

represented was that we made no request to be represented, and Great Britain thought we did not want to be. They naturally thought we were quite content to let them go ahead themselves.

It is stated, parliament is now the only authority to say whether or not we take any part, and if so, what, in the enforcement of the treaty or in the securing of rights that arise later on by virtue thereof. Well, parliament has had that right ever since Canada had a parliament. Does the hon. member think Canada was ever without those rights? Were we not consenting parties, for example, to the Anglo-Japanese alliance? Did not Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when the question of the first renewal of that alliance came up, expressly affirm on behalf of Canada approval of that renewal? That is what he did, and I am not criticising him at all. Perhaps I would have done otherwise, but anyway parliament made no objection. Now then, does the minister say that because Canada approved of that renewal, was a party thereto, if any war arose as a result, we had no say as to what participation we should have in it? We had absolute command of the whole situation. Parliament, in the light of Canada's position, could decide what we would do and what we would not do, notwithstanding the fact that Canada manfully, under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, declared her position. Never under Laurier did we assume the position, if you call it that, the retreating, ambiguous, crouching position we took in 1922, and never did we assume the position we are now in as a result of this correspondence over Lausanne.

It is stated furthermore, and I have already referred to this statement of the Minister of Justice, that it was harder for us to be represented, owing to the different European conditions, in 1923 than it was back at the time of the treaty of Paris. He says the relations between the Allies were not so cordial—I understand his point; I did not at first—and consequently it was harder to get France and Italy to agree that we should have separate representation at the conference. I do not know that there was very much in it. I know they objected strongly in 1918, but I know that their objections were overcome, but suppose that they could not have been overcome; suppose the conditions and the jealousies were such that they could not be overcome, very well; then we could have had representation on the British delegation and could have been in a position to press the Canadian viewpoint, and to warn against courses which ultimately might result to our detriment. How did the minister know the

objections could not be overcome? He never tried. Hardly was the communication received than Canada sprang to the opportunity, I presume thinking we were getting out of something, and notified them that what they did was fine and that no exception could be taken to it at all.

Then it is stated—and the Minister of Justice dwelt upon it at some length, though rather cautiously—that our present relations are unsatisfactory, that they are too undefined, that our obligations within the Empire, our duties, our responsibilities and our rights have not that definiteness they ought to have; and consequently the resolution passed in 1917 at the Imperial conference, which provided that after the war there should be a constitutional conference whose functions should be more clearly to define these relations, should have been given effect to. He criticises me because I was a party to a resolution in 1921 which stated that in view of the constitutional developments—and I ask hon. gentlemen to mark the words—which had taken place after 1917 and before 1921, the relations were clear enough for the present and such conference was unnecessary.

What were those constitutional developments? Between 1917 and 1921 we acquired the right to representation in the negotiation of high political treaties. We acquired the right to representation as an individual country within the Empire. That right we did not have before. This was an achievement, and a marked achievement, and the conference of 1921 felt that, in view of this and other matters, but this one in chief, there was no more need of a constitutional conference. I am quite aware, and I admit very freely, that Sir Robert Borden has taken a position contrary to that taken by myself. I must say, by way of plea, that the entire representation of all the dominions there agreed with our position, and the resolution declaring in 1921 that the constitutional conference was no longer necessary was unanimously assented to by all present. And let me add that there may be a measure of, may I say, indefiniteness; there is an absence of written contract or obligation; but if I apprehend the meaning and mission of this Empire aright, it is based on that very fact; its greatest strength is that very fact. The Empire is a growth, a development, an evolution. It is not anything that is the consequence of negotiation and written contract, and I would take this occasion to advise the administration, and I advise them earnestly, that they should not take the pathway of constitutional conferences whose purpose may be to make a brand new constitu-