

Disunited Navies Useless.

Perhaps I should say a word or two on the subject of naval control which has been spoken of during this debate. While I respect the opinions of able and earnest men who disagree with me, I cannot see that it is possible to maintain the naval supremacy of this empire by a series of disunited navies, not under one central control. We may be of different minds as to whether Canada should contribute to the defence of the empire outside of her own territory, but if we once make up our minds that Canada is so to contribute, then it seems to me absolutely sure, certain and beyond argument that the naval supremacy of the empire can only be upheld by one great naval force under one great central control. That is my conviction, that is one great reason why it seems to me the naval proposals of the government are useless and could not be carried out effectually.

Policy Which Conservatives Would Carry Out.

It may be fairly asked what we would do, if we were in power to-day, with regard to this great question. It seems to me that our plain course and duty would be this: The government of this country are able to ascertain and to know, if they take the proper action for that purpose, whether the conditions which face the empire at this time in respect of naval defence are grave. If we were in power we would endeavour to find that out, to get a plain, unvarnished answer to that question, and if the answer to that question, based upon the assurance of the government of the mother country and the report of the naval experts of the admiralty were such (and I think it would be such) as to demand instant and effective action by this country, then I would appeal to parliament for immediate and effective aid, and if parliament did not give immediate and effective aid I would appeal from parliament to the people of this country.

Permanent Policy Involves Wide Considerations.

Then, Sir, as to the permanent policy, I think the people have a right to be consulted. I do not know whether I have made my position clear, but I have done so according to my humble capacity. I think the question of Canada's co-operation upon a permanent basis in imperial defence involves very large and wide considerations. If Canada and the other Dominions are to take their part as nations of this empire in the defence of the empire as a whole, shall it be that we, contributing to that defence, shall

have no voice whatever in the councils of the empire touching the issues of peace or war? I do not think that such would be a tolerable condition, I do not believe the people of Canada would for one moment submit to such a condition. Shall members of this House, representative men, representing 221 constituencies of this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, shall no one of them have the same voice with regard to those vast imperial issues that the humblest taxpayer in the British Isles has at this moment? It does not seem to me that such a condition would make for the integrity of the empire, for the closer co-operation of the empire.

People Must Be Consulted.

Regard must be had to these far-reaching considerations, a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy had been worked out and explained to the people of Canada, to every citizen in this country, then it would be the duty of any government to go to the people of Canada to receive their mandate and accept and act upon their approval or disapproval of that policy.

Monk's Motion Unsatisfactory.

The hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) has moved this motion. I am not particularly satisfied with its phrasing. With the object which my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier has in view I am absolutely in sympathy because I think the mandate of the people should be taken on so great a question. I have considered the words of my hon. friend's amendment with some care and I think that the object he has in view might be expressed, according to my humble appreciation at least, in words of more satisfactory import.

I am speaking entirely of course from my own standpoint, and I acknowledge that my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) has the same right to his opinion as I have to mine. I beg, therefore, to move:

That all the words after the word 'thereof' in the proposed motion in amendment be omitted and the following substituted therefor:

We beg to assure Your Excellency of the unalterable attachment and devotion of the people of Canada to the British Crown and of their desire and intention to fulfil all just responsibilities devolving upon this country as one of the nations of the empire. We desire, however, to express our regret that Your Excellency's gracious speech gives no indication whatever of any intention on the part of Your Excellency's advisers to consult the people on the naval policy of Canada.