

read what we placed before the people of Canada when we were asking them to return us to power during the recent election campaign :

Since the last general election the government has entered upon a new line of policy in regard to naval affairs, which is of far-reaching importance. The policy adopted was not debated before the people during the election, and it bears all the earmarks of a hasty and ill-considered scheme. In my judgment our duty to the empire cannot be properly or effectively fulfilled by such a measure. I hold that the plan of the government contemplates the creation of a naval force that will be absolutely useless in time of war, and therefore of no practical benefit to Canada or to the empire. It will cost immense sums of money to build, equip and maintain. It will probably result in time of war in the useless sacrifice of many valuable lives, and it will not add one iota to the fighting strength of the empire. The more it is considered, the more does it become evident that the whole naval plan of the government is an unfortunate blunder.

I have no doubt that the ideas embodied in that paragraph of the address which I issued to the people of Canada have entered the inner consciousness of my right hon. friend; and if that be so, I do not understand the great curiosity which he exhibits with regard to this matter, because I think he is pretty effectively answered by the words I have quoted.

The proposals of the late government involved an expenditure of nearly \$55,000,000 in the next ten years. It was argued in parliament, and there was never any satisfactory or reasonable answer to our contention, that, as a fighting force, it would be absolutely useless when completed. Further than that, it established the principle of disunited navies, and I think it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the right hon. gentleman himself, and will be demonstrated before the end of this session, that before such a navy would be completed it would be entirely obsolete. Does my hon. friend consider that under those circumstances an expenditure of that kind should be carried on? I say there is only one thing to be done, and that is to stop such a system of wasteful expenditure—and we propose to do it. Further, Mr. Speaker, the whole policy must be reconsidered, and we shall reconsider it. In so grave and important a determination affecting for all time to come the relations of this Dominion to the rest of the empire, it is infinitely better to be right than to be in a hurry. The question of permanent co-operation between this Dominion, and the rest of the empire ought to be threshed out and debated before the people, and they should be given an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. I say further that we shall take pains to ascertain in the meantime what are the conditions

Mr. BORDEN.

that confront the empire, and hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, without exception, will be prepared to do their duty as representatives of the people of this Dominion, and as citizens of this great empire. I stand by the declaration which I made in this House on the 24th day of November last.

My right hon. friend has spoken of the resolutions that were passed, and has called attention to one which I myself moved declaring:

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.

I have no fault to find with the right hon. gentleman for calling attention to the fact that my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk) when this matter was under debate two sessions ago did not see eye to eye with me on the question of emergent conditions which at that time I thought confronted the empire. Those conditions appealed to me in that way at that time by reason of very grave declarations that had been made by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty of Great Britain. I am ready to admit, in fact we were afterwards taunted in this House by hon. gentlemen opposite with the fact, that these declarations were, to a very considerable extent, modified by subsequent statements made in the British House of Commons by the advisers of the Crown, by the Prime Minister himself, I think, and also by the First Lord of the Admiralty. It is true that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk), and I did not see eye to eye, but the point that divided us at that time was not a question of policy, but a question of fact, because the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk) had said over and over again that when any emergency confronted this empire he and those who think with him would be prepared to do their duty. The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk) and I stood together on this common platform that it would be the height of unwisdom, and not in the interest of a united empire that any great scheme of permanent co-operation should be forced on the people of this country without affording them an opportunity to pronounce upon it.

My right hon. friend could not come to a conclusion without having a fling at the