

a nation, and that we shall act as a nation. But as my hon. friend has said, next year there will be a conference of all the representatives of the British Empire and the most momentous questions affecting the sister nations of the Empire will be discussed and decided. Let us, therefore, wait until this event has occurred before voting the amount of money which Parliament now asks us to vote.

My last reason is that this Parliament is not representative. It has not a mandate to vote this appropriation because it was not elected to do so, and furthermore the Government has pledged itself to the country that no naval expenditure will be made without being first submitted to the Canadian people. But there is this further fact to be considered. This Parliament at the present time—and no one can gainsay the fact—does not represent the majority of the Canadian people. Indeed, Sir, it does not even represent a large proportion of the people. Public opinion is decidedly against the present Parliament.

Mr. BEST: That is only your opinion; you don't know.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Is it? I venture to say that my hon. friend could not be elected in his riding to-day, and he knows it; and there are many other hon. gentlemen on the other side who could not be elected in their constituencies.

Mr. BEST: Don't you think that your country is the whole Dominion.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Well, I was elected quite recently in my county, and I think I can boast that I represent the opinion of my electors to-day. But my hon. friend cannot say the same. This Parliament, I repeat, does not represent public opinion. This Government has not been able to elect a single member supporting it except two ministers. They cannot do it, ministers cannot be replaced when they die or when they disappear in any other way. We have one of the most important departments in the Government, the Department of Public Works, which is not administered by a minister. There is a seat in this House—seat No. 40—which is vacant. It is going to be vacant until a new Parliament is elected because no minister can be elected by the Canadian people to fill that seat.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There is no minister from the Maritime provinces.

Mr. LAPOINTE: There is no minister from the Maritime Provinces and there is

no minister representing the province of Quebec east of Montreal. There cannot be any, because nobody can be elected as a supporter of this Government let alone a member of it. When we have such a condition of things, is it reasonable to enter into a new policy, to ask Parliament to vote almost \$2,000,000 and to accept ships from the Admiralty as the nucleus of the Canadian navy of the future? Let the Canadian people pronounce upon it. Postpone this vote until next session, let us go to the country and then a Parliament which will represent the views and opinions of the people of Canada will decide as to the naval policy.

Mr. CRERAR: The ground in this discussion has been so thoroughly covered that I do not think I can add very much that is new to the debate. I do believe, however, that the position of the minister in asking us to pass this vote is illogical and inconsistent. In his speech in this House in the closing days of March he stated that our naval policy would be considered at the next Imperial Conference to be held in 1921. If that is true we must assume that we have no naval policy to-day. Now, if we have no naval policy, where is the wisdom of considering a vote of about \$2,000,000 for naval expenditures this year? I am quite agreeable to the vote that the minister brought down when the Main Estimates were laid before the House but I think the House is quite justified in taking the position that the minister and the Government at that time did not contemplate this additional expenditure of \$1,700,000. That being the case I think those in this committee who are opposed to this vote are simply standing by the position that the minister and the Government took at that time. Now, our naval policy is to be considered at the Imperial conference in 1921. Personally, I regret that the Government have accepted the generous offer made by the Mother Country to give us certain war vessels. It is not known whether these vessels will be of very great use in future wars. I have read recently expressions of opinion by quite competent naval authorities in the Old Land who state that in future wars the battleships and cruisers that we have had in the past will be of very little use. I have seen it asserted that hereafter light cruisers and submarines might flood the towns and cities along the shores of a hostile country with gas. That, I believe, is the opinion of at