

going to do until you know what the situation is in which you are proposing to intervene or not to intervene?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am not suggesting that we can tell exactly what we may do, but I think we can and should determine our general policy. In my judgment that is not clear to-day—despite the lengthy statement of the Prime Minister this afternoon and his statement a year ago. I for one confess my absolute inability to know where the government stands with regard to our obligations to the British Empire.

Mr. MARTIN: Are we to infer from what the hon. gentleman has said that he has changed the position he took last year, that in any event and in all events—

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am coming to that I believe a little later. I am discussing the Prime Minister now, and do not intend to be diverted by the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin). The Prime Minister said, "What we are doing we are doing for Canada alone." For a moment I want to glance at that "Canada alone" policy. A year ago the Prime Minister gave a statement of the Canadian legion which, he said, set forth the views of his administration. It read:

(4) That we, therefore, believe that it is essential that Canada should, forthwith, develop a defence policy which, in the first place, would be designed to enable us to effectively defend our neutrality in case of war and protect our trade and commerce, and ultimately enable us to defend our eastern and western coasts from aggression by enemy forces.

My criticism is that this whole policy is one of compromise. The Prime Minister says:

If we have not proposed more, if we have not proposed less, it is because of that guiding principle, we have sought to keep the country united.

I think the cat is out of the bag. If we proposed more, we would be siding with the imperialists. If we proposed less, the government would be accused of being isolationist; so there is the policy. Let me read the Prime Minister's statement again:

If we have not proposed more, if we have not proposed less, it is because of that guiding principle, we have sought to keep the country united.

It seems to me the government is refusing to take responsibility. It is all very well for the Prime Minister to say that there will be no participation in an overseas war except by the consent of parliament; but if war came, instead of maintaining unity, this country would be split from stem to stern. There is no doubt of that. It would be a reasonable thing for the government to face the

question of a diversity of opinion in this country and come out with one or the other policy, instead of keeping us in suspense as to what is the real policy of the government.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Does my hon. friend want to split the country right away?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No; I do not want to split the country right away; but I want to know where this government stands, and I think the country has a right to know where it stands. I suggest that the Minister of Justice, after listening to the speech of the right hon. leader of the opposition, would have no doubt where he stands. We know where he stands, but we do not know where the government stands.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I know where I stand.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: That may be; I wish the minister would tell us when the time comes. As regards having a war-time election, think what would happen. We would be faced with a fait accompli, and probably we would be into a khaki election. Would that keep the country united?

I should like to direct attention to the resolution of the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. MacNeil), which I think ought to be considered very carefully. This resolution reads as follows:

That in the opinion of this house the Canadian government should take such steps as may be necessary to make clear to the other members of the Commonwealth and to the world that the right either to declare war or to remain neutral, in any war that may occur, is vested solely in Canada.

I submit that is a step which we should take to clarify the situation. South Africa has done that in her Status of Union Act and Royal Executives Functions and Seals Act. Why do we not do it in Canada? I for one do not want to be dragged into another imperialistic war.

I put briefly two or three considerations, the first of which is that from a military standpoint our defence is wholly inadequate. It must be inadequate. How can we, a comparatively small country from the standpoint of population, a great, scattered country, possibly defend ourselves if, as the leader of the opposition suggested, someone were determined to come in. Let us recognize that fact. We cannot by ourselves have any real measure of security. I will go farther than that and say that to-day no nation can successfully adopt an isolationist policy. We may possibly have to do it for the moment; but I would urge that the world to-day forms a community,