

a member of this House, Mr. Bourassa, it says:

We do not mind confessing that Mr. Bourassa is largely right when he says that the Canadian fleet would almost as a matter of course take part in the empire's naval struggles. In other words, the theory of national control, exercised dispassionately, would in any imperial emergency prove but a fiction. Yet that fiction, like many a legal fiction, would shelter a mine of practical wisdom, and enable us to avoid many of the difficulties that would arise under the application of the more logical suggestion of Mr. Bourassa. For organic union we are not yet ready. But we are ready or should be, to take some share in the naval defence of the empire. By the creation of a Canadian navy we can fulfil our duty in that regard, and at the same time preserve ourselves from all the perplexities, at home and abroad, that would follow either the policy of direct cash contributions to the British navy, or the creation of a federation of British states. Our fleet would be in our own hands, to go or not to go to the empire's wars. That in practice it would no doubt inevitably go to any major war would not destroy the value of the freedom from entanglements that the Dominion would possess under this policy. Under it, the question of participation may be put off for ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years, if war should not ensue. Britain has not had a great naval war for a century. The creation of new centres of imperial naval strength in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa may help to make such a war improbable for a century to come.

This is the view presented to the English electors of my own province. But let us look for further differences and we will find some equivocation in a letter which the right hon. the Prime Minister himself wrote to an elector of the province of Ontario who was seeking information upon this subject and who, a farmer, wrote to the Prime Minister disapproving entirely of this expenditure. The right hon. gentleman wrote on the 8th of November last in reply to the very emphatic letter which he had received:

I have very little exception to take to your letter, and I am sure that when our policy has been laid before parliament there will not be much difference between your opinion and ours, and I do not think there should be any.

He did not want any expenditure at all for the construction of a navy, or any contribution. On writing this as his view, the Prime Minister tells him that there is very little difference between them.

I would respectfully call your attention to the fact that you are in error in saying that this is a new matter. On the contrary it has been before the Canadian public since the conference of 1902, when an attempt was made to force us into a policy which you might properly call militarism and against which we dissented. I would draw your attention to the paper which was laid before the

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imperial conference at the time by the ministers who attended it, that is to say Mr. Fielding, Mr. Paterson, Sir Wm. Mulock, Sir Frederick Borden and myself, and in which we thus declared our policy:—

At present Canadian expenditures for defence services are confined to the military side. The Canadian government are prepared to consider the naval side of defence as well. On the sea coasts of Canada there is a large number of men admirably qualified to form a naval reserve, and it is hoped that at an early day a system may be devised which will lead to the training of these men and to the making of their services available for defence in time of need.

In conclusion the ministers repeat that while the Canadian government are obliged to dissent from the measures proposed, they fully appreciate the obligation of the Dominion to make expenditures for the purpose of defence in proportion to the increasing population and wealth of the country. They are willing that these expenditures shall be so directed as to relieve the taxpayer of the mother country from some of the burdens which she now bears; and they have the strongest desire to carry out their defence schemes in co-operation with the imperial authorities, and under the advice of experienced imperial officers so far as this is consistent with the principle of local self government which has proved so great a factor in the promotion of imperial unity.

You will therefore see that we refused to go in for any larger expenditures than would be warranted by our development as a nation. This policy has been before the people for several years and it has never been challenged so far as I know, by any one.

I overlooked that I am no more in sympathy than you are with militarism in any form, but the question of defence is one which cannot be altogether overlooked.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Hear, hear.

Mr. MONK. My hon. friend the Postmaster General says hear, hear. He has been saying hear, hear, all afternoon. Surely he deserves the knighthood and I hope I will be present when he receives the accolade.

It is the penalty of becoming a nation and which all nations have to bear and which, in course of time, I hope they may dispense with.

Without going any further, because I might multiply these examples, I say it is important to show that in reality there has been an attempt on the part of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister and his friends to veil and disguise their policy in grandiloquent expressions of all sorts instead of putting it fairly and frankly before the people. We have, therefore, the right to ask in the first place what is that policy. Now, I lay this as the basis of my argument. It is absolutely impossible to pursue even the very meagre report of the imperial conference, and there can be no doubt that report is incomplete; in fact it was decided at the conference that only such papers as were agreed upon would be put on record—I say it is impossible to read