

when it floats over the battleships of the British fleet will be a protection for Canada and she will need no other defence. I do not know whether it has been settled or not, but up to the present we have not learned what flag is going to float over our Canadian navy, whether it is to be the Union Jack or the Canadian flag. This has been kept in the background and probably for a very good purpose. While the British navy remains supreme that is a sufficient protection for Canada, and it has been so up to the present time, but should that navy be defeated, where, I ask, would we look for support and protection? Our present duty is to strengthen the British navy in our own self-defence and not to do so, in my humble judgment, would be unwise and unpardonable. The right hon. Prime Minister has practically confessed that he cannot give an accurate estimate as to when this navy will be provided. He did hazard a guess on the second reading of the Bill when he said that within a year he thought that docks should be constructed and within five years the navy. But, if the right hon. gentleman's estimate in regard to this is no more nearly accurate than was his estimate as to when the National Transcontinental railway would be constructed, and especially as to its cost, I think we can quite readily come to the conclusion that were his estimate doubled it would be well within the mark. We have no docks, no ships, no men to man them, no officers, no training schools, no equipment, and it takes years to secure these, and in the meantime should an emergency arise where is Canada going to be? The hon. Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Frederick Borden) and the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur) stated at the imperial conference that the supreme consideration was the constitutional freedom of the state to which all questions of strategy, no matter how important, must be subordinated. I ask, where would our boasted freedom of state be were the British fleet swept off the seas?—a not impossible contingency. Where would we get our freedom then? The Minister of Militia and Defence might get down upon the Atlantic shore and his colleague, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, on the Pacific with the most powerful megaphones and sing out to the enemy, many miles off, that word, 'autonomy,' 'autonomy,' until they were black in the face, and it would not be as much protection as our dinky little navy that we are going to construct under this Bill. If the Canadian navy is intended to be of any assistance to the British navy why does it not include a first-class battleship, a Dreadnought, such as Australia is providing, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Pictou (Mr.

Mr. ROCHE.

Macdonald) says about the Indomitable class, which is practically a Dreadnought. Why have we not contributed a Dreadnought to the fleet the same as New Zealand has? The nations of the earth are actually rebuilding their fleets in order to include vessels of the Dreadnought class in them. A modern fleet which is without a Dreadnought is practically useless as a fighting force. Any modern battleship of the Dreadnought class, on our Atlantic or Pacific shore, would send our navy to the bottom of the sea without coming within the range of the guns of our fleet. The question, in my opinion, is: Does Canada desire to be an integral portion of the British empire, and, if so, is she willing to undertake the responsibility for her share of the national defence? If we refuse I think we are neglecting our own duty and that we ought to be thoroughly ashamed of ourselves. I have referred to the character of the vessels required, and I will quote what has been already quoted from the words of a gentleman who was formerly First Lord of the Admiralty. Lord Selborne, speaking with regard to the character of the battleships required, said:

The sea is one and the British navy must be all one. If the idea should unfortunately prevail that the problem is one of local defence, and that each part of the empire can be content to have its allotment of ships for the purpose of the separate protection of an individual spot, the only possible result would be that an enemy who has discarded this heresy and combined his fleets will attack in detail and destroy these separate British squadrons, which united could have defied defeat.

This was not the expression of a politician, but of the First Lord of the Admiralty in reference to the concentration of the fleet in time of war instead of having it separated as proposed by this Bill. Again I quote Mr. McKenna, the present First Lord of the Admiralty. Speaking in the British House of Commons on March 16, he is reported as follows:

There will come a day when, by an almost automatic process, all ships of an earlier type than the Dreadnought will be relegated to the scrap heap. The maintenance of our superiority then will depend upon our superiority in Dreadnought class alone.—

Not any second-class cruisers that are made to elude the pursuit of the enemy.

The German power of constructing this particular type of vessel is at this time almost, if not fully, equal to our own, owing to their rapid development within the past eighteen months.

Again, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary in Mr. Asquith's government, speaking on this same question, said: