

down a couple of ships and the whole difficulty is settled. Great Britain in a case like that, would not want the help of the Canadian navy. Would you send the Canadian ships in such a case to join the British navy? To come closer home to Europe, suppose Great Britain should unhappily—it is hardly conceivable—engage in a war with Switzerland, an inland country, with no navy. Great Britain might feel bound to declare war against Switzerland. Would it be necessary in such an event that we should automatically send our ships to join the British navy? These are all, I grant, extreme cases, but extreme cases are possible in the matter we are now discussing.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. If the Canadian navy were under the British admiralty, does the hon. gentleman suppose that it would ask that the Canadian navy be sent to England under such circumstances as he has mentioned?

Mr. FIELDING. But why should we place it under the control of the British admiralty? I say that this clause deals with occasions when it is not necessary or expedient for any British purpose that the ships of Canada should be sent to join the Royal navy. But I will carry the argument further. I am going to suppose a war with a great power. Let us suppose that that German scare, which kept so many hon. gentlemen opposite awake at night during the early part of this session, results in a war with Germany. I say that the people of Canada, who have built and paid for these ships, are the persons to determine, through their constituted government and parliament, what part they shall take; and therefore I stand for the principle laid down in the clause, that the right of the people of Canada through their government to determine that question shall be maintained as it is in this Act. But while I maintain that that right is necessary and proper, I have no doubt as to the manner in which that right would be exercised. I say that whenever the British nation shall become involved in a war with a great power, I do not stop to consider whether it is a just or an unjust war—so long as we are part of the British empire, I care not what government is in power in Canada, it will be its duty instantly to join and help the mother country; and I say the government in power in such a crisis, be it Liberal or be it Tory, which will fail to respond to that sentiment, will be swept out of existence, and will deserve to be. All the same it is well that we should recognize, as we do in this Bill, that if we are to engage in these wars, we are going to engage in them, as we have done in the past, by the free voluntary action of the Canadian government and the Canadian people.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. And so we would be doing it by a free and voluntary act of the Canadian people if we said that the Canadian naval force should be part of the naval force of the empire in time of war—a free act of the will of the Canadian people. Why does my hon. friend the Minister of Finance desire to becloud the issue in that way? If this parliament does that, it does it as the representative of the Canadian people, and speaking for the Canadian people. That is the free act of the Canadian people in the one case, just the same as it would be in the other case. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance speaks of war with Switzerland or a war with some inland power. The ships of the royal navy would not be engaged in such a war. The ships of the Canadian naval force would not be so engaged. One might remark in passing that the Swiss navy is about the only navy that our own supposed force could safely fight, so far as one can judge.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But when Britain is engaged in a naval war, it might be that not 25 per cent of her own fleet would be engaged in active hostilities; on the other hand it might be the whole of her fleet. I am not asking that the Canadian navy should be sent to South America, or to Egypt, or China on some trivial pretext. I am not asking or suggesting that; but I say that the only workable scheme is to declare that in time of war the Canadian naval force is part of the naval forces of the empire.

Some hon. members. Hear, hear.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not see any middle course. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance has perhaps not fully appreciated the attitude which the Prime Minister has taken. The Minister of Finance said: I would not stop to consider whether the war was just or unjust. The Prime Minister said: I shall very carefully consider whether the war is just or unjust. If the war, according to my appreciation, is a just war I will send the Canadian naval force to take part in it. If the war, according to my appreciation, is an unjust war, or one that does not specially concern the interests of Canada, then I shall take good care that the Canadian force shall not take a part in that war. Again, I say it is an unworkable theory, and more than that, a dangerous theory and a theory which, if persisted in, can have only one result and that is the severing of the ties which now bind this country to the empire.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think my hon. friend has drawn upon his imagination if he reaches the conclusion from anything I have said on this occasion that we would judge as to the justness of the war