

to pay tribute, or to contribute to the defence of the Empire.

Mr. BOULAY: (Translation.) Will the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. LAPOINTE: (Translation.) If that is quite agreeable to the hon. gentleman I will allow him to do so.

Mr. BOULAY: (Translation.) The hon. gentleman is aware, no doubt, that Sir George Etienne Cartier was defeated at Montreal on that issue?

Mr. LAPOINTE: (Translation.) Sir George Etienne Cartier was certainly not defeated for having approved of the admission of British Columbia into Confederation. That is another mistake of my hon. friend from Rimouski. Surely there was no need of uniting the various provinces, if the system of national defence was to consist for the future in the payment of a certain sum to the British exchequer.

Look into the report dated July 12, 1865, addressed to His Excellency, Viscount Monck, Governor General of Canada, by the Canadian delegates, the hon. Messrs. John A. Macdonald, George Etienne Cartier, George Brown and A. T. Galt, and you will find what were the feelings of the fathers of the Canadian Confederation in regard to this question of defence.

Immediately after Confederation, with a view to carrying out the policy which had been formulated, the British troops were withdrawn from Canada and our militia was organized. It was a new assertion of the principle of responsible and autonomous government.

Another step in that direction was taken ten years ago, when the British forces stationed on our Atlantic and Pacific seaboard were withdrawn and we took over the forts at Halifax and Esquimalt.

The establishment of a Canadian navy is the natural crowning of that work. It is the carrying out of that provision of the British North America Act which says that the Canadian Parliament will see to the military and sea defence of the country. It is an essentially constitutional and autonomous move.

Any contribution in cash or in vessels to the British navy would on the contrary be a direct violation of the constitution. It is a backward move in the general trend of our national progress. It constitutes a recurrence of those old-time notions of centralization and of Imperial control, which the supporters of the 'family compact' tried in days past to impose on our country, and which our forerunners had to fight against on the battlefields.

It is making of Canada a ward of Downing Street, and helping to bring about that state of things dreamed of by the hon. member for St. Antoine, when he said in a speech that Canada was called upon to

occupy within the Empire a position similar to that held by each province within the Dominion. Now to play such a part it would be necessary that Canada should give up many of its powers, many of its privileges, in the same way that the Canadian provinces have had to do to enter Confederation.

Is that, Mr. Speaker, showing respect for Canada's past? Is not that endeavouring to break the traditions which have been handed down to us and oblige us to live over again our past history?

The Government realize so well how imperfect their Bill is, that they are endeavouring to delude public opinion by statements of an utterly misleading and contradictory character. The stand taken by the Prime Minister in launching this new policy was that we were in honour and duty bound to make this gift to Great Britain. It was a present offered to the Mother Country by her loyal Canadian subjects.

To-day, performing once more a wonderful somersault, he declares that the ships built with our money will continue to be the property of Canada, while at the same time being part and parcel of the British fleet and taking part in all the wars in which that fleet may take a hand. That last stand is to my mind even worse than the first. However ridiculous the notion of making to the Mother Country a gift of thirty-five millions, still I think it is preferable to the proposal of owning a fleet unit as part of the British fleet. That fleet unit will not be under the control of the Canadian Parliament, the Government of this country having over it no authority whatever, and it will obey exclusively the orders of the British Admiralty. Its field of usefulness will not be in Canadian waters, but in the North sea.

And please note, Mr. Speaker, that the three warships built with our funds will be, as the Prime Minister stated, the three most powerful warships to be found in the whole world.

And while they will continue to be our property, according to the new theory of the Government, these ships will take part in all the battles in which the British fleet will engage in any part of the globe, whatever the nature of the conflict, and without the Canadian people having had a word to say in regard to the settlement of the questions which have given occasion to the war.

We will in consequence be mixed up in all the wars of the Empire, whether just or unjust, even in the civil wars which may at times break out in the United Kingdom. Have we not of late, Mr. Speaker, heard a section of the British Tory party urge revolt and rebellion and endeavour to induce people in Ireland to take up arms on the day that Home Rule would be sanctioned?

And what is even more serious, we are endorsing in advance Britain's foreign