

of free trade as it was viewed in the Old Country twenty-five years ago, but in relation to this particular question he has taken a different stand. We are not contending that we should not encourage the development of industry in Canada. We say that under the conditions which obtain at the present time, we are justified in taking the course followed in this Bill. I repeat that assurances have been given to the House that the Government and the Admiralty will encourage in the near future, the establishment of shipyards in this country.

Mr. BUREAU: And build oil tanks.

Mr. STEVENS: Now I want to say a word on the question of equipment, which is also referred to in this clause. In the early part of this debate hon. gentlemen opposite contended in the most emphatic terms that we were able, not only to construct war vessels, but to equip them, to the last possible item, with the finest class of guns and everything else. Now their position is entirely changed. The hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) who, perhaps, has given more study to this question than any other member of the Opposition, stated very distinctly the other day that it was not necessary for us to construct or to build all the equipment in Canada, and that we should start by building the hulls and import the equipment from other parts of the world, if necessary. That is a very reasonable view to take, and it is exactly the view that we take. We say let us do what we can, let us encourage this development, but we do not intend to wait until we are fully equipped before we enter into the responsibilities of national or Imperial defence.

The last point I wish to touch upon is the subject of the common defence of the Empire, upon which we are divided, and which is also referred to in this clause, so that I am keeping strictly to the subject under discussion. Hon. gentlemen opposite take a clear-cut stand against any action on the part of the Dominion for the common defence of the Empire. They state most definitely and emphatically that it is Canada's business to build up a system of defence for Canada, and that in case of strife between the Empire and other countries, it is a question for Parliament to debate and to decide whether or not Canada shall enter into that war. I shall quote the words of the right hon. the leader of the Opposition which clearly sets that forth, and I may say in this connection that when the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Kyte) quoted this statement the other night, he quoted it as having been made by the leader of the Government. I would remind him that it was made by the right hon. the leader of the Opposition. The right hon. gentleman said:

When England is at war, we are at war.

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That sounds very nice, but he goes on to say:

It does not follow that because we are at war we are actually in the conflict.

How any person could entertain two such contradictory views as these is beyond my comprehension, and, I think, beyond the comprehension or explanation of any hon. gentleman opposite or on this side of the House. We contend without reservation that it is the duty of Canada to participate in the common defence of the Empire, and by the common defence of the Empire we mean this, that whenever there is any necessity for the expenditure of money in the defence of the Empire, Canada shall contribute either by the methods set forth in this Bill or by any other method which may hereafter be introduced by the Government in the form of a permanent policy. The point I wish to make clear is, that, so far as the two parties are concerned at the present time, the line of cleavage is distinct and clear. Our hon. friends opposite repudiate the responsibility for a common Imperial defence; we claim that responsibility rests upon our shoulders.

When I rose to speak on this question, I suggested that there was one point which called for consideration, and that is in regard to the time when action will be taken under this Bill. No doubt, later on, the Prime Minister will have something to say on this matter, and I would ask him at this stage if, when the time comes for taking the matter into consideration, he would give an assurance to the people of this country, and especially to those whom I represent, and whom my colleagues from British Columbia represent—because this matter is of vital importance to us—that it is the intention of the Government to take speedy action to give effect to the terms of this Bill. I trust that later on in the debate the right hon. the leader of the Government will see his way to express his views on that matter, and I feel satisfied that he will give us that assurance. With that assurance, I can say to the Government, and have no hesitation in saying to the country at large, that we from British Columbia are a unit behind the Prime Minister and the Government in support of this Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD: Has the hon. gentleman any fears that this policy of the Government which he supports is along the lines announced by the Deputy Speaker in his journal and by other Nationalists in Quebec, that no speedy efforts are to be made to carry out the terms of the Bill.

Mr. STEVENS: I did not quite catch what my hon. friend said.

Mr. MACDONALD: I asked whether my hon. friend had heard and approved of