

Admiralty. These ships, with the exception as to the superior officers—the exception is worth noting—are to be manned by Canadians. Gifts are favours with sharp edges. There is in them, however carefully hidden, some element of obligation. A one-sided gift between equals is a difficult transaction; and where the relationship is uncertain with some suggestion of inferiority on the part of the recipient, the acceptance of a gift may possibly have awkward consequences. The Dominion Government, it seems to us, would have been well advised if it had replied to the well-intentioned pressure from the Admiralty by saying that it could have no transactions with it until it had worked out its naval policy and secured the approval of the Canadian people; but that, once this was done, it would be prepared to consider taking over British ships if the Admiralty had them to spare on the basis of paying their full value for them.

If Mr. Ballantyne's statement is to be interpreted as meaning that the Canadian naval policy is to be determined at an Imperial naval conference to be held in London shortly, there is room for vigorous protest.

That is what the Manitoba Free Press, one of the newspapers supporting this Government, says in part about Canada's Naval Policy, and it will be noticed that it asserts that the very best thing the Government could do would be to defer this matter until we have had time to go more fully into it. I hope the Minister of Naval Affairs will carefully weigh the words of the Manitoba Free Press. Now, Sir, there is another newspaper which is strongly opposed to naval expenditure at this time. The paper in question is published in what may be called a naval and military city—a city which ever since its settlement has practically been a base for the British Army and the British Navy, and lately a base for Canadian troops and for the Canadian Navy. The paper to which I refer is the Halifax Chronicle which, in its issue of Wednesday, June 16th, made the following statements:

It is to be hoped that the practice of ministers saying one thing and meaning another, or meaning nothing at all, will not become epidemic in Parliament.

Well, Sir, I might say here that the Minister of Naval Affairs is not the only minister who has been guilty of this very same thing. The Chronicle goes on to say:

The Minister of Finance gave a striking exhibition of it in his Budget Speech. The Minister of Naval Service has followed suit.

Hon. Mr. Ballantyne gave it to be clearly understood, three months ago, that no decision would be reached with regard to a permanent naval policy for Canada until after the next Imperial Conference in 1921, more than a year hence. He subsequently presented Naval Estimates of only \$300,000 for the current year. He issued orders for the virtual stripping of the Halifax and Esquimalt dockyards, and arranged for the disposition of all equipment and supplies. His apparent intention to economize

rigorously was regarded with almost universal satisfaction because it was generally felt that, after her enormous war expenditures, Canada could afford to do nothing effective in the naval direction, and had therefore better not attempt anything at present, or until the necessity and the way became clearer.

The matter was considered as good as settled temporarily, or for the session at least, until the minister sprung his new announcement of policy on the House of Commons, on Monday, coupled with Supplementary Estimates for \$2,200,000, in addition to the \$300,000 previously estimated, thus providing for a total expenditure of two and a half million dollars this year. More significant still, if not more ominous, was the repetition of his former statement that "no decision on a permanent naval policy would be reached until after the next Imperial Conference in 1921." The obvious suggestion is that the present vote of \$2,500,000 is only a preliminary step, a mere foretaste of what is to follow.

An amazing revelation made in the minister's speech was that at a meeting of overseas Premiers, in London, in 1918, over which Sir Robert Borden presided, a memorandum was drawn up and sent to the Admiralty, in which the policy now to be adopted was recommended. That policy is identical, on a small scale, with that which Sir Wilfrid Laurier proposed for Canada, and which after first supporting, Sir Robert afterwards strenuously opposed. It was in direct opposition to it, that he brought forward his defeated measure, to make a gift of Thirty-Five Million Dollars to the Admiralty from the Dominion Treasury. If Sir Robert is not a great sailor it cannot be for lack of knowledge of how to box the political compass on the Naval question.

The main points in connection with the minister's speech are that an additional \$2,200,000 of public money is to be expended during this and each coming year, with the prospect of indefinite further increases in the near future, and that Canada is to maintain a number of vessels, presumably for training purposes. We are to assume this further burden while almost crushed beneath the liabilities incurred through the war, and before any effective steps have been taken towards the rehabilitation of the country's finances.

While Great Britain is cutting down her Navy as far and as fast as she can, Canada is to start building up a new Navy. While the German fleet was at its full menacing strength Canada did without a Navy. Now that the German Fleet has been wiped out of existence, and there is no threatening fleet in sight in the world; now, after we have spent billions in the war and crippled the Dominion's finances for years to come, we are to be forced into further borrowings for additional expenditures to build and maintain a fleet which is wholly unnecessary just now, or as far ahead as one can see.

Surely Parliament will inspect and examine this singular proposition, so singularly brought forward, to the very bottom before sanctioning any such expenditures as that asked for by the minister, in Canada's present condition and circumstances.

I think that these wise words written by the editor of the Morning Chronicle should certainly have some weight with the Minister of Naval Affairs and other hon. gentlemen opposite. In fact I think I am safe