

accuse me of any disrespect toward him if I confess myself as at present quite unable to answer him. Besides my inability to follow him in many of his learned disquisitions, I am under the misfortune of not having heard some portions of the hon. gentleman's speech when he turned aside to address gentlemen behind him or lowered his voice. Therefore, if I attempted to answer his speech, I fear that I would make myself ridiculous by confusing banana belts with Hudson bay, hitching posts with Dreadnoughts, or committing similar confusions which might make it appear that I was ridiculing the hon. gentleman's effort. I have no doubt that upon that effort the hon. gentleman has bestowed a great deal of time and learning, and I think it would be impossible for me or any one else, merely from hearing such a speech, to make an appropriate answer to it. One thing stands out perfectly plain and clear from his speech, and that is, that my hon. friend the leader of the opposition has in his ranks another gentleman who has another policy to propound on this naval question. I regret that certain portions of this debate have assumed a tone which I think not quite worthy of this House. Let me begin with my hon. and learned friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). I have always listened—as I think most men in this House have—with great respect to any speech made by the hon. gentleman. I know of no man in the House who has more dignity of bearing, a better parliamentary style, more learning, better reasoning faculty and greater eloquence, but I venture to say that the House will share my opinion, when I assert that he descended to a plane not worthy of him when he ventured to characterize hon. gentleman on this side as having entered into the plan proposed by the right hon. the leader of the government, merely because, if they did not, they would be deprived of patronage. Sir, hon. gentlemen on this side are as high-minded and conscientious as is my hon. friend, and are no more influenced in the views they express and the positions they take by the lust of patronage than is the hon. member for Jacques Cartier.

Another passage in the hon. gentleman's speech was, I think, unworthy of him; and for it I believe the hon. gentleman, if he were present, would, on his attention being called to it, express regret that he had so far forgotten himself as to accuse the right hon. the Prime Minister of being a master of circumlocution and deceit. Such language does not raise the tone of the debate in this House. On the contrary, it lowers debate from that lofty plane on which every well wisher of Canada, every one solicitous for Canada's fair fame and reputation, would desire to see it carried on.

I do not think there is much necessity to deal with the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman. I take it for granted that one or two members in this House may be found to support it, but it embodies a principle so novel in the history of Canada and so much at variance with our theory of responsible government, that practically it implies a change in the principles and methods underlying our constitution. At all events, whether open to this objection or not, it is sure to receive so small a measure of support, that I do not think it deserves very serious consideration.

The most important matter to discuss is the amendment proposed by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden). In respect of that, I desire to say that it starts out with a statement which very nearly ventures on the borders of audacity and ends with an inconsistency. It starts out with the assertion that this scheme of the government is not upon the lines laid down by the imperial conference of 1907. True, the policy outlined in this Bill does, to some extent, vary from that proposed in the imperial conference of 1907; but does the hon. gentleman accept the doctrines of that conference as absolutely conclusive or final? Has he run aground upon the conclusions of that conference, and is he not willing to allow even an imperial conference, directed by the admiralty, presided over by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to advance a step in regard to these matters. Because it is plain, from the correspondence which has been laid on the table that, though in some degree the proposition in the Bill may slightly vary from that originally entertained in the conference of 1907, it does not at all depart from but absolutely carries out the conclusions arrived at by the conference of 1909; and surely, in regard to these matters, we are not bound up by the conclusions of any one imperial conference, but are at liberty to follow from time to time the latest developments and adopt the latest conclusions in that connection.

In the conclusion of his amendment, the hon. gentleman was guilty of the inconsistency so well pointed out by my hon. friend from Red Deer (Mr. Clark). It assumes that, without reference to the people, it is quite proper for this House to vote \$25,000,000 to meet the cost of two Dreadnoughts, and send the money over to England to be used there, but that it is improper for us to construct a Canadian navy of our own, out of our own material, by our own men, and man it by our own people, without submitting that proposition to the people of this country. It seems to me inconsistent to say that you shall take so large a sum of the revenues of our people and send it over to the mother country,