

United States, which were brought to the aid of the British Navy and of the armies of all the Allies. It was when those tremendous economic resources were brought to our aid that Germany faded away, was put out of business. The lesson of that would surely be that while Australia must have some naval defence, in Canada, if we are to continue this loose confederation, of which all the parts are free, known as the British Empire, we would do better, possibly, permanently to have a system of co-operation between the different parts of the Empire. But certainly we should have done better to have that system of co-operation until the Imperial Conference was held; we should have done better to give our people a breathing space from naval expenses, especially at a time when, I think I have offered considerations which go far to prove, such naval expenditure useless because it is unnecessary.

I come back to my first point, which shall be my last. I think the Government was shortsighted to accept the offer of this vessel. I myself think that Lord Jellicoe put one over a very sharp man, our own First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Ballantyne); I think the British Admiralty put one over on him. We were shortsighted and badly guided. We had so easy a course; it was to say—I repeat: Let us leave this thing in abeyance; let us till our vast western plains; let us re-establish our financial resources, and when we meet in the Imperial Conference, whoever are the representatives of Canada will enter into all these weighty and wide considerations and will work out a system of co-operative defence which will make an Empire bigger and abler to defend itself in the future than it was in this war.

I want to say one word more. I want to impress upon the Government and all sections of political thought in this House that in armaments it is the first step that count. If the nations begin to embark once more in a competition, whether by chemicals, or in the air, or by sea, or on land,—leave all thought of the League of Nations,—then take it from me, Mr. Chairman, that another war in the future is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow morning. In the meantime we should have gone very carefully; we need not have committed ourselves to this expenditure at this time. If the conversion of my hon. friends on the other side to the principle which we on this side defended so strenuously in very different times, as my hon. friend (Mr. Lemieux) has pointed out; if their conversion has been brought about through

Canada having attained what has been called a national status, then I want to warn hon. gentlemen on both sides of this House that they will have to see to it that they change the status of their national pocket-book.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I should like to say, in reference to what my hon. friend (Mr. Clark, Red Deer) has advanced to the committee, that we cannot determine questions of this kind by saying: "If the next war is to be fought in the air," or "If the next war is to be fought with gas." If my hon. friend would put forward any practical suggestion founded on results that are already demonstrated, I for one would be most willing to listen to him and to give every weight to his suggestion. But what advantage is it to a Government responsible in these matters to say that the next war may be fought in the air or that the next war may be fought in some other way, and therefore we are to do nothing at the present time? I know something of the very eminent statesmen who have been alluded to by my hon. friend—statesmen who are as earnest as any one in their desire to promote and strengthen the purpose of the League of Nations. Does my hon. friend know of any one of these eminent statesmen who is prepared to abolish and scrap the British navy under existing conditions? I have not heard of one of them who is prepared to do that.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer): I think I have already answered that question. I stated in almost the last words I uttered that in the island portions of the Empire, like Great Britain and Australia, preparations by sea could not in the present condition of the world be absolutely put to one side.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Does my hon. friend not recognize that the security of the seas is essential to every part of our Empire, and is just as essential to us as it is to Great Britain, or Australia, or New Zealand, or South Africa? I should like my hon. friend to tell us, if he can, what advantage it would be if we should plant and sow and reap, if the crop, when harvested, could not seek the markets of the world beyond the seas. How does my hon. friend imagine that the safety of the ocean highways is not of very marked im-

1 a.m. portance to this country as well as it is to Great Britain? I think my hon. friend misunderstands the purpose of the Estimate which has been put forward by the Minister of Naval Affairs. That Esti-