

I think he was not so very sure of his ground and he wanted to have a referendum.

Sir, the result of all this is plain: on the other side we have a House divided against itself. At one end we have the negative extremists represented by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier. On the other end we have affirmative extremists, those who desire a navy, but an imperial navy to be maintained by contributions from the self-governing dominions, those who believe that if we have a navy it should pass automatically, in time of war, under the jurisdiction of the admiralty; those who believe one project of a navy is not sufficient, that we should also vote an emergency contribution.

Sir, all these forms of opinion are simply different forms of a respectable, though misguided, imperialism. And it is to that view I wish to address myself at first. If I may say so,—if I may be permitted to speak of myself personally—I do not pretend to be an imperialist. Neither do I pretend to be an anti-imperialist. I am a Canadian, first, last and all the time. I am a British subject, by birth, by tradition, by conviction—by the conviction that under British institutions my native land has found a measure of security and freedom which it could not have found under any other regime. I want to speak from that double standpoint, for our policy is an expression of that double opinion. Let me say at once to gentlemen who differ from me, to those who pretend to be imperialists, to those who pretend that the British empire must be the first consideration that, in my judgment, the policy which we advocate, the policy which I have the honour to place before the House at this moment, is in better keeping with the true spirit upon which the British empire was founded, upon which it exists, and upon only which it can continue to exist. There is a difference of opinion upon this, and it is to this difference of opinion that I desire to address myself at this moment. This is not the first time in history that men who have conceived a new idea and have felt very strongly upon it have made a sad failure when they have attempted to carry it into effect. Peter the Hermit preached the first crusade, and his voice aroused Europe. Under the influence of his impassioned words, men abandoned their avocations and took up arms for the deliverance of the tomb of the Saviour from Mohammedan desecration. But Peter the Hermit proved to be a most unfortunate leader. Thousands of men flocked to his banner, but the eloquent preacher was unable to direct their movements. Under his direction, the expedition of which he was in command moved on from disaster to

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disaster. And so it is with the shortsighted men who believe that their policy of centralization would unite the British empire. Mark the difference. Their policy is centralization; our policy is autonomy. And let the tale of the past tell the tale of the future. Sir, of all the phenomena of history, I do not know any that carries with it a greater lesson than the existence of the British empire, composed of young nations scattered all over the earth, with no force binding them, but attached to the motherland simply by their own devotion. If, in the days of the Emperor Augustus, when Rome had reached the summit of her power, when after generations of conflict that empire had at last reached a condition of peace, when her dominions extended all over the basin of the Mediterranean, but when thirty legions were necessary and were kept moving all the time from one end of the empire to another to keep in subjection rebellious races—if then some one had said to the strong Roman statesmen of that day: The time will come when the small island of Britain, now the most distant of Rome's possessions, will itself establish an empire which will extend to the confines of the earth and will be maintained, not by force but by a new principle discovered by her people, the principle that government must rest on the consent of the governed, these great Roman statesmen would have laughed at the idea; they would have said: That is Utopia; force and force alone, can build and maintain an empire. If, without going so far back, we go no further back in history than the first year of the reign of the late queen when Upper Canada and Lower Canada were in the throes of rebellion, if some one had then said the day will come when these two provinces, now kept in subjection and obedience by force of arms, will reject force, will become obedient and devoted subjects, and will extend the Dominion of the Queen from ocean to ocean—the answer would have been that it was the maddest of all conceptions. Well, Sir, this maddest of all conceptions has become the reality of the present day. And now, Sir, I pause to ask: What is the principle, what is the inspiration, what is the one thing that quelled rebellion in Canada, that brought Canada to the position that she occupies to-day?—what is the principle, the inspiration which has made Australia what it is, which has made New Zealand what it is, and which to-day, in South Africa, torn by war only ten years ago, is building up a nation under the British flag? What is it, but the principle of autonomy, the principle of self-government? Yes, it was when Lord Durham, speaking from Canada, then still in the throes of civil war, said that the only manner in which the colonies could be kept loyal and