

to. We even see our southern neighbours, protected as they are by their geographical position between two oceans, building up a great air fleet at an annual cost of several million dollars. On this subject, I believe we will simply have to adhere to the principle of the most elementary local protection, because it is materially impossible to think of militarizing Canada. I would indeed be relentlessly opposed to such a policy.

I am equally sceptical as to the true meaning of this armament policy. Are we moving towards a contributory imperialism? If we permit these estimates to be voted without any protest to-day, shall we, to-morrow be bound by a dangerous precedent? Should we also believe the statement made by the Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain and reported in the morning papers in connection with the military estimates of 7 billion 500 million dollars voted in England, "that it is not the intention to invite the dominions to share in a common scheme of defence."

Here again, we must admit that accurate foresight is difficult. God only knows what the future has in store and we are powerless before His divine intents.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, upon what basis are we going to build up our knowledge and our conclusions? Whom are we going to believe? Whom are we going to trust? Shall we give credence to the demagogical outbursts of the Conservatives and their newspapers? Or to the sententious warnings of the nationalist press? Or again to the vain threats of certain associations financed by the Tories and which, under the chaste cloak of patriotism, are carrying on an active propaganda against the federal Liberal party? Or lastly, to the whispers of a mob treacherously deceived by the false prophets of extreme nationalism, whose adherents will perhaps be the first to call upon our militia to save them from the anger of that mob, roused by them to a frenzy of demagoguery?

Of course, Mr. Speaker, as one lone protest has reached me from my constituency, the only alternative left me is to give my full confidence to those who are responsible for the government of our country. To my mind, it would be an insult to question the true Canadianism of the Right Honourable Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King). His past behaviour bespeaks his future actions. And when he said these words which I find in Hansard, February 15, 1937, page 890:

I must deny categorically and immediately what my hon. friend has said.

The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) had just made a statement.

[Mr. Lalonde.]

There are no commitments and no understandings in the nature of commitments between this government and the government of Great Britain or any other government.

I fail to understand how anyone can doubt his word and conclude that our country is moving towards military imperialism. I cannot understand how certain newspapers, especially *Le Droit* in its issue of February 17, 1937, can make such statements as this one:

Can the Minister of National Defence give us the unconditional assurance that, notwithstanding his own intentions the new armaments he asks for will not be used in a war waged by England in Europe or elsewhere? Is he in a position to give us a concrete guarantee—

Let me emphasize that word concrete so as to show its sheer stupidity.

—that if, to-morrow, England were to be involved in a war, these new armaments will not serve any other purpose than the protection of Canada's neutrality in case of any attack against her own territory? In a word, can he tell us how these new armaments would be used in the event of war? Whatever the Minister of National Defence intends to do for the moment, he cannot give us any real assurance that these armaments will not be used in such a conflict.

The man who made that statement speaks ex-cathedra and he imputes to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Mackenzie) motives that he never had. I may say that the writer of this article, if he is not blind or deaf and if he is not determined to oppose to the end everything that is reddish and to extol everything that is bluish, should read, read over again, consider and reconsider the speech in which the Minister of National Defence states more than once that our armaments will only be used for the protection of our territory.

Let me quote what he says at page 904 of Hansard:

—to give us a small force to cooperate with our air force and our naval force for the protection of Canada, within Canada only.

And at page 906:

These are the actual details of the estimates. They are all for the purpose of coastal defence, and for increased equipment and for cooperation of militia services of Canada with the air force and naval forces for the protection of Canada, within our borders. I cannot make that sufficiently clear to hon. members of the house.

Then at page 907, he says again:

—this defence policy is a Canadian defence policy for the direct defence of our Canadian shores and our Canadian homes.

At page 903:

In the first place, our enlarged defence estimates are submitted only for the defence of Canada. In the second place, they are not arranged between Canada and any other nation.