

Mr. SPROULE. I rise to a point of order. I submit that that statement of the hon. gentleman is not in order.

Mr. SPEAKER. That term is unparliamentary.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. I did not say that the member for Vancouver was a mountebank, I said his performance could be likened to that of a political mountebank.

Mr. SPROULE. I understood the hon. gentleman (Mr. Ralph Smith) to say that he had been listening to a political mountebank.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. I submit myself to the Speaker of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER. I don't think the term is parliamentary.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. I will be glad to withdraw the term mountebank, but I submit, Sir, that if evidence of right about face is to be taken, evidence of political manoeuvring on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite and of my hon friend (Mr. Cowan) with reference to the principle of a Canadian navy, I do not know what word better than 'mountebank' can describe that position. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this contention before the House at the present time and the consideration of this important question, originated where? It originated in the resolution of the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) a year ago. And what was it in favour of? It was not in favour of sending Dreadnoughts to Britain. Neither the member for North Toronto nor the leader of the opposition, nor any member opposite said anything about that. It was in favour entirely and absolutely of the commencement and the formation of the nucleus of a navy in Canada. But, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Cowan) went further, and he contended that in the Bill before the House the British North America Act, the constitution of this country, is infringed upon. My hon. friend (Mr. Cowan) read section 15 of the British North America Act to prove his case, but to demonstrate his simplicity it is only necessary that some one else should read section 4 of the same Act. Section 15, that my hon. friend read and made so much out of states that the authority should rest in the King, and, he said that the Bill before the House removed this authority from the Sovereign.

The command in chief of the land and naval militia and of all naval and military forces, of and in Canada, is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the King.

Now, what is the section in the Bill? I read this to show that the hon. gentleman has dwelt for twenty minutes or half an hour in his speech on this very principle, and yet had demonstrated to the House that he has never read the Bill. Section 4 of the Bill is the very section of the British North America Act that I have just

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read; it is worded in exactly the same way:

The Command in Chief of the Naval Forces is vested in the King, and shall be exercised and administered by His Majesty, or by the Governor General as His representative.

My hon. friend from Vancouver founded an argument, and declared upon the foundation of that argument the disloyalty of the government towards the constitution of this country; and yet he had not examined or understood this section of the Bill of which he complained. Now, before I move the adjournment of this debate, I want to make this remark. The whole contention of my hon. friend is that the development by this country of its own land and naval forces has only one meaning, that is, that it is promoted and intended to develop the independence of Canada apart from the British empire. The development of this country, and its protection on land and on sea, are the greatest security that can be given to the British empire to-day; and if hon. gentlemen opposite twenty years ago had recognized, in any degree at all, the responsibility which they seek to have others recognize, and had done then exactly what this government is providing to do to-day, what position would Canada have been in to-day to send her fleets across the Atlantic to assist the empire in any emergency that might arise on the other side? But because they did nothing, and because things have to have a beginning, and because it takes time to promote them and bring them about, the whole blame is cast upon the present government. Hon. gentlemen opposite complain that very little is being done by the government, and yet in their very amendment they object to the enormity of the provisions already made. They say, you are making a tin-pot navy, and then they declare that the question is sufficiently important to have the opinion of the people of this country upon it before you carry out the project. I have no hesitation in saying, and I think I shall be able to prove to this House at a later time, that there never was a proposition placed before the parliament by the leaders of any great party, in view of the position that was taken by those leaders years ago, that represented such mixed and contrary opinions, while it is only intended to appease the fanatical wrath of hon. gentlemen belonging to their own party, but does nothing to establish the principles on which this country can be defended or can ever hope to be of any important assistance to the motherland. I beg leave, Mr. Speaker, to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned.

On motion of Mr. Fielding, House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.