

I said a moment ago that these cruisers, destroyers and other boats that the Minister of Naval Affairs and the Government intend to accept from the Old Country would be absolutely ineffective for war purposes. I do not think that anybody will deny that statement. If anything should happen in the near future, if any complication should arise, we certainly could not expect to defend our coasts with these boats against any navy in the world no matter how small it might be.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (East Lambton): To whom would we turn for assistance to protect our coasts if we were put in the position which the hon. gentleman has just stated?

Mr. DUFF: I would ask my hon. friend to whom we would turn even if we had this little cruiser and these torpedo boat destroyers and two submarines. The hon. gentleman does not think, I suppose, that these would protect the Atlantic or Pacific coast in time of war?

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Lambton): No.

Mr. DUFF: I am sure he does not intend to convey that idea. I do not care what happens, these five boats are absolutely useless for defensive purposes. If war should come and you kept them on the Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast would be undefended, or if they were on the Pacific coast, the Atlantic coast would be undefended. You cannot very well cut in two—as Solomon proposed to do with the baby—this cruiser which the Minister of Naval Affairs is going to accept from England. You cannot have one part of that vessel on the Atlantic coast and the other part on the Pacific coast. I am sure that the hon. member for East Lambton (Mr. Armstrong) will agree with me that one torpedo boat destroyer on the Atlantic coast and another on the Pacific coast would not be very much good for the purposes of defence. And then, in case of an emergency, to whom would we turn? I tell the minister that we do not want these ships, and the reason for it is because on this side of the Atlantic we have the Monroe doctrine, and that doctrine will protect us as it will protect everybody else on this continent.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. DUFF: The Minister of Naval Affairs may very well laugh. Of course, it will be a great thing for him when these

[Mr. Duff.]

cruisers come out. He can put on his peak cap and gold braid, go down to the city of Halifax, board this cruiser and be received by a large number of man-of-war's-men. Next he can go up the St. Lawrence to Quebec and be received there by the mayor and the other civic dignitaries, and can finally proceed to Montreal, his own city, and be received there. It will certainly be a great time for the Minister of Naval Affairs. But to the average citizen of this country, the ordinary man who has to pay taxes into the federal treasury, it is no laughing matter. I can assure hon. gentlemen opposite that I was never more serious in my life when I say that these boats which the minister is taking, or thinking of taking, from Great Britain will be absolutely useless for defence purposes and will be an absolute waste of good money.

Now, Sir, I said a moment ago that my third reason for being opposed to this policy was that public opinion in Canada is very strongly against this navy, and if the committee will bear with me for a minute or two, I will read what two or three papers have said since the Minister of Naval Affairs announced his policy in that regard on the 14th of June. The Manitoba Free Press, of Winnipeg, in an editorial of June 17 gave utterance to the following views:

There is, however, nothing emergent in the situation. Even though it may be that we face a future of wars and rumors of wars, we are going to have a breathing spell of release from these alarms. No hostile warships are likely to raid our coasts for a decade or so; and we have time fully to consider the question and to reach some definite idea as to the extent of the burden we shall need to carry and the manner in which we can best provide this defence. Beyond the fact, which trust has been settled for all time, that the navy when it comes will be Canadian throughout, Canadian ships, Canadian crews, Canadian officers, Canadian control, there is no very clear idea anywhere as to what is best to be done. Admiral Jellicoe's reports have by no means settled the problem for us.

The Free Press has more than one suggested that, seeing that the matter is not urgent, this is one problem that the Union Government might very well mark time upon. The matter should be very fully discussed in parliament and out of it before commitments, which are bound to have large financial consequences are made. The situation has all the appearance of having been forced by the importunities of the Admiralty. The Admiralty probably holds as firmly to-day as it ever did its belief that a common Imperial navy, subject to central control, is the only means effectively to provide naval defences for the British nations.

The Dominion Government, not having made up its mind about this naval policy, is nevertheless creating a small naval force made up of vessels presented to Canada by the