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Question—On what grounds did Parliament decide on a Canadian Naval Service?

What were the views of Hon. George E. Foster who introduced the resolution?

Answer—

It was the Hon. George E. Foster who introduced the resolution of March 29th, 1909, which, as amended, was subsequently unanimously adopted by both political parties. In one of the ablest speeches he ever delivered, Mr. Foster summed up the arguments for and against a policy of contribution—the present Borden Policy—and a policy of a Canadian Naval Service—the Laurier Policy. The question at that time had not become one of party politics. Mr. Foster, therefore, spoke not as a party politician, but as a statesman. The following is a summary in Mr. Foster's own words:*

ONLY ONE OF TWO POLICIES POSSIBLE, CONTRIBUTION OR NAVAL SERVICE.

MR. FOSTER.—“When you boil down all the propositions that are made, you get down to two propositions, one or the other of which must in the end be adopted, . . . the first is a policy of a fixed annual contribution, . . . the second policy is the assuming by ourselves of the defence of our own ports or coasts.”

“The policy of a fixed annual contribution divides itself, apparently, into two branches, but it is really the same thing. One man says send \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000 a year; another man says send a dreadnought or two dreadnoughts, and so far as Canada is concerned, these two are absolutely one. When we translate our contribution into dreadnoughts it comes down in the end to money which would be sufficient to build and equip a dreadnought and, therefore, I say they are both parts of the one proposition.”

*The speech in full will be found in the Hansard report of the debates in the House of Commons on March 29th, 1909, pages 3484 to 3503 inclusive.