joke—and it might well be considered a joke if it was not such a tragedy. The Evening Mail devotes one of its pages to what it calls a "Question Box." On that page it prints questions from readers and such answers as the editorial staff are able to furnish. Let me read one of these questions; it is as follows:

Question.—In the demobilization, so-called, of the Canadian Navy, again so-called, some two hundred, more or less, good, honest mechanics, natives of Halifax, mostly heads of families have been sent adrift. In each department a few men have been kept on, but the great majority have had to walk the plank. At the same time the clerical staff is left intact. Why get at the mechanics? If there is no use for the mechanics, there can be no use for the clericals. I thought the new navy was to be Canadian, but the men retained have been selected by Imperials who are shortly to leave for England. We were told the new head would be a young Canadian, but now we find it is to be an Englishman. While the war was on, some 7,100 young Canadians joined the service, serving in the North Sea, at home and elsewhere. Do you know how many of them are being retained for the new Canadian navy? Just one. And the new ships will soon be coming out to form the new Canadian navy with 1,500 Englishmen. Except, perhaps for a few clericals, the new Canadian navy will be more English than ever. We poor "natives" do not seem to be regarded as of any use except when there is any fighting to be done. I hope The Mail will take this matter up, for it is certainly getting up to the straining point.

The answer given to that question reads:

Answer.—Regarding the mechanics, we understand the labor unions are taking the matter up and as far as the other statements are concerned we have no direct knowledge. Of course, we have always considered this Canadian navy business as more or less of a joke and as time goes by we see no reason to change our opinion.

That, Sir, is the opinion of the editor of the Evening Mail, published in the city of Halifax—a city, which as I said a moment ago, was for many years a naval and military centre.

Mr. McKENZIE: Who is the editor?

[Mr. Duff.]

Mr. DUFF: I do not recollect at the moment; but the distinguished proprietor of that paper is no less a gentleman than Hon. Mr. Dennis, a member of our Senate.

Now, Sir, in view of the fact that public opinion is so strongly against this expenditure; in view of the fact that the finances of Canada are in such a serious condition; and in view of the fact that these ships we are getting cannot by any means be termed a navy or even the nucleus of a navy, it seems to me that the Government should reconsider this matter and not ask the House to vote these Estimates. My own idea is that under present circumstances the minister should take a decided stand and advise the Mother Country that we are not in a position to accept the proffered ships. I can understand that it is a very delicate subject for the Minister of Naval Affairs or the Government to refuse this gift from the Mother Country, but I think we might well be honest in the matter. At the present time practically one-quarter of the water front in the city of Halifax is owned by the Naval Department either for the Imperial or Dominion Government, and there can be no doubt that it would be better for the Government to sell that portion of the water front for business purposes, particularly as the water front facilities are insufficient to meet the local business needs; and by taking the course I have suggested the minister would be doing something that would help to stimulate and increase the business of this country. There is plenty of vacant land either on the Bedford Basin or on the Dartmouth shore where a dockyard could be located as a coaling station, etc., for the British Navy. Therefore in my opinion we should say to the Mother Country: If we enjoyed the prosperity of some years ago when we did not have to bear the enormous burden which we incurred during the war, we would be very glad to accept your gift; but at the present time our financial position will not warrant us undertaking the expenditure which the acceptance of your gift would involve.

But let us offer to help out the Mother Country in this way. Let the Imperial authorities make a new dockyard at the Bedford Basin or on the Dartmouth Shore and take over the naval defence of Halifax and Esquimalt. We will do what we can to provide naval recruits. If our young men now join this Canadian navy, they will have very small chances of promotion; but if the British Government take charge of naval affairs at Halifax and Esquimalt