

at least, in the old days humiliation was their portion. And this brings me to that part of His Excellency's speech which deals with the colonial conference in Great Britain. It would be hard to overestimate the vast importance of the results likely to flow from a meeting of that nature—a meeting called together by the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain to take advantage of the gathering in London of so many leading statesmen from the outlying parts of greater Britain to attend the coronation. The work of this conference fell chiefly under three heads. First, the political relations of the mother country with the colonies; second, imperial defence; third, the commercial relations between the various colonies and Great Britain. With regard to the first, the colonial representatives felt in general, and the Canadian representatives in particular, that the existing political relations were satisfactory in the extreme. Under no conceivable circumstances could we enjoy greater freedom to take advantage of every opportunity to develop our enormous resources, and that for the present at least is all our people crave. In this connection it may be opportune for me to read the opinion expressed by the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain said:

It would be a fatal mistake to transform the spontaneous enthusiasm which has been so readily shown throughout the empire into anything in the nature of an obligation which might be at this time unwillingly assumed or only formally accepted.

The good sense of that, I believe, must be evident to every one, and I cannot see why the sentiment should not have been carried further and applied to the matter of imperial defence also. This, I know, has been an oft mooted question. Various and many have been the schemes proposed in this connection. One frequently urged and strongly pressed has been the collection of a fund by taxation in the colonies to be handed over to the British government for expenditure, but I believe that such a scheme savors too much of taxation without representation to be popular on this continent where the application of that principle worked so great a trouble over a century ago. What money we have to expend must be expended by our own responsible ministers and by them alone, until that day shall come, which I fear is yet far distant—that day hoped for but hardly to be expected for some considerable time yet—when our own Canadian house is set in order in the matter of defence. The scheme propounded by the British government was the formation of an Army Reserve Corps in Canada, liable to special service across the ocean and specially trained, to be used by the imperial government in the case of war, but only with the consent of the colonial government to which the particular force belonged. At first blush the scheme, sub-

ject to that condition, seemed perfectly safe, but after all it was somewhat misleading. What colony would expend large sums of money in the creation of a force for a special purpose and then refuse that force to the imperial government when required? The acceptance of such a proposition would, as a matter of course, mean the granting the use of these men whenever the government which raised the force were called upon to allow it to be utilized. In the case of the South African war, we gave aid freely and spontaneously, but with the distinct understanding that our action should not create a precedent, and that we should be free to exercise our own judgment as to our course in the future. Were it not for that understanding, in what position would we find ourselves? Simply this that in the case of wars declared by the British parliament, in the declaration of which we had no say, which would be forced on us without our consent being asked, we would be in the very anomalous position of forced contribution, the equivalent of having consented to give up some of the rights of self-government which we so highly value.

As one having some experience in the matter of recruiting even for a twelve day camp, may I say, with all diffidence, that the raising of the Canadian quota, which was fixed at 10,000 men, subject to special training—which must take at least three months in every year—would be in busy Canada entirely impossible. I doubt if a tithe of that number of men could be got together to drill that number of months every year. Therefore, I think that our representatives were quite right in not consenting to the scheme propounded by the mother country. And, mark you, Sir, it was refused in no mean spirit, but simply because our representatives felt that they had a knowledge of the local conditions in Canada which the imperial authorities could not possibly have. And in order to convince the House of the absolute correctness of the attitude of our representatives as Canadians, let me read to you the closing paragraph of the memo presented by the Canadian ministers to the imperial authorities last summer. It is as follows:

In conclusion the ministers represent that while the Canadian government are obliged to dissent from the measures proposed, they fully appreciate the obligation of the Dominion to make expenditures for the purposes of defence in proportion to the increasing population and wealth of the country. They are willing that these expenditures shall be so directed as to relieve the tax payer of the mother country from some of the burdens she now bears; and they have the strongest desire to carry out their defence schemes in co-operation with the imperial authorities and under the advice of experienced imperial officers, in so far as this is consistent with the principle of local self government which has proved so great a factor in the promotion of imperial unity.

Mr. THOMPSON (Haldimand).