

*National Defence—Mr. Mackenzie King*

Some hon. Members: Time.

Mr. MacInnis: May I finish reading this?

Mr. Mackenzie King: Yes, let the hon. member finish.

Mr. MacInnis: I shall continue:

The dominions, as a matter of fact, have spent a great deal of money upon perfecting or improving their own defences, and that is their contribution to the common fund, but there is no other form of contribution, of which I am aware, under discussion at the present time.

And then the hon. member said:

So, you see there is a common fund to which the dominions contribute.

Now what did Mr. Chamberlain mean when he spoke about a common fund? He meant common security. At last the hon. member has discovered that after all there is a common security, towards which we may perhaps be contributing something. I ask hon. members whether they think it is inadvisable to contribute to common security, to a common fund in the nature of security against aggression, against invasion, by making some effort to maintain peace and this in the present instance by defending our own coasts, in our own country, and nothing more.

But Mr. Chamberlain's statement, possibly because it referred to a common fund, was apparently not regarded as sufficient on the part of British statesmen to relieve the fears of some hon. members, because the next day another minister spoke, this time Sir Thomas Inskip, minister for defence coordination. Sir Thomas only yesterday made the following statement in the House of Commons, which is equally emphatic. I read from the Associated Press report in the evening papers of yesterday:

So far as the dominions have opinions on our foreign policy let them be expressed by them, not by persons in this house. We shall this year enjoy the full measure of a conference with dominions' representatives. Let us not embroil them in our commitments.

The defence coordination minister also repeated previous assertions that the dominions will not be asked to share the bill.

"We ask this country to pay for the colonies and dependencies in those parts of the empire for which we are responsible, on which we depend for much of our raw materials," Sir Thomas Inskip declared.

"The dominions, of course, are conscious of the value of their associations with this country and they are making their own preparations at their own expense for their own defence."

As if that were not enough the Prime Minister of England also felt that he should make clear the position that in no way was Canada, or any other dominion, in connection with what it is doing for defence, necessarily committing itself to expenditures for some scheme

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of imperial defence. The Canadian Press report in last night's Ottawa papers contained the following:

Geoffrey Mander, Liberal, asked for a statement concerning proposals that the government lay before the imperial conference suggestions that a greater share in the cost of imperial defence be borne by the dominions.

Mr. Baldwin: "While welcoming the opportunity afforded by the imperial conference for discussion of defence and other problems, I may remind the hon. gentleman that the defence expenditure of the dominions is entirely a matter for His Majesty's governments in their respective dominions."

Could anything be clearer than that? That statement by the Prime Minister of Great Britain should remove all possibility of doubt as to defence commitments not sanctioned by our own parliament.

In the course of this debate it has been necessary at different times from this side of the house to repeat that what we are doing we are doing for Canada and for Canada alone. That has been necessary for the reason that an impression had been created that what we were doing had relation to some expeditionary force which would be sent overseas. When we say that what we are doing we are doing for Canada alone, we mean that what we are doing is for the defence of our country within the territorial waters of the coasts of our country, and within Canada itself for the defence of Canada. But I hope it will not be thought that because we have laid emphasis on the fact that what we are doing we are doing for Canada, we are not thereby making some contribution towards the defence of the British commonwealth of nations as a whole, or that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all English-speaking communities, that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all democracies, that we are not making some contribution towards the defence of all those countries that may some day necessarily associate themselves together for the purpose of preserving their liberties and freedom against an aggressor, come from wherever he may. I say that while we are doing what we are doing for Canada we believe that in this way we can make the most effective contribution towards the security of all countries that may have like institutions, like ideals, and principles of freedom similar to our own.

May I say this word in conclusion. We have heard in this debate that we ought to look to the United States, that we ought to become members of some pan-American conference, that we ought to take up with new friends, that we ought to seek our security in