

mate is largely in fulfilment of a measure which was presented to this House ten years ago and which received, if I remember correctly, the support of my hon. friend himself. Under those circumstances I can hardly realize the force of the position which my hon. friend has put forward to-day. He has spoken of the security afforded by the League of Nations and he has properly referred to the endeavour of my hon. friend the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Rowell) to impress upon the people of this country the supreme importance of committing themselves to the purpose which is embodied in the League. No one is more sincere in his desire that the people of this country shall be impressed by that purpose than I am. But I should like to inform my hon. friend that when the League of Nations was being sanctioned in Paris, no less than eighteen or nineteen different military campaigns were being carried on in Europe. A great many of them have been carried on since, and some of them are being carried on to-day. I venture to say that no one would be quite so confident in the ability of the League of Nations to control these matters under present conditions as to suggest that the entire naval defences of the Empire should be abolished in advance. The navy represents force, and so do methods of Government in any civilized country represent force. But when force has behind it the just purpose of maintaining order, of sustaining orderly Government, of upholding justice among people in their dealings with each other, force is not to be despised or sneered at. If my hon. friend suggests that force has always been provocative of war, I venture to point out to him that the force embodied in the naval strength of Great Britain has never been used for that purpose and has never been provocative of war; that is my firm belief. On the contrary, I believe that the force typified by the naval strength of this Empire has on more than one occasion averted war. If my hon. friend will consult his recollection of the historical events of the past twenty-five or thirty years he will be the first to concur in the observations I make in that respect.

Now, the naval Estimate which the Minister of Naval Affairs has presented to the House, is, under the circumstances, a very moderate one. It does not represent anything that could be regarded as a permanent policy. I myself took the ground years ago that a permanent naval policy, in the sense in which I understand it, should not be embarked upon in this country until the

[Sir Robert Borden.]

people had had an opportunity to pronounce upon it, and I hold that opinion to-day just as strongly as I did before. But in the meantime are we to abolish these dockyards to the upkeep of which we are committed by very solemn engagements, and are we to put absolutely to one side the purpose and undertaking which was embodied in the Act of 1910 which had the support of my hon. friend and myself? That is a question and it seems to me the only question for the committee to consider, and I hope that hon. gentlemen will see their way to approve of the Estimate which my colleague has offered.

MR. FIELDING: Although this subject is a very large one which offers justification to those who wish to speak upon it at very great length, I do not feel at liberty at this late hour, and under the circumstances of our meeting and the desire of hon. members to bring the session to an early close, to speak more than a few moments. My creed on the naval policy was expressed in the resolution, in the preparation of which I had some part, which was adopted unanimously by the House in the year 1909. That resolution set forth that the people of this country, as they increased in wealth and population, should undertake in larger measure than in times past to share the burdens of naval defence. The resolution went on further to declare that that good purpose could best be served by the establishing of a Canadian navy, created and maintained in harmony and co-operation with the Imperial naval authorities. The resolution further recognized the fact that in the maintenance of a great British navy we had the best guarantee for the peace of the world. That was the creed of that day, and that is the creed I propose to hold to whenever the necessity shall again arise. That that creed was departed from, that that unanimous resolution of the Canadian Parliament was not carried out, that partisan ends were allowed to divert the people of Canada from that purpose, has been to me a matter of profound regret. I am glad to know, however, that in what the Minister of Naval Affairs is now proposing he is practically returning to the policy of that day. The right hon. the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) has just told us one of the reasons why we ought to do what is now proposed is because we passed the Naval Act of 1910. Well, if we on this side of the House are bound by the Naval Act of 1910, my right hon. friend need not be bound by it, because he did all he could