

the people before taking final action. I would like to recall to my right hon. friend the words that I used last year on this point, and words which I stand by to-day. In speaking in this House on the 3rd day of February, 1910, I said:

I am as strong as any man in this country in the belief that it is the duty of Canada to participate upon a permanent basis in the defence of this empire and to do our reasonable share in that regard. But I say that to attempt to force a policy of this kind upon the people of this country without giving them an opportunity to say yea or nay with regard to it, would be one of the worst mistakes that could be made by any man who really favoured that policy. If my hon. friend was able, in very short metre indeed, in 1899, to respond to the popular will, there seems no reason why he should not to-day be equally ready to respond to the popular will upon this question. What the people of this country want, as far as any man can judge who has observed currents of public opinion, what the people of this country desire, is immediate and effective aid to the empire, and to have any proposals of a permanent character very carefully considered and matured, as they ought to be considered and matured, before any such policy is embarked upon, because there are a great many considerations that must be taken into account.

One of those considerations I may mention, and it must present itself at once to every thinking man in this country. When Canada, with the other great Dominions within the empire, embarks upon a policy of permanent co-operation in the naval defence of the empire, it ought, from every constitutional standpoint, from every reasonable standpoint as well, to have some voice as to the issues of peace and war within the empire.

Well, the right hon. leader of the government opened a county in the province of Quebec and his candidate did not succeed. I have said, in commenting upon that election what I repeat here to-day, that the campaign which was made against the right hon. gentleman in Drummond and Arthabaska was exactly the same campaign that was carried on by himself and his colleagues in 1896 against the Conservative party. Moreover, a gentleman who ought to know something of the Liberal policy during the last fifteen years, a gentleman who calls himself a Liberal, while he opposes the right hon. gentleman upon this question, stated publicly in the city of Montreal not so very long ago, that that campaign was made in Quebec not only with the knowledge but by the authority of the right hon. gentleman who leads this government.

Well, Sir, our position upon the government proposals of last year was embodied in a resolution which was proposed at the end of the remarks that I made on the 3rd of

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February, 1910, and that resolution was this:—

The proposals of the government do not follow the suggestions and recommendations of the admiralty and, in so far as they empower the government to withhold the naval forces of Canada from those of the empire in time of war, are ill-advised and dangerous.

That no such proposals can safely be accepted unless they thoroughly ensure unity of organization and of action without which there can be no effective co-operation in any common scheme of empire defence.

That the said proposals while necessitating heavy outlay for construction and maintenance will give no immediate or effective aid to the empire and no adequate or satisfactory results to Canada.

That no permanent policy should be entered upon involving large future expenditures of this character until it has been submitted to the people and has received their approval.

That in the meantime the immediate duty of Canada and the impending necessities of the empire can best be discharged and met by placing without delay at the disposal of the imperial authorities as a free and loyal contribution from the people of Canada, such an amount as may be sufficient to purchase or construct two battleships or armoured cruisers of the latest Dreadnought type, giving to the admiralty full discretion to expend the said sum at such time and for such purposes of naval defence as in their judgment may best serve to increase the united strength of the empire and thus assure its peace and security.

I am not going to-day over the ground that was traversed so thoroughly last year with regard to the existence or non-existence of an emergency. I do not know as has been suggested, that the word 'emergency' is perhaps a very happy term to express what was in the minds of a great many people in this country at that time and what is in the minds of a great many people to-day. If by the word 'emergency' is meant an immediate war, or a war within six months or a year, or within some early period, I do not think that is what a great many people had in their minds. But, let us remember that the issues of any great naval warfare of the future will be practically determined before a ship is sent to sea or before a shot is fired. The work of preparation for the war will have been done beforehand. The predominance of some great naval power, or of a combination of several great naval powers may decide the event before a shot is fired or a step taken in active warfare. As far as we are concerned, our position of last year, was one which I think would have commended itself to the country if the government had adopted it. I do not deny that there would have been an outcry, but the people of the country as a whole, I believe, would have accepted it.