

iy not conducted on any naval policy. This Parliament unquestionably has no mandate of any kind from the people to adopt such a policy. Why this haste? I repeat. Why should you be in such a desperate hurry to accept those ships and to enter upon a programme of naval defence? Mr. Chairman, conditions are altogether different now from what they were in 1910. They are different so far as the financial situation is concerned. We had the financial means to enter upon such a programme in 1910, but we have no such means to-day. And there was a menace then. Where is the menace to-day? Germany is impotent; she can do no harm. She is disarmed, both on land and on sea, and her allies are disarmed. They can do absolutely nothing against Britain or against Canada.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Did not my hon. friend say then that there was no menace?

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is one of the fine interjections of the hon. the Minister of the Interior. Why should he ask me that question? What has that got to do with the present contention I am advancing? Is there a menace to-day? I ask my hon. friend that question.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I would say there is no immediate menace to-day; but that does not say that this country as a nation, asserting the rights of nationhood, should not incur the obligations of nationhood.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Why do you not wait until next year when our status will be defined?

Mr. GRIESBACH: Will you say now that you will accept the status then defined and agree to assume the obligations which that conference may impose upon us?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Let me tell my hon. friend that I will not accept anything that he or anybody else may define for me. I may say to the hon. gentlemen that we have different ideas on many questions.

Mr. GRIESBACH: Hear, hear.

Mr. LAPOINTE: And I am rather of the opinion that we would not agree on this question. My hon. friend is a militarist. He has proposed.

Mr. GRIESBACH: Will the hon. gentleman tell me what a militarist is?

Mr. LAPOINTE: If my hon. friend wants a course in militarism I will ask the adjournment of the committee and I will give

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

it to him on Monday. I have not the time between now and twelve o'clock. Now, Mr. Chairman, the minister by means of his interjection has induced me to speak of something else. I do not quite remember the point at which I left off, but I shall proceed to say a word or two in regard to the League of Nations. The countries of the world in the older regime had the system of alliances and the balance of power. One-half of the world was arming against the other half. But this system has been discarded, having been considered vicious and detrimental to the interests of mankind; and it is the cherished hope of every public man in the civilized world that it will not be revived, and that the League of Nations will be an institution that will prove effective in maintaining the peace of the world. I was not here when the hon. member for St. Antoine, (Sir Herbert Ames) spoke the other evening, but I read his speech and I may say that it did not require that hon. gentleman's eloquence to convince me that the League of Nations, if its precepts are observed, will be an important factor in promoting international amity. I believe in the League of Nations. I hope this body will accomplish the purpose for which it was conceived and put into operation. Canada is going to contribute. We are asked to contribute over \$200,000 for the first year, and I will vote enthusiastically for that contribution. But I will not vote for this project of a navy, for accepting ships and maintaining them before we know what our policy will be as to naval defence in the future.

I do not think that this is an opportune time, when ever nation of the world desires to establish peace on a permanent basis, for Canada to embark upon this undertaking. No one can afford to think of war to-day. War in the immediate future is unthinkable; it would be an unutterable crime. The war that has just ended was frightful enough, but it would be nothing compared to another war that might be precipitated in the present unsettled state of the world, and no nation can afford to take the responsibility for starting another war. I repeat, and I emphasize the point, that this is a most inopportune time for us to enter upon a new programme of this kind.

Another reason which I have for this stand is that we have no status. We do not know where we are on the question of nationhood. We claim we are a nation; I believe we are a nation; I hope we are