

that blue-book through and have any doubt whatever that the policy is absolutely new and novel, differing in every respect from any policy enunciated or suggested before by either the imperial or this government. There can be no doubt that the policy is entirely novel, and that the people have so far been kept in the dark as to its real meaning and import. Let me point out what in reality is the proposal which was laid before the imperial conference in 1909 and agreed upon by our delegates and the others, and I will do it in connection with this proposition, which it is also necessary in the interests of truth to elucidate, and which is this. A local navy or a contribution of ships and money is attended with precisely the same political consequences, because, in my province at any rate, it has been held out to the people in a deceptive way, that what the government proposes to do is to organize a naval defence uniquely and solely for our own protection, and it has been hinted every where that this was the first step in the direction of a far larger emancipation than we have hitherto enjoyed. I say that in the first place, it is suggested that in the case of the navy we are arming for our own protection. The responsibilities, however, are precisely the same, as far as political consequences are concerned, as if we were contributing in money or ships to the British navy. In the first case, as they are, we are arming for our own protection; in the second, we are making common cause with the imperial fleet for imperial defence. That is the pretension set forth in my own province, this view has been systematically advanced in the province of Quebec by people who are interested in deceiving the electorate. But in either case, the consequences, now I say, are the same. The only variation lies in the mode of assistance. That was what was advanced at every stage of this discussion as far as the British government was concerned. Of course, my right hon. friend did not agree to that. He who makes such terrible attacks on this side of the House, because there are on this side honest and sincere differences of opinion, has differed so often with himself on this very subject that he thinks he can escape by playing the role of the tadpole which throws mud all round it in order to escape. I am prepared under any circumstances to respect the opinions of my fellow citizens on this subject and that does not seem to be the disposition of the right hon. the Prime Minister or the future Knight of the Bath, my hon. friend the Postmaster General (Mr. Lemieux). As soon as he is knighted, he will, like the errant cavaliers of ancient times, put a patch on his eye until he has met with some man of noble blood and slaughtered him.

What I say is that this proposition which I venture to lay before the House was abundantly proved by the proceedings of the conference itself in regard to which if my hon. friend, instead of giving us the story of Peter the Hermit, had explained those things, as he should have done, on the second reading of the Bill, I might have been spared the trouble of detaining the House on this point.

In support of this, let us take in the first instance the declaration of the results of the conference made before the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Mr. Asquith, and set out in the proceedings of the conference—a declaration which was absolutely approved by the conference itself, and after one of our own delegates, my hon. friend the Minister of Militia, had moved a vote of thanks to the British government. This is the statement made by the Prime Minister:

The conference, which has just concluded its labours, was convened under the terms of Resolution I of the conference of 1907. In the invitation sent by His Majesty's government at the end of April to the governments of the dominions, it was stated that the object of the conference would be to discuss the general question of naval and military defence of the empire, with special reference to recent proposals from New Zealand and Australia, and to the resolution passed on March 29, by the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. It was further stated that the conference would be of a purely consultative character, and that it would be held in private. It follows that all resolutions come to and proposals approved by the conference which has now been held, must be taken, so far as the delegates of the dominions are concerned, to be ad referendum, and of no binding force unless and until submitted to their various parliaments.

I should add, in special reference to the delegates from South Africa, that they did not feel themselves in a position, in regard to either naval or military defence, to submit or to approve positive proposals until the union of South Africa was accomplished fact. With this preface I will briefly summarize the main conclusions of the conference in regard, first, to military, and next to naval defence.

After the main conference at the foreign office, a military conference took place at the War office, and resulted in an agreement on the fundamental principles set out in papers which had been prepared by the general staff for consideration by the delegates. The substance of these papers, which will be included among the papers to be published, was a recommendation that, without impairing the complete control of the government of each dominion over the military forces raised within it, these forces should be standardized, the formation of the units, the arrangements for transport, the pattern of weapons, etc., being as far as possible assimilated to those which have recently been worked out for the British army. Thus, while the dominion troops would in each case be raised for the defence of the