

be offered to the present policy of the leader of the opposition in this House. If I want to find an argument in favour of a Canadian navy, I must go to the speeches of these hon. gentlemen a year ago; if I want to find an argument against making a contribution to Great Britain for Dreadnoughts or anything else, I must go to the arguments of these gentlemen a year ago. I take first the hon. member for North Toronto. As hon. members listened to his words, I ask them to keep in mind the policy of the leader of the opposition, and keep in mind also the somersault performed by the hon. member from North Toronto a few days ago in the debate on this Bill—a political somersault that, I admit, was cleverly executed; no member of the party could execute such a 'bout-face' as did my hon. friend. His contention eleven months ago was in favour of a contribution. Speaking of the thing to be considered, he said:

The first is the policy of a fixed annual contribution in money to the British government or the British admiralty. Now, that divides itself, apparently, into two branches, but it is really the same thing. One man says: Send one million dollars or two million dollars a year; another man says: Send a Dreadnought or two Dreadnoughts, and so far as Canada is concerned, these two are absolutely one.

The present policy of the leader of the opposition is to send Dreadnoughts, but the member for North Toronto demonstrated that, so far as the principle of the thing is concerned, there is absolutely no difference to Canada.

When we translate one contribution into Dreadnoughts it comes down in the end to money which would be sufficient to build and equip a Dreadnought. And, therefore, I say, they are both parts of the one proposition—

Now, I would like the hon. member, and especially the hon. gentleman who is to follow me in this debate to remember this:

—an annual fixed contribution of money to the British government for the purpose of national and imperial defence.

If that statement be correct, then this House has to consider not only the proposition of the leader of the opposition for two Dreadnoughts at the present time, but the more serious contingency of a repeated contribution to the British empire which is involved in the principle necessarily and according to the hon. member for North Toronto himself. Let us get back to the foundation of this proposition. If we are not to have the establishment of a Canadian navy, if we are to remain in the empire, if we are to make the contribution this year because we have not the necessary ships within the country to help the British empire, and if, as hon. gentlemen

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say, we are not to have a Canadian navy, is it not logical to say that for all time to come, every time a little cry is raised, every time a possible contingency threatens in Great Britain, hon. members opposite will stand in favour of making direct contributions in cash from this country to the empire? They cannot escape the necessary conclusion. That, Sir, in my opinion, is the very weakness of their position. If the hon. gentleman had said: We will build a Canadian navy and we will make a contribution, that would have been a different proposition. But the hon. gentleman takes the position: We will not build a navy, but we will send a contribution. Sir, if you never begin to build a navy, you will never have one, and if you never have one, and remain within the empire, then you will for all time have to resort to a direct subscription of money by the people of this country.

The next proposal of the leader of the opposition is to submit the question of the establishment of a Canadian navy to the people. Well, I do not know what I would do under exactly similar circumstances as the hon. gentleman, but in contending for a principle I always try to put myself in the other fellow's place. But so far as I can see, if I had been the leader of the opposition, I would have reversed that proposition, I would have asked the people of Canada if they are willing to send a contribution of 20 or 25 millions to the empire, but I would assume that I had a mandate from the people to take proper measures to defend their trade and their coasts. As I say, my hon. friend reversed that proposition, and says: We will send away the money of this country, over which we will have no control, and we will not ask the people for permission to do so.

Mr. BURRELL. I would like to ask the hon. member if he considers there is an emergency, and if so, what does he propose to do?

Mr. R. SMITH. I intend to make my own speech in my own way, and I will answer my hon. friend on the question of an emergency before I get through. I propose to go from one point to another in logical sequence; I do not depend upon a manuscript nor read an essay like my hon. friend. I have to use the logical faculty with which I am possessed, just as necessity arises, but I try to use it in a proper way. I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that the leader of the opposition assumes that he has a mandate from the people to make a money contribution, but he has no mandate to build ships, and shipyards, and dockyards, and develop a naval protection for Canada. I say that my hon. friend's proposition on the face of it is contrary to the principles of responsible government, and it cannot but confuse the public mind from its con-