

made by Mr. Chamberlain in presence of the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), the sentiments in which speech will I am sure be endorsed by every member of this House. Mr. Chamberlain said :

The mighty fleet, of which we exhibited a portion to our visitors the other day, and those military preparations to which reference has been made, they are not a threat to other nations; they constitute no danger to our neighbours. They are the pledge we give to our colonies and to our dependencies that so long as they value their connection with us we will use all our resources in its defence. . . . The evidences that they have seen here will convince them that we are willing to make all the sacrifices that are necessary to maintain their honour and their interests as well as our own. I hope they will also take back with them the conviction that we sincerely entertain that the continued unity of the British Empire is the best guarantee for the peace and the civilization of the world.

I shall not comment on that, nor shall I quote the reply made by the Prime Minister, for that raises another issue which I do not intend to deal with now. While I am drawing attention to the eloquent speeches made by the Prime Minister—and all his speeches are eloquent—permit me to quote the following from a speech which he made at Sherbrooke so late as January, 1900:

We believed it our duty as a British colony to take part in the war, and to permit 2,000 Canadian volunteers to enlist in the English army and to fight for the mother country. We did it because we believed it our duty to do it, in response to the unanimous sentiments of the people of this country. We are a free country; ours is a constitutional government, and our duty is to put into execution the popular will, and the moment the popular will was known to us we had but one duty to discharge, and we discharged it of our free will. There was no power to constrain us to act as we did; but in the plenitude of our legislative independence, we had the right to reply to the popular will.

I quote this to show that the Prime Minister committed himself absolutely to the principle that under our constitution, the government should respond to the popular will. Let me say, that I do not dissent from a single word in that quotation. Sir, when I read the speech from the Throne, I was greatly delighted. I was pleased to believe that the government had bowed to the overwhelming—I shall not say unanimous expression of public opinion, because some of the Prime Minister's friends are dissentients—I say I was glad to find that the government bowed to the overwhelming public sentiment of all parties, of all classes, of all races and of all creeds in this country, in favour of the principle that Canada should bear all the expenses connected with the Canadian contingents. I found in the Governor General's speech that in deference to the unequivocal opinion of this country the government announced that

provision would be made 'For the cost of equipping and paying the Canadian contingents.' I profess to have some little knowledge of the English language and that sentence seemed to say without qualification, that Canada was going to pay all the expenses of the contingents. When the news reached me that the government had wisely decided to offer a second contingent to Her Majesty's government, I was about to address a mass meeting of political friends as well as political opponents in the city of Vancouver. I told them there, that I had heard with great delight that the government had decided to send a second contingent, and I at the same time expressed the hope that when parliament met, the speech from the Throne would announce that all the expenses connected with our Canadian volunteers in South Africa, would be borne by the government. I stated then that I would only be too glad to give all the support in my power to such a policy. Sir, since then I spoke to one of the ministers—it is a public matter, and not confidential—and I said to him: There is no doubt about the statement in the speech from the Throne; Canada is to pay all the expenses; but to my great regret I found that this was a Delphian Oracle statement in the speech, and that it might mean one thing or the other. I believe, Sir, that the government never made a greater mistake than that. My right hon. friend has been good enough to favour me with some of the correspondence—there is, I believe, some which I have not yet seen—that was to be laid on the Table with reference to this matter; and amongst other papers, is the following telegram sent by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to Lord Stratheona:—

In view of discussions upon subject here, I desire to know definitely what is arrangement between British government and different Australasian colonies respecting pay of men serving on colonial contingents after landing in South Africa. Are colonies paying, in any case? Give details.

The following is Lord Stratheona's reply:—

Have communicated with colonial officer regarding your cable, 26th instant. Arrangement with Australasian colonies precisely same as with Canada. In no case are colonies paying their contingents after landing South Africa. New Zealand government offered to provide pay for their contingent, but Her Majesty's government were of opinion that arrangement by which pay at Imperial rates should be provided from Imperial exchequer from date of disembarkation South Africa should be applied all colonial forces. See Nos. 13 and 16, parliamentary paper, 16th November, 1899. Copies sent Secretary of State 15th ultimo.

I think there must be some little mistake there. I am quite aware that parliamentary papers Nos. 13 and 16 do propose on the part of New Zealand that they should pay, and that the British government suggests that it would be better to adopt the