

point of view?—which means that once for all we must cease to look at or think of the empire or the motherland in framing our policies. The latter is my viewpoint. We must regulate our business as an independent nation, free to help or not to help a country which may be at war, and free to arm or to disarm as we see fit. I understand that it is difficult for some Canadians to break the last link which unites Canada to England and to view our situation regardless of what their feelings may be as to the old country. I, however, venture the assertion that of the 245 members or thereabouts of this house there is not one who has not given the most serious thought to the question of national defence. I am sure every hon. member will be sincere when he votes on the question of armament. One may discuss different points of view; one may disagree with another, but one must give others the same credit for sincerity and honesty and patriotism as he expects for himself. The duty of a representative of the people is, after all, to try to find the right path, and to express such views and act in such a way as may be in conformity with his conscience.

If there were only two courses to follow; if I had to vote either for the government or for the Conservative party, I admit I would not hesitate for one moment, for I am certain that the Conservative party, according to past declarations and the past policy of that party, would consider \$15,000,000 for rearming our nation to be only small change. In regard to this most important question of armaments I must place what I sincerely believe is the interest of my constituents before any party interest. To make my position clear and to be consistent with myself I shall read what I said in this house on February 4 last:

I consider that considerations of prudence and foresight demand that Canada, as one of the nations of the world, should have some kind of an army, in the same way that every city needs a police force. We therefore need an army whose size and cost should be measured by the danger that threatens us and our ability to pay. My opinion is that we are not exposed to great danger, and it is a fact that the state of our finances does not permit us to undertake any expenditure that is not absolutely necessary. I therefore object to the provision of armaments to an extent not justified by any immediate danger and by the financial resources of the country. Above all, Mr. Speaker, I object to any participation by Canada in the armament race.

Believing that the war danger in Canada is not pronounced, believing that our means are not abundant enough, and believing that an adequate Canadian defensive or offensive army would be almost an impossibility, I

[Mr. Brunelle.]

regret I must come to the conclusion that the increase in our military estimates is too large. I am of opinion that we must have some protection, but the difference between the previous year's military estimates and those of this year is too great. The answer to the question whether or not we should spend more for armaments this year is not self-evident. It is not, as the expression goes, lying under one's very nose. There are some people who believe we ought to arm to the extent that we are preparing to arm, and there are other people who do not so believe. After all, we are preparing for future events, and we do not know with any certainty what those future events will be. So there is no certainty upon which one can base his attitude with regard to armaments. The only certain thing is that this year we contemplate spending a great deal more than we spent last year.

It is sometimes hard to do one's duty as one sees it, Mr. Speaker. I find it painful to disagree with the leaders of my party and so many of my Liberal friends. I respect the opinions of those who have different views, and I hope that my opinions will be respected also. I have considered this question just as seriously as a person could consider any question; I have listened to the speeches that have been made in this house; I have listened to the statistics that have been presented and the arguments that have been advanced both for and against the increase in the estimates. As I have already said, I have been forced to make up my mind to vote against the increase in the estimates for our Department of National Defence.

I like people who speak their minds freely. I like people who look a situation in the face and say what they think. It seems to me queer that our hon. friends who form His Majesty's most loyal opposition should be so quiet on this subject. It appears to me that the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett), who thought it expedient to speak for about two hours with regard to the appointment of Mr. John Vallance in connection with rehabilitation work in western Canada, should not have five minutes in which to address us and to demonstrate that an expenditure of \$15,000,000 is not very much, that perhaps he would be prepared to go to the extent of \$75,000,000 or \$100,000,000. Probably if that were done, it might help us to form a better judgment on this issue. I would have expected our very eloquent friend the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Massey) to give us an illuminating address on this important question. I should like to have heard the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe