

upon us have created the impression not only in England, Ireland and Scotland, but in the United States, and in other parts of the world, that these provinces are in a naturally weak and feeble state—that they are in point of fact, almost indefensible. Such an impression interferes more than any one can estimate with the permanent prosperity of our country; it stops immigration to our shores, it depreciates our public securities, and prevents the investment of capital in new enterprises, however productive they may be. If, then, we would do away with this false impression, so unjustly created, and place ourselves on a firm and secure footing in the eyes of the world, our course must be to put our country in such a position of defence that we may fearlessly look our enemies in the face.

These views were cheered in 1864, in the city of Toronto:

Holding these views, and knowing that they are the views of the great mass of the people of this country, it is a pleasure for me to be able to state, and I am sure it will be a pleasure to all present to be informed, that the conference at Quebec did not separate before entering into a pledge to put the military and naval defences of the united provinces in the most complete and satisfactory position. Nor let me omit to say that in coming to this decision, there is no minister of the Crown, sitting at these tables, who would not be prepared to rise now and express his conviction, that, notwithstanding all that has come and gone; notwithstanding all the diatribes of the newspaper press of England, the British Government is prepared now as ever to do its duty by these colonies, and to send us their armies and their navy at any moment to aid us in our defence.

I have felt it my duty to put this evidence on record as showing the spirit which animated the men who were the instruments in the creation of this great Canadian confederation, and I think that the doctrines they then propounded are such as might worthily be adopted and followed by the people of this day and generation. If this was the plane on which these gentlemen placed themselves, and which they had assurances which would be continued by those who came after them, surely we should live up to the spirit which animated them, and be prepared to adopt as our policy that of defending our own shores by building our own navy, and owning and manning it for the protection of the Canadian nation; at the same time should real emergency arise making the best contribution, we, as a nation, possibly could make to the British Empire as an association of nations. Better far it would be to adopt that policy than to send over a contribution of money, unaccompanied by our hearts—for no man can say that a Canadian is sending his heart with the money, if he is not willing to accompany that money with his life and his

blood. Hon. gentlemen talk about men not being willing to participate in the manning of ships in Canada, because, forsooth, they can get only fifty cents or seventy-five cents a day! It is an insult to the spirit of Canadianism that is abroad in Canada to-day, and a reflection upon our growing nationhood!

I have spoken of the views entertained by the fathers of Confederation, and I come now to a consideration of the attitude of the Conservative party in this day of our history. I am bound to say that I have some difficulty in divining just what the policy of the Conservative party is on this issue as propounded by the right hon. the leader of the Government. I listened with a great deal of attention to his speech on December 5 and I gathered that he had two or three reasons upon which he based his proposal. He advanced as a reason for this proposal the statement that there was an emergency. That was the foundation stone. He then travelled beyond that and went into a discussion as to whether we did not owe it to Great Britain because of her defence of our shores in the past, that it was incumbent upon us, by reason of her defence in time past, that we should now make that contribution. He started out by saying that he proposed to give \$35,000,000 to Great Britain as a gift, a gift in which every Canadian would take pride. He pictured these three battleships in the fighting line not manned by Canadian people, but with Canadian name; and he considered it a happy augury that such a gift should be made at a time when there was an uncle of His Majesty the King presiding over the Dominion of Canada as Governor General. That was his statement then, it was a gift of \$35,000,000 for the purpose of defending the British Empire in an emergency. Then he went on to say that we should not adopt the other policy because it meant that there would be too great a delay, that we were attempting something that we could not accomplish, that we were not able to build ships and would not be for twenty-five or fifty years. My right hon. friend has recently given utterance in this House to an idea that emphasizes that feature of his policy, and I am in doubt therefore as to what his policy is. He said the other day in this House, in his last utterance on this subject, that it was a loan, it was not a gift, we were not to part with the ownership, we were to pass the ships over to them as a loan, and he said that these words were consistent with his first utterance on the 5th of December, because he then said that there was an understanding that if at any time we required those ships we could have them back. I ask, and I think this country is entitled to know, if