

and the other nations will likewise receive their share of indemnity, but Canada will have absolutely nothing. Where then will we stand? We shall have taxes to pay for a hundred years to come; we shall have to provide for and relieve all our invalids and maimed, not mentioning the pensions we shall have to pay for hundreds of years to come. Therefore, in order to meet those obligations, I say that we must preserve a portion of our property, whilst if we do ruin ourselves to day, we will never be able to meet such obligations. Mr. Speaker, I do really like the Empire, but I love my own country far better. I may be wrong, but such are my sentiments, all the same.

We have now come to the point of tearing up our railway tracks. They are no longer content with throwing away millions after millions of dollars; here now comes along our Minister of Railways (Mr. Cochrane) who is shipping our railroad tracks over to Europe. I would not be in the least surprised if, before long, we should be forced to come to Ottawa on foot and all that, just to please the Empire. I am actually wondering when and where we are going to stop.

Mr. Speaker, we are just now passing through a most serious period of financial stringency. Business men who had, until now successfully speculated, have found themselves suddenly ruined; business men of the highest standing have found themselves in such straits that they could no longer meet their liabilities. I repeat it, this crisis has been most disastrous, most painful, and it is in such a time that we hear these hon. gentlemen say that it is for us to give our last cent for the Empire. As for me, I must describe their conduct as extraordinary and extravagant.

In the political world, we are told that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has rather bad grace asking for a referendum on the conscription Bill seeing that he did not offer any in connection with the Naval Act. That is really the main objection that is raised, as far as I can see. I will take the liberty of thus answering that objection. The Naval Bill was voted upon and I am one of those who voted in favour of it. On March 29, 1909, the proposal of the hon. Prime Minister—who was then Sir Wilfrid Laurier—was submitted to the House and unanimously carried. The late hon. F. D. Monk, who was not present in the House, when this measure was submitted, when he did return—in explaining his absence, on March 29, 1909, when the resolution had been voted—added that, had he been present, he would

have voted in favour of it. Such is the declaration of the late member for Jacques Cartier, and any one can read it, for it is inserted in the Hansard.

The principle of the Naval Act having been practically accepted by both sides of the House at the time, can the present situation be compared with the one then existing? When the people, represented by both sides of the House, agree; when the members agree that the principle of a law is acceptable, why make an appeal to the people? Such is my contention, Mr. Speaker, and I believe my answer is a good one. More than that, when the Naval Act was voted, we were within the limits of our mandate; we had only served three years of our term, therefore, as members, we were not, according to the expression of the worthy leader of the Opposition, a moribund Government.

There is nothing very nice in being told such things, to have this Government called a moribund Government, and do the honourable gentlemen on the other side fret over it? They don't seem to be in any way offended; they accept it as a dainty. A moribund Government! Were I the Prime Minister, I would really be offended, if anybody told me that, but as I am not the Premier, there is no danger.

Then I say that there is no possible comparison with the stand taken by the members on your left demanding a referendum upon the present Act, while none was asked for the Naval Act. A third reason, Mr. Speaker, is that the Naval Act was no conscription law; the Naval Act was a free law, a voluntary law, nobody was forced to enlist, it was all volunteering; but in this case, attention! They want to enlist us in spite of ourselves, without a shadow of resistance, saying: Enlist to go and defend the Empire, the Empire is in danger. Well, it is the honourable members on the other side of the House who say that. Those who speak on behalf of the Empire don't say that, they do not ask us men, they do not ask us soldiers, they do not ask us to go and fight over there. They may have asked us potatoes, wheat, oats, eggs, ham, bacon, etc., they want to have provisions, and in lieu of provisions, the Premier and his friends substitute men. Well, I prefer taking the word of the Right Honourable Mr. Balfour, who came here and from your chair, Mr. Speaker, spoke to us in this House; I would rather take his word, I say, than the talk of the honourable members on the other side of the House. The Right Honourable Mr. Balfour said: