

By the passing of this Bill, Canada is promoting herself to a higher place in the eyes of the world, and that is a very good reason for me to give it my cordial support.

I admit that the status of Canada as a British colony is far better than that of any colony of France, Germany, Portugal, Holland, or even of the United States of America, for in the case of all of those colonies the sovereign state deals with their municipal or local affairs from its legislature without consulting the people of the colony. England alone allowed her colonists to tax her exported goods; to produce goods similar to her own; to sell goods to foreigners or buy from them; to ship them even in non-English bottoms; to be governed by the rules of metropolitan justice. But, it is true, just the same, that Canada is bound, whether it pleases her or not, to do what England may require her to do. Should England wish to tax Canada there is nothing in the public law of England to prevent her. I may be reminded that we have the precedent of the tax on merchants; but let me tell you, Sir, that those merchants, at that time, were probably equipped to accept the inevitable consequences of resisting the new tax on their tea. Such is not the condition of Canada to-day. Are we to follow the teaching of a certain portion of the press and the speeches of certain of our orators who have been preaching that Canada should have no army and no navy, but should remain as it has been for 150 years, completely without defence, and exclusively inhabited by farmers, merchants, lawyers, and ward-heeders, depending solely for protection on the application for the benefit, of that fiction or hallucination known as the Munroe doctrine.

I know that Canada is not, to-day, governed, as she was upon the arrival of Lord Durham at Quebec. It would be rather difficult for the colonial office of to-day to send to our Governor General instructions similar to those which they sent to Sir Poulett Thompson, and to tell him to govern his country against, or without the advice of his responsible ministers. I know that a radical change has taken place. I know that now the Prime Minister is much more than a sub-officer of Downing street. I know that Canada, since 1791, or to be more accurate, since 1840, has passed from the status of 'Crown' colony to that of responsibly governed colony. I admit, also, that this has been done in consequence of the new policy adopted by England, by which she feels herself in duty bound to grant her colonies autonomy in matters municipal. I am ready to proclaim, that England alone has stood the first, and perhaps will stand

the last, in the history of the colonial regimes of the world, for the establishment of such colonial autonomy as our own, but on the other hand, if I scrutinize the text of our constitution, without taking into account our de facto position towards England, but exclusively our de jure relations with her, I venture to affirm that I make no misstatement of law when I declare that Canada is, legally, but a British colony, and not a nation, in the sense implied by the authors of international law. Sir, we know the meaning of the word 'race', of the word 'people', of the word 'nation', of the word 'state'. Too often, have we in this country lost sight of the true definition of each of those words. Let me define a nation: A nation, Sir, is the union into a society of the inhabitants of one country, having the same language, governed by the same laws, banded together by identity of origin, of physical conformation and of moral propensities, by a community of interests and of feelings and by a merger of existences brought about by the passing of centuries.

I am mentioning all this to show that though England has not been pressing hard upon us to give her help, and has been trying to veil the exercise of her rights upon Canada, she has without any question authority to command Canada to come to her rescue, willingly or unwillingly. But, Sir, not only our status forces us to build up a navy, but our own interests, both political and commercial, impel us to do so, as I will try to show later on.

Sir, are there any real reasons for Canada not doing anything to comply with the wishes of England? A few of our citizens are trying to raise, or rather, to invoke the question of neutrality. Let me explain what is neutrality, as defined by Martens, Klüber, Heffter, Wheaton, Hubner, Hautefeuille and Ortolan. Neutrality is for a state the right or the duty not to take any part in a war. Under international law, neutrality is permissible in favour of any state. One of the most celebrated cases of neutrality was that urged by the United States of America in 1795 when, France being assailed by quite a number of European powers, the United States answering Mr. Genet, the French minister, told him that they were not bound to do anything for France, which had been very recently the most potent instrument in bringing them into the society of states. That resort to neutrality has been invoked, for 150 years, quite a number of times. But let me say, Mr. Speaker, that behind the most of the instances of optional neutrality, you find national suicide, or national cowardice.

If we look at the relations between Britain and one of her provinces, there cannot be any question of neutrality, and the rea-