

sea, and that sort of thing. That was the description he gave at that time of this beautiful work which now he describes as an association and which confers the obligations of which he has spoken.

Mr. BENNETT: Will the right hon. gentleman permit me? He will recall that in the Statute of Westminster we had inserted a provision that no power was conferred to amend the constitution of Canada. That was the whole point.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): That is right, but I do not think it has much to do with what I was just saying. We have the right to frame our own policies. We are, as my right hon. friend has said, an association of free states. He said we have to carry on the obligations of the free association. Well, "obligations" and "freedom" do not go very well together. We have the right to devise our own policy in everything; we are autonomous in matters internal and external, and that includes defence policies. I believe that I am really serving the aim of the preservation of that association, of that bond, by claiming absolute freedom in all matters of policy whether external or internal. There could be no more deadly blow to the preservation of the free association than the claim and the contention that Canada or any other dominion should be bound blindly by any policy of the United Kingdom or of any other part of the commonwealth with which we would have nothing to do.

Mr. BENNETT: Has anyone suggested that?

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Well, it is really an inference. I am glad that my right hon. friend does not suggest it. If he does not, we are more in agreement than I was afraid we were. I am always pleased to be in agreement with the right hon. gentleman.

Freedom is the bond, and it is the safest guarantee of association and of union between the various parts of the commonwealth. My right hon. friend says, no criticism after the event. Well, the foreign policy of Britain is criticized there every day after it has been devised and framed. Anyone who has read the newspapers lately must have read the violent, bitter words of Lloyd George, of Mr. Attlee, and of other prominent members of the commons with regard to the measures which had been taken by the British government. Is it to be said that here we cannot even criticize the policy, that we have to accept it without having anything to do with it and without having any policy of our own?

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

With that I cannot agree, and if my right hon. friend will permit me, I will say it is very different from the Canada-first policy which I heard so eloquently expressed in 1930.

Mr. BENNETT: And I still make the same contention.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I am more Canada-first to-night than my right hon. friend.

Mr. BENNETT: Not a bit.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): And now a word to my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth), for whose views I have every respect. The leader of the opposition is at least logical, but I cannot see the logic of the stand taken by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. He does not like our attitude of saying nothing, doing nothing, not criticizing other countries that are invading some other parts of the world. We ought to be aggressive at least in our words, in our attitude, in our stand; but he does not want us to have anything to do with preparing to defend our own country, or with preparations to guarantee the security of our coast from attack. We will defy the world; we will challenge other countries, but we must not be ready if they take up our challenge.

There is another thing. My hon. friend says that the policy of Great Britain since the war has been a succession of blunders. I do not agree with that. Great Britain has saved the world from war at least twice. The policy of Great Britain has averted war. I have no hesitation in making that statement. I know the criticism that has been leveled against the British government on two or three occasions, and I know that criticism has been most unfair. I will allude to one of them, at the time of the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy. Great Britain has been criticized bitterly even in this parliament. I do not know whether I have the right to say something which is rather of a confidential nature, but I have heard two ministers connected with the foreign affairs department in Great Britain, in answer to a criticism made by one delegate of one dominion with regard to that very matter, make this statement: "Yes, we have done all we could to prevent war, but at a certain time when we were urged by other countries to go to war on that question, we said, 'All right, what help will you give?'" And not one of them was ready to give any help." They all wanted Britain to go and wage war in a certain part of the world, but none of those who were so free to offer advice was ready to help. I say that Britain since the war has not deserved the