

cere in our expression of a desire for an election. There is an easy way for the Government to test our sincerity, let them dissolve at once. We will abide by the consequences, knowing that the principles involved in the Bill affect our constitutional rights. As the hon. ex-Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk) said to the members of the Government before he resigned his portfolio, the Bill is beyond the scope of the constitution and no government, however fresh it may come from the country, has the power to interfere with the constitution of Canada. Some hon. members opposite seem to think that because they have come recently from the country with a large majority they can do anything they like. There are Conservative newspapers which are clamouring to-day in Canada that because the Highways Act was referred back to this House from the Senate last year with an amendment which made it constitutional, the Senate this year should accept the Bill in the same form. I do not know what the Senate will do, but I say that the same duty devolves upon the Senate to-day as last session. No majority was ever sent to this House to interfere with the fundamental principles of the constitution. Whether it is a great majority or a small majority, whether it is one year or two years or five years after an election, the constitution will remain there and the views of the people alone cannot change the constitution. An amendment to the constitution can only be made by the unanimous consent and the joint action of all the legislatures of Canada.

I shall now read to the House an article which appeared in one of the greatest journals of the British Empire, the *Manchester Guardian*, the day before the closure was introduced in this House by the right hon. the Prime Minister. That article is as follows:

Party feeling is running higher in Canada than it has ever done since the dominion was formed, and all Englishmen must be pained to think that the cause of all this heat is the proposed contribution of dreadnoughts to the British navy. It is worth far more than three dreadnoughts to England that she should be beyond the dust of party strife in Canada, for the whole secret of Imperial unity is that attachment to England should be the common property of all parties and the exclusive possession of none. As it happens, there is no quarrel between the parties as to whether any contribution should be made, but only as to the form it should take, but it is a grave misfortune that one alternative form—that of Mr. Borden's Bill—should have been put to the country as that preferred by the British Admiralty. Canadian opinion is extremely sensitive of any appearance of dictation or advice from the British Government on matters which are within the competence of Canada, and the British Admiralty, which stands in either case to benefit by what

Mr. TURGEON.

Canada does—whether it was to take the form of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Bill introduced under the last Government or of Mr. Borden's Bill,—could not have been too careful to avoid saying anything which would indicate a preference of either plan. We agree that the situation for a First Lord of the Admiralty is a very difficult one. He naturally has his own preferences, and if he is appealed to by the official head of the Government which is bringing in a Bill which he thinks better than the Bill that the other side would bring in, is difficult for him to disguise his own views. The difficulty is increased by the double position of a Canadian Prime Minister. Mr. Borden is not only leader of the Conservative party, but as premier he is the only channel through which the Admiralty can convey information. Information that is asked for cannot be withheld.

I hope that every member of this House understands how this came about.

But how is it to be conveyed without seeming to take sides with one party against the other, with the Government against the Opposition? But difficulties exist only to be overcome, and Mr. Borden and Mr. Churchill between them, so far from overcoming them, have brought about that worst of misfortunes the introduction of England into the strife of Dominion party politics.

We say between them, for Mr. Churchill, to judge by his published utterances, has seen the danger and has been trying to avoid it. Mr. Borden, we fear, has not been equally careful. In the Admiralty memorandum, which rased such a storm in March, Mr. Churchill said nothing which it may not have been his duty to say, holding the views he does, in reply to a request for information. The sting of the matter, we think, was in the form that Mr. Borden's request for information took 'I should be glad,' he wrote, 'of any information along that line, so that it will be available if necessary,' and, as we observed at the time, the phrase 'along that line' could only mean 'of a character that will enable me to meet the arguments of the Canadian Liberal party.' Mr. Borden's visit to England last year made things worse. Does it not look as though Mr. Borden and Mr. Churchill had then arranged a policy, reversing the policy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and that the present Canadian Bill was really that of the British Admiralty, which Mr. Borden had consented to father? Mr. Churchill's published words may be discretion itself, but if these are the facts the fat is in the fire, however careful one cook may have been. He is under a pledge to submit any permanent naval policy to the people before it is adopted, and the Liberal party is clamouring that he should submit this present Bill. 'No,' replies Mr. Borden, 'because it is not a permanent but an emergency measure.' But how does he know that an emergency exists except through the British Admiralty? In effect, what he is doing by this excuse is to put the whole responsibility for the measure on the Admiralty. Mr. Churchill may have told him that there was an 'emergency' last year when he was in England, but we are at a loss to think why, seeing that these three Canadian dreadnoughts are left out of account in our calculations of relative naval