

NAVAL POLICY

of the
Liberal Conservative Party,
as set forth by

R. L. BORDEN

in the House of Commons on
November 24th, 1910.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have been rather peculiarly situated in one way. It has pleased the Nationalists in the province of Quebec, as has already been pointed out in the course of this debate, to declare that the Conservative party in Canada is in alliance with Sir Wilfrid Laurier on this naval question. I do not think that the Prime Minister himself was of that mind during the last session; I do not believe that he has changed his opinion since.

I have had the good or bad fortune, according to the point of view that may present itself to any one, to be denounced beyond measure by Nationalist speakers on every platform where they have spoken in the province of Quebec. I do not complain of that; I have taken my stand on this question, and as a public man I am open to criticism and open to denunciation at the instance of any man who does not happen to agree with me. I share the honour of being so denounced with about 80 Conservative members of parliament, and also with a number of gentlemen on the other side of the House.

No Alliance With Nationalists.

It has also pleased Liberal speakers and the Liberal press of this country to declare that the Conservative party is in alliance with the Nationalists, and if you work that out to its logical conclusion then there cannot be any difference of opinion whatever on this naval question in Canada, because we are in alliance with the government party thereon and we are also in alliance with the Nationalist party, and there is absolutely no difference of opinion. Well, we are not in alliance with the government on this question. Our policy differs from theirs, but if any proposals which the government bring down to parliament are in accordance with the policy which we have announced and for which we stand this year as last year, then we will support those proposals. We are not in alliance with the Nationalists, and we have been denounced by them even more strongly than we have been denounced by hon. gentlemen on the

other side of the House. We will retract no part of our policy because Nationalist or Liberal agrees or disagrees with it. We will stand by it as we laid it down last year, and we will not be swerved from it by any taunt, whether of Nationalist or Liberal, that we are in alliance with some other party.

I come now for a moment to the motion of my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). That motion was in these words:

That the said motion be amended, by adding to the proposed Address to His Excellency the Governor General the following paragraph at the end thereof:

The House regrets that the speech from the Throne gives no indication whatever of the intention of the government to consult the people on its naval policy and the general question of the contribution of Canada to imperial armaments.

Conservative Attitude in Session of 1910.

I have already explained in speaking upon this subject this session, the nature of our proposals when the government's measure was brought down last year. We then proposed a resolution which I read in this House only the day before yesterday, and need not read again. We declared by that resolution that the proposals of the government were dangerous, useless and expensive; we declared that before any permanent policy of this character involving large and unknown future expenditures was entered upon, it should be more carefully considered and thought out, and should be submitted to the people of Canada for their mandate. We also said that in the meantime and under the conditions which in our apprehension at that time confronted this empire, we ought to bring immediate and effective aid to the mother country and to the empire as a whole. That, in brief, was our position of last year. So far as the motion of my hon. friend is concerned, it deals with one aspect of that case. It does not, it is true, deal with every aspect of the case.