

LAST WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

By OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ottawa, Feb. 26, 1910.

THE big guns have been fired and during the last week we have heard in the talking shop nothing but the rattle of small arms. Three posts are being stormed. The government position is based upon the view that there is no grave crisis in international affairs and that Canadian loyalty is best shown by forming



Mr. Ralph Smith, M.P.,
For Nanaimo.

the nucleus of a Canadian navy, which will grow with the nation, and eventually place Canada in a position to protect herself in any local emergency, and to be a strong arm of defence in times of imperial peril.

Singularly enough this policy was endorsed if not blessed by Mr. Borden last summer in London at the Dominion Day banquet. He is reported to have said:

"Some feeling was created in the British Isles owing to the fact that Canada did not, by resolution or by speech from the Prime Minister vouchsafe the offer of one, two or three Dreadnoughts. He (Mr. Borden) thought the resolution in the form in which it was passed, whilst its terms might not upon

their surface seem as significant at the moment as the offer of one or two Dreadnoughts would have been, laid down a permanent policy for the Dominion of Canada upon which both parties united and which would serve a more practical purpose than any such offer of Dreadnoughts."

The Opposition now, however, preaches present and practical aid to the mother country. A gift of two Dreadnoughts, they claim, can alone meet the emergency of the case. The Opposition believes firmly in Germany's evil intentions towards England. They also claim for themselves the sole agency in Canada for the diffusion of loyal principles, and openly declare that the Government policy has but one end—the dissolution of the Empire.

The third fort is commanded by Mr. F. D. Monk (Jacques Cartier) and stands upon the principle that the Empire requires no help, and that Canada is not justified in incurring naval expenditure. The position is covered by clever earthworks in the form of a resolution calling for a plebiscite before taking any action.

The Opposition policy seems to me to stand or fall on the question as to whether there be a crisis in England. Born and bred in the old country, I can remember no consecutive period of, say, three years when my internal digestive organs were not agitated to the point of acute dyspepsia, by some pressing evil which threatened to end in the extinction of the British Empire.

Russia up to the time of her defeat by Japan was a chronic bogey. My earliest remembrances of rhyme and jingle are unfortunately not "Sing a Song of Sixpence" and other harmless if meaningless rhymes.

I was fed on:

"We don't want to fight, but by jingo! if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men,
We've got the money too.
We fought the Bear before, the Britons they are true,
The Russians shall not take Constantinople."

My haunting fears, as I laid me down to sleep, were that I should awake and find that India was lost to us forever even if the Bear had not taken Constantinople.

Comets always ran Russia a good second, for when the papers had no other terror with which to spoil our breakfast, father could always read to us about a comet which was rushing towards the earth threatening the extinction of the world, which, in those days,

meant to me Great Britain and a few foreigners and heathens.

I mention these little things to show how susceptible we, in England, have always been to scares. It took a clever journalist of recent years to turn this weakness into pounds, shillings and pence. He is reaping a rich harvest.

In Marseilles in 1890 my companion and I were stoned in the streets, owing to our lack of discretion in being born under the Union Jack. Those were the days when Codlin (Germany) was our friend, not Short (France). By the way, there was a naval scare involved then. Scaremongers thought nothing of mammoth men-of-war at

that day. You were disloyal then if you judged the navy by any other gauge than submarines and France was building them at an alarming rate. When I returned through France a few years later the *entente cordiale* was in full force and my troubles were not to ward off sticks and stones but maudlin caresses and sentimental kisses. Short was now our friend, not Codlin.

I have heard "Wolf! Wolf!" so often that I cannot get excited over the recent outcry, although the alarm has never sounded more loudly. The *Daily Mail* is a splendid megaphone.

Mr. Ralph Smith (Nanaimo) contributed a well thought out speech which he delivered in his usual vigorous and forcible style on Tuesday. He made a good point when he claimed that Canada in building a navy was carrying out the traditional policy laid down by Great Britain. As far back as 1862 a resolution was passed in the Imperial Parliament enunciating the principle that the colonies exercising the rights of self-government ought to undertake the main responsibility of providing for their own internal order and security and ought to assist in their own external defence. This principle was embodied in the Colonial Naval Defence Act, 1865, which empowered colonial governments to provide men and vessels of war, the same to be available for service in the royal navy, when an offer is made by the government of a colony to place them at the disposal of the Imperial Government.

Mr. Edwards of Frontenac also contributed a good speech from the Opposition benches. He suffered from the same fault as Mr. Ralph Smith and all speakers I have yet listened to—redundancy. Mr. Edwards made a spirited attack upon the loyalty of the French Canadians, and had he sat down when that part of his speech was concluded it would have been damaging and effective. Like nearly all the other speakers he felt it necessary to continue to deal with the whole matter from Genesis to Revelations.

Judge Doherty, rising from the Government benches, made the best debating speech of the week. In construction, style and effect his reply to Mr. Edwards' charges of disloyalty reminded one of the best traditions of the Mother Parliament. When he resumed on Thursday he spoke a little too lowly and deliberately to carry his hearers, but to thoughtful men who read his speech in Hansard it cannot fail to be effective and damaging to the Government.

I can hardly conclude these notes without a reference to Mr. L. A. Rivet's speech on Wednesday—noticeable not only on account of its excellent matter and arrangement but because delivered in fluent English by one who only started to study that language in 1903.

WYNNE GRANVILLE.

THE MEN IN POSSESSION



Dame Asquith (who, having lost her chief means of support through a horrible accident in the country, finds her dwelling in the possession of two long-standing creditors, Keir Hardie and Redmond): "To think it should have come to this! And me once so respectable!"—*The Bystander*.