

had this revolution, the moment they passed that bar yonder, the moment they came into this House at the time and place appointed for debate, became as mute as oysters. With a demure face and without a smile they told us they could not debate or discuss this question until they knew what had taken place at the conference at London, until they had all the papers, although during the recess, without knowing what had taken place at the conference, without having the papers, their able tongues had been wagging, wagging, wagging, in all the tones of the gamut, and in resonant euphony. This sudden prudence and caution after so much extravagance of language did not deceive anybody; it was very transparent, although a somewhat clumsy attempt to hide the difficulty which it had been apparent to all observers, would meet them as soon as they came together. When they were talking among themselves, one here and one there, one in Alberta, the other in Winnipeg, one in Toronto and one in Quebec, they could all speak differently, each one trying to appeal to the passions and feelings of his immediate audience but when they came here they had to try to speak to the country, and speaking to the country, they had to speak something of all events like unanimous language. There was the difficulty, hence the silence, hence the demand for papers, and in the meantime they met and deliberated. They deliberated in the morning, they met in the evening and again deliberated and the result of their meetings and their deliberations, if we are to credit the reports in opposition newspapers, although they are not always the most reliable, was the appointment of a committee with the object of trying to frame a policy, trying to reconcile the free-traders, trying to find a platform or something on which the bold lion from East Grey and the gentle lamb from Jacques Cartier could roar and bleat in unison. The task was rather a difficult one and how far the committee succeeded we know by what took place within three weeks, when this Bill was introduced for the first time. Three members of the opposition then spoke and all three spoke differently. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), if I understood his speech right and I think I did, agreed to the principle of this Bill, but thought it did not go far enough. My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) there was no hesitation as to what he meant, he is opposed to this Bill and to everything of that kind. My hon. friend from Digby (Mr. James) also spoke; I do not know that I exactly apprehend his meaning, but I think he was not so very sure of his ground and he wanted to have a refer-

Sir, the result of all this is plain, on the other side we have a House divided against

itself. At one end we have the negative extremists represented by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier. On the other end we have affirmative extremists those who desire a navy, but an imperial navy to be maintained by contributions from the self-governing dominions, those who believe that if we have a navy it should pass automatically, in time of war, under the jurisdiction of the admiralty; those who believe one project of a navy is not sufficient, that we should also vote an emergency contribution.

Sir, all these forms of opinion are simply different forms of a respectable, though mis-guided, imperialism. And it is to that view I wish to address myself at first. If I may say so,—if I may be permitted to speak of myself personally—I do not pretend to be an imperialist. Neither do I pretend to be an anti-imperialist. I am a Canadian, first, last and all the time. I am a British subject, by birth, by tradition, by conviction—by the conviction that under British institutions my native land has found a measure of security and freedom which it could not have found under any other regime. I want to speak from that double standpoint, for our policy is an expression of that double opinion. Let me say at once to gentlemen who differ from me, to those who pretend that the British empire must be the first consideration that, in my judgment, the policy which we advocate, the policy which I have the honour to place before the House at this moment, is in better keeping with the true spirit upon which the British empire was founded, upon which it exists, and upon only which it can continue to exist. There is a difference of opinion upon this, and it is to this difference of opinion that I desire to address myself at this moment. This is not the first time in history that men who have conceived a new idea and have made a sad failure when they have attempted to carry it into effect, Peter the Hermit preached the first crusade, and his voice aroused Europe. Under the influence of his impassioned words, men abandoned their avocations and took up arms for the deliverance of the tomb of the Saviour from Mohammedan desecration. But Peter the Hermit proved to be a most unfortunate leader. Thousands of men flocked to his banner, but the eloquent preacher was unable to direct their movements. Under his direction, the expedition of which he was in command moved on from disaster to disaster. And so it is with the shortsighted men who believe that their policy of centralization would unite the British empire. Mark the difference. Their policy is centralization; our policy is autonomy. And let the tale of the past tell the tale of the future. Sir, of all the phenomena of history, I do not know any that carries with it a greater lesson than the existence of the British empire, composed of young nations