

the representatives of Canada answer? They said that their objection arose not so much from the expense involved, as from a belief that the acceptance of the proposal would entail an important departure from the principles of self-government, which had proved so great a factor in the promotion of imperial unity. That demand came from the First Lord of the Admiralty. But there was, as president of that conference, a gentleman who cherishes also the ideal of a united empire under the principle of concentration. Yet he saw the political aspect of the situation. Mr. Chamberlain said:

The link which unites us, almost invisible as it is, sentimental in its character, is one which we would gladly strengthen but it seems to me it has proved itself to be so strong that we would not wish to substitute for it a chain which might be galling in its incidence.

In 1902 all the colonies, except Canada, had consented to pay money to the British admiralty. At the conference of 1907 what do we find? The First Lord of the Admiralty, again representing the men who have but one point of view, the unit of command and strength of the British fleet, Lord Tweedmouth, said:

We thoroughly recognize that we are responsible for that defence. We want you to help us in that defence. We want you to give us all the assistance you can, but we do not come to you as beggars; we gladly take all that you can give us, but at the same time, if you are not inclined to give us the help that we hope to have from you, we acknowledge our absolute obligation to defend the King's dominions across the seas to the best of our ability.

There is one sea, there is one empire, and there is one navy, and I want to claim in the first place your help, and in the second place authority for the Admiralty to manage this great service without restraint.

That was Lord Tweedmouth's declaration. He spoke for the admiralty. Because of his political functions the Prime Minister has of course to take a wider vista of things, and this is what Mr. Campbell-Bannerman said in his address of welcome at the opening of the conference of 1907:

The First Lord of the Admiralty, in the same way, will be present when naval questions are discussed. On this I may say, that I think the views sometimes taken of the proper relations of the colonies to the mother country with respect to expenditure on arma-

ments have been, of late, somewhat modified. We do not meet you to-day as claimants for money, although we cordially recognize the spirit in which contributions have been made in the past, and will, no doubt, be made in the future. It is, of course, possible to over-estimate the importance of the requirements of the over-sea dominions as a factor in our expenditure; but however this may be, the cost of naval defence and the responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs hang together.

The admiralty was to receive its first setback at that conference. Things had run fairly smoothly in 1902; all the colonies except Canada had chipped in their money, but in 1907 the Prime Minister of Australia said:

The agreement to which we assented and which has still a few years to run will have to be put an end to, or when ended will not be renewed, because we are not satisfied that this is the best scheme in the interests of Australia or Great Britain for us to continue. We will henceforth develop our own navy on our own lines.

This is the history of the efforts of the admiralty up to 1907 to get the dominions and the colonies beyond the seas to subscribe money for the development and maintenance of the British navy. I cite these facts because I want to establish that in March, 1909, when the Dominion of Canada, through its representatives in the House of Commons, made an official declaration of policy, it knew exactly what the admiralty wanted. A leading newspaper in my province, the Montreal Star, discussing the declaration of the leader of the opposition and his affirmation that the admiralty had always been in favour of a money contribution, headed its article by three words which showed its stupor: 'Straight against the admiralty.' Yes, straight against the admiralty, but straight also against the admiralty was the whole House of Commons on the 29th of March, 1909. Straight against the admiralty was the Hon. Mr. Borden, now the Prime Minister of Canada, who said:

In so far as my right hon. friend, the Prime Minister to-day outlined the lines of naval defence of this country I am entirely at one with him. I am entirely of opinion, in the first place, that the proper line upon which we should proceed in that regard is the line of having a Canadian naval force of our own. I entirely believe in that. The other experiment has been tried as between Australia and the mother country and it has not worked satisfactorily in any respect.