

Canadians to South Africa, and he said that the campaigners in Quebec in order to make it as easy as possible for the government used this argument: First, they contended that the Boer war was indefensible; second, that Canada should not have participated in it; and third—and this is the excuse they gave—Sir Wilfrid Laurier was forced into it by the fanaticism of a united English-speaking population. And, in the face of this, the Postmaster General, has told us that out of the fullness of her heart Canada voluntarily sent her troops to fight the battles of the motherland in South Africa. It reminds me of that somewhat egotistical expression of the Prime Minister when he told us that he went to bed one night leaving Canada a mere blot on the map and he woke up in the morning and lo and behold, Canada was a nation, and: 'I did it'. What a personification of modesty.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have not prepared any typewritten peroration, such as we listened to this afternoon. I simply desire to say in plain words that I am going to oppose this Bill, first, because it provides for an independent Canadian navy which will have no association whatever with the empire fleet. It is not a unit of the British fleet such as Australia has, and I was surprised to hear the Prime Minister say, far from frankly, and wrongly stating the facts in regard to the Australian fleet, that Australia instead of giving a contribution to England of one million dollars for the upkeep of the British navy, as she formerly did, had now reversed her policy, and had come to Canada's way of thinking, and would do as Canada was doing. Australia is doing nothing of the kind. True it is, that Australia had been contributing for years to the upkeep of the British navy, as had the other colonies, and in 1907 she had increased her grant, but at the recent imperial conference Australia took the advice of the admiralty and is now constructing under that advice, an Australian unit of the British navy, which Canada is not doing. And why is England contributing to Australia's navy? It is because she is going to get something in return that will be of service in time of war. And if Canada had taken the advice of the admiralty and had done as Australia is doing, England would also have contributed to the Canadian navy a million dollars just as she is contributing to the Australian navy, which will be of some service to Britain in time of war. Then, the Prime Minister has told us that this is not a new policy of his, but that it has been before the country for the last eight years. He bases that assertion on what Dr. Smartt, of Cape Colony, called a pious affirmation by the Prime Minister, in 1902, that Canada was willing to take into its consideration the idea of some kind of

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naval defence in the future. And mind you, that pious affirmation was made when, in 1902, the other colonies were giving fifty thousand pounds, and a hundred thousand pounds, and two hundred thousand pounds to the upkeep of the British navy, and when Canada was lagging behind just as she has been lagging behind ever since this government came to power in everything that appertains to contributing to the defence of the empire. But, even if the Prime Minister did make that declaration eight years ago, up to the present hour he has not lifted his little finger to implement it by practical legislation. It is ridiculous to claim that this is a new policy; it is not treating with sufficient respect the intelligence of the members of this House and the people of the country for the right hon. gentleman to make such a claim. And, Mr. Speaker, I object to this proposal, not only because it is not a unit of the British navy, but because its cost will be enormous, and in time of war it will be utterly useless. The initial expenditure will not be eleven millions dollars as stated by the hon. member for Pictou, because according to the statement made by the Prime Minister, if it is built in Canada thirty per cent will have to be added, and that will bring the initial cost to fifteen or sixteen million dollars. Its upkeep will be twice what it was represented to be, and in the end the navy will be of no benefit to the empire. The people of Canada have never had an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon this policy, and I am democratic enough to believe that such an opportunity should be afforded. We know that the Prime Minister, in days gone by, claimed to be a democrat to the hilt, but he has singularly changed his character in that respect. He once sneered at empty baubles and glittering titles, which appealed to men of less noble mind, but he soon changed his mind, and the excuse he gave was that Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, had actually thrust a knighthood upon him that he could not refuse—another exemplification of his modesty. I am sufficient of a democrat to desire that before engaging in this permanent policy, which certainly can be of no help to the motherland for five years, and perhaps for ten years, if at all, the people of the country should have the opportunity of passing judgment upon it. I shall, therefore, support the amendment of the leader of the opposition for a direct contribution to purchase two Dreadnoughts, or the equivalent, according to the best expert opinion of the British admiralty. Again, the hon. member for Pictou reflected on that. We are going to send them any place the admiralty desires in time of war. Yes, we have sufficient confidence in the British admiralty—far more than we have in this government—to believe that they