

we on both sides of the House have maintained and the attitude which we on this side of the House do intend to maintain. When the war broke out, both parties in this House agreed that it was the duty of the Canadian people to participate in the war to the fulness of our resources. That decision, made on the floor of this Parliament by both sides of the House, was unanimously ratified by the Canadian people. No, I must make an exception to that. The ratification was not unanimous. There has been a minority which has always protested against our attitude, and that minority is the Nationalist party in the province of Quebec, who took the position from the start that it was a crime for the Canadian people to participate in this war. Not only did they use that strong language, but again and again in the Nationalist press they have asserted, and still assert, that we have taken our present position simply because we bow, servilely bow to the imperious dictation of the British authorities.

Sir, I hold no brief for the Government; but I have been fifteen years in office and I know the nature of the relations between the Imperial authorities and the Canadian authorities, and I say that there is no foundation for such an assertion—and I know whereof I speak. I know that I speak the truth. I know that I speak nothing but what is common intelligence to any man who knows the institutions under which we live when I say that there was on the part of the British authorities no command, no demand, no request. The offer of the Government was spontaneous, the ratification of the Parliament of Canada was deliberate. What we have done we have done in the full power of our legislative independence under the constitution which we hold from the British Parliament. What we have done we have done deliberately, voluntarily, not from any sentiment of compulsion, but because we thought that, as British subjects, as men who had been enjoying and still enjoyed, the benefit of British freedom, we owed it to ourselves to make sacrifice of our treasure, and of our blood, in order to maintain British institutions and freedom in the world. Such is the spirit of British institutions, such is the lofty character of the constitution under which we live, that not even the King of England, not even the Parliament of England has the right to order a single soldier to go out of Canada, or to take a dollar

from the treasury of Canada. We are a free people, and I am sure that I express the sentiments of all Canadians worthy of the name when I say, that it is as free men that we have gone into this conflict and are continuing in it. It is not, however, to be supposed, that in coming to this conclusion on the floor of this Parliament, we were all impelled by the same motives.

Seldom, if ever, in any deliberate assembly, when a decision has to be reached upon any important question, is the problem approached from the same point of view by all the members of that assembly and a decision reached from the same standard. On this very question of our participation in the wars of Great Britain there has been between my right hon. friend on the other side and myself a line of cleavage. My right hon. friend has often asserted that the moment Great Britain was at war it was the duty of the Canadian people not only to defend their territory if attacked—and that goes without saying—but to send our forces wherever Britain was called upon to fight; whereas I have always taken the position that in such circumstances it was for the Canadian Parliament to decide whether or not Canada would participate and the extent of her participation. I have claimed for the Canadian Parliament the same rights absolutely as those which exist in the Parliament of the Motherland. If to-day I recall this line of cleavage it is not for the purpose of resurrecting a discussion on it—this is not the time nor the occasion for that, although the time and the occasion may come when the Canadian Parliament may have to decide that question one way or the other—but Sir, if to-day I recall this line of cleavage it is to show the inanity of the reproach of servility which is levelled at us in my own native province. Servility is a big word, it is a loud sounding expression; but there may be servility and servility. There may be and often is servility to a master; there may be and there is servility to passion and prejudice. And if to-day there is servility anywhere it is not with those who have taken the attitude which we have maintained, and will maintain in this House, but it is with those who, blinded by passion and prejudice, would deny us the liberty of being humane and generous, would deny us the liberty of following the instincts and the promptings of our minds, and our hearts, and our consciences; would deny us the liberty, when we see France threatened with dismemberment, when we