

parliament and before his country and declares a certain policy to be the wise policy, when he keeps on reiterating the same opinion on every possible occasion on which he appears in public, either in this country or in England, and sticks to the same story when he first comes back at the opening of parliament,—and then suddenly changes, the charge of inconsistency becomes a serious one, and that public man must show some good cause if he is not to be condemned as guilty. What did the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. L. Borden) say last session?

I am entirely of opinion, in the first place, that the proper line upon which we should proceed in that regard is the line of having a Canadian naval force of our own.

That was last year. This year he moved a resolution which declares that he does not want a Canadian navy:

It was pointed out in discussing this question that Australia in providing a force of that kind would provide a force which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Great Britain to send across the seas, and that in thus protecting themselves they were providing the best possible force for the protection of the empire. So I am at one with the Prime Minister as far as this is concerned. I am at one with him in this respect also, that I think that an—

And let us mark what he said.

—that I think that the expenditure of money designed for that purpose ought, in the main at least, to be under the control of our own parliament, and that by making an appropriation of that kind and attending to the defence of our own coasts, by co-operation and co-ordination with the imperial naval forces, we would be rendering a real service in the defence of the empire, and we would be doing our duty not only to Canada but to the empire as a whole.

These are splendid sentiments. Did he mean them? I would like to know whether he meant them or not. Was he trying to fool his own party and the people of Canada when he uttered these words? Why did he take that position declaring that he was in favour of a Canadian navy, first, last and all the time? Later on, in the same speech he said:

I do not desire to say anything more on this subject. I believe that the defence of our own shores and the protection of our own commerce is due to the self-respect which should fill the heart of every man in this country—

I ask my hon. friends on the other side who have any Canadian ambition, who are proud of the fact that they are Canadians—can these words of their leader fall without response upon their ears?—

—that the defence of our own shores and the protection of our own commerce is due to the self-respect which would fill the heart of every man in this country. You say that we

may rest contented to depend for our naval defence on Great Britain. Well, if we have assumed the status of a nation in one respect, shall we adhere to the status of a Crown colony in other and still more important respects?

I wondered, when my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) was talking of the 'rag baby of autonomy' the other night, what he thought of the expression of his leader that this country might be reduced to the status of a Crown colony. And the fact that we failed to undertake these duties in regard to naval development and merely give a contribution would mean that Canada would sink to the status of a Crown colony. Yet that policy to-day is the policy of my hon. friend, the policy that Canada should be demeaned, that Canada should sink away below the other colonies of the empire from the premier position which she now occupies, away back to the standard of a Crown colony. Well, my hon. friend went down to Halifax to his own constituents, and told them that he was in favour of a Canadian navy, and his newspaper in Halifax reports him as follows:

Mr. Borden lifts the question of national defence above petty partisanship.

Wasn't it splendid?—lifting the question above petty partisanship. Well, if that phrase means anything, it only means that my hon. friend at the present time has got it down to the level of party politics. I think, and I desire to say this again, if my hon. friend is a stickler for constitutional usage he ought to resign his seat and go back to his constituents and tell them that he has changed his mind, that what he regarded, when he was in England, as the worst form for Canada, he now regards as all right; after making such a volte-face as he has done on this question, going down to his constituents and telling them that he was for a Canadian navy, and six months afterwards discarding the whole thing and saying: We don't want a navy, we want to send \$25,000,000 to England, and borrow the money to do it. This is what he said last summer:

The House of Commons last session laid down a certain policy touching naval defence in which both political parties united. It may not have suited the aspirations of all Conservatives.

So, then there were some gentlemen on the other side last year who did not want a Canadian navy. These gentlemen were not powerful enough to throttle him last year, but they have become powerful enough in the meantime to drown the voice with which he spoke last year.

But it seemed our bounden duty to place, if possible, above the limits of partisan strife, a question so vital and far reaching, and to attain the standard which has for many years