

lead to annexation. And these bold gentlemen opposite, these loyal gentlemen, taking that as a threat, were ready to tell the people of Canada to lie down under it, that if President Taft said it was so it must be so—forgetting that what seven or eight millions of free Canadians had to say on that subject was the important thing, and not what President Taft had to say.

However, that issue is out of the way at present, and I think the motion of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the leader of the opposition to amend the Address is a most pertinent one on this occasion, particularly in view of the personnel of the present cabinet. We do not believe there is harmony; the country does not believe there is unanimity. If cabinet responsibility is still a good British doctrine let us have it in Canada as well as in Great Britain. Let the Prime Minister free himself from his troubles as I suggested. Why, Sir, as I have said, the Navy Bill is not a thing of the future, but a thing of the present. The objection raised to it by hon. gentlemen opposite was that it did not go far enough; it did not meet the views of the present Prime Minister because it did not give 'unity of command,' that is it did not give the command of our Canadian fleet to the British Admiralty. That clause of the Canadian Naval Service Act can be amended.

It was stated there was too much autonomy in it, and not enough imperialism. That all rests in one clause, which provides that the Canadian navy may go to the defence of the empire upon the order of the Governor in Council. If that does not suit the majority in this House, that clause of the Canadian Navy Bill may be amended also. But why not go on? If you want the Canadian navy to patrol foreign waters, state so in the Civil Service Act by a short amendment. If you want to know whether there is an emergency or not, and you should give a cash contribution, a cable will serve your purpose.

But I believe that there is something behind what we see in the newspapers, that the policy which the government will follow in regard to the Canadian navy service will be a policy of delay, delay, seeking to put the matter over until the Nationalist movement in the province of Quebec shall have quieted down; and I honestly thought to-night when my hon. friend the First Minister commenced his speech at twenty minutes to six, that he himself was actually playing against time until the adjournment so that he might consult with the Minister of Public Works. The case, however, is in the hands of hon. members opposite. I think we can rely on the gallant Minister of Militia and Defence (Mr. Hughes) for his support on this question. He was out when I made my

Mr. GUTHRIE.

statement regarding him a few moments ago, and as it was, I think, complimentary, I see no reason why I should not re-state it in his presence. He is a man in whom we on this side of the House have a great deal of confidence as a gallant officer, as a man who is not afraid to pay tribute to his predecessor, as a man who was not afraid, when occasion required, to vote against what is known as the Monk amendment last year, and the only Conservative who did so, as a man who is not afraid to express his opinion and to stand by his opinion. Now, all I ask of the Minister of Militia and Defence is that he will stand by the opinion which he uttered in this House at page 293 of last year's 'Hansard' on the question of submitting to the people a question so important as that of the naval defence of Canada. We on this side rely on the good sense, the good judgment and the manliness of the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence, and we ask him to stand with us on that question and force the government to take a stand on the Canadian Naval Bill. If that stand is not satisfactory to the people of this country, then we shall have no hesitation in asking for a dissolution and seeking a new mandate from the people, but not by referendum, and not by a plebiscite.

Hon. GEO. E. FOSTER (Minister of Trade and Commerce). I have been intensely interested and not a little amused by my hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie) who has just taken his seat. He has developed in a good many ways. In one way it struck me, just towards the conclusion of his speech, that the party opposite had missed a great opportunity in not having chosen him some years ago as leader of the party and of the government. He has such a delightfully short and sharp way of bringing great issues to fulfilment. He would send a cable, and settle the whole matter of the naval difficulty. Now, there are short cuts which help and there are short cuts which hinder, and I am afraid that the short cut system which has been adumbrated by my hon. friend would not be the most successful in carrying out great policies in great countries. We have had an admirable melange of gossip. Gossip always takes. What circle will not come close together and put ear to ear and head to head to hear something gossipy, which probably has no foundation in fact, but it is none the less eagerly listened to. Now, a great part of what my hon. friend has stated is gossip pure and simple, a sort of an outside introspective view of the formation of cabinets, and how it is done. But the mild and gentle temperament of my hon. friend seemed to change into one of a sanguinary character. He built up an extraordinary picture of men carrying vast