

the leader of the opposition less than twelve months ago conceived the importance of a Canadian navy to be so great that he undervalued the land defences of this country, and then said we should spend half the money we are now spending for militia to formulate a Canadian navy. He laid stress on the importance of Canada's oversea trade in comparison with its overland trade, and contended that the argument was preponderatingly in favour of a naval policy as against a land militia. Said the leader of the opposition: Ninety-two per cent of the trade of this country passes over the sea, whilst the remaining eight per cent passes over the land. For this land business we subscribe an average of \$6,000,000 a year. What would be wrong in taking three or four million dollars from the land defence and subscribing for a strong, magnificent protection of this country? I supported that principle because just a few weeks before I had made some little complaint in this House against the extreme expenditure on the militia from the standpoint that the ministers were contracting the appropriations for public works in the country generally on account of the financial conditions, and that when we were reducing the expenditure for productive public works, we might have seen our way at that particular time for that particular reason to decrease the large expenditure made on the militia for that particular year. When the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) put up his argument I agreed with him entirely. I shall read one sentence from the hon. gentleman's speech. He said:

I venture to submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this House, that the expenditure in defence of our seaports, in defence of our coasts, in defence of the waters of the ocean which are immediately adjacent to our coasts is of immensely greater advantage and of immensely greater importance than the expenditure which, year after year, we are disbursing in connection with the military forces of this country. . . . 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.

I submit that it is a marvellous exhibition to have these words from responsible leaders of great national parties. There can be no change in any conditions or circumstances which would correspond to the enormous changes in these opinions. What has happened in ten months that Canada should have a navy ten months ago and should not have a navy to-day? Perhaps the scare has been scattered. Perhaps hon. gentlemen think that there is no such thing as an emergency. If a Canadian navy to-day is not necessary because hon. gentlemen think there is not an emergency, by what line of reasoning can they suppose that there ought to be two Dreadnoughts?

If it is not necessary to build up the protection of this country for the defence of Canada, for the trade of Canada, what particular reason is there that we should send \$20,000,000 or \$25,000,000 out of this country over which we would have no control? I submit that there is no reason or logic in the position hon. gentlemen have taken.

Another hon. gentleman, the hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Middlebro) made a very magnificent speech last year and of course he switched around just as quickly as did all the rest of the hon. gentlemen. I wish to read a few words of my hon. friend's speech of a year ago. I read it just three hours before he delivered his speech this year, and as he addressed the House I was able to compare his speech of this year with his speech of last year, and to observe the wonderfully quick change that he had made. Let me read a few sentences:

We are here to-day to protect the Dominion of Canada, a country that has a population of 7,000,000, a country that is thirty-three times as large as Italy, eighteen times as large as Germany, eighteen times as large as France, nearly as large as the whole of Europe, and slightly larger than the United States. We are here to protect the commerce and the productiveness of the Dominion of Canada. We are here to protect seven thousand miles of coast line on the Pacific coast.

Now I expect the support of my hon. friend in connection with the handsome Bristols that are to be built for Esquimalt in my district.

We are here to protect 7,000 miles of coast line on the Pacific coast.

If that was his position ten months ago, what has happened? May I not confidently expect that he will vote to protect the 7,000 miles of sea coast on the Pacific, and support the government policy when he has an opportunity.

Mr. SPROULE. I would be very glad still to support it if the scheme which the government mapped out were in my judgment suitable to do that, but I do not think it is.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. The hon. gentleman who commits himself to a proposition of doing nothing ought not to be a competent judge of the qualities of what ought to be done. My hon. friend has committed himself to a proposition of doing absolutely nothing. If he had said: If you will build so many Dreadnoughts, if you will build a navy of a certain capacity, if the government will decide to do just what ought to be done in the construction of this navy, I will support them—he might speak, but my hon. friend is not in that position; my hon. friend is in a position of opposing every thing so far as a Cana-