

to Halifax to fulfil an engagement which I had made with the president of the provincial exhibition to deliver an address there. On that occasion, finding that nothing had been done, finding that all these other colonies were in advance of the position we had taken, finding that the state of things which then existed left no reasonable doubt that war must take place, I felt it necessary to make this further declaration. Let me remind the House that on the 8th of September the British Cabinet asked for a war credit of five millions; that on the 16th of September General Buller sailed for South Africa; that on the 18th of September the London newspapers declared that war was inevitable. That was the position of things which I found when I was called upon to address the exhibition at Halifax, and where I had an opportunity of meeting a very large number of people, and on that occasion the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) did me the honour of being one of my auditors. Sir, there in the presence of a member of the government, and carrying out the policy I had indicated, I felt it was due from me, as leader of Her Majesty's loyal and constitutional opposition in this House and in Canada, to express my opinion of what I felt the interest and the honour of our country required. I said on that occasion:

I believe that the government of Canada only correctly interpreted the sentiment of the people of Canada when they unanimously passed a resolution expressing their sympathy and hope that their grievance would be overcome. I believe they will be correctly interpreting the sentiments of the people of Canada if they avail themselves of every means for enlisting a regiment of stalwart Canadians to bear arms for Her Majesty's government should it need them.

I felt that I was doing a service to the government in this indirect though proper way, to express not only to the leader of the government my conviction as to the authority that we already possessed under the resolutions unanimously passed by this House, but to say that in my belief, the sentiment of the people of this country would entirely sustain the government in adopting such a measure as would strengthen the hands of the Imperial government in that connection. Now, Sir, as the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair) has taken great exception to the spirit by which I was animated and the course which I took, I may quote what, I think, the House will regard as an authority quite as great as that of the Minister of Railways and Canals, I will quote a statement made by the hon. the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Russell), sitting alongside of him at this moment. That gentleman in a very able and eloquent speech, which he delivered at the Board of Trade, on the 16th day of January, said:

He personally had taken the stand, in private conversation, nearly a year ago at Ottawa, when

the idea of parliament adopting a resolution upholding the claims of the Uitlanders for redress of their grievances, that any expression of opinion of this kind by Canada should be backed up by a subsidy or a contingent.

It was not thought then that Kruger would actually go to war, but the unexpected happened, and the crisis was upon us. He was glad Canada was unanimous in backing up her loyalty in a substantial manner.

I ask the attention of the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair), who has formed an opinion so entirely at variance with these statements which I am now about to read:

It was the opportunity and the privilege of the leader of the opposition to initiate the proposal to offer Canadian troops for service in South Africa. It was a proud, enviable and distinguished opportunity.

I regret to say, that what I intended in the best possible good faith as a suggestion to the Prime Minister, that the time had come when it was absolutely due to the honour and to the interest of this country that the government should take action, was not accepted in the spirit in which it was intended. I went on from Halifax to Yarmouth to deliver an address at the agricultural exhibition in the county of Yarmouth. I learned on the morning of my address, by a communication that had been made by the right hon. Prime Minister to the *Globe* correspondent on the 3rd of October, I learned, to my deep regret—I do not hesitate to say it, in the most unqualified manner, that I learned with the deepest possible regret that the Prime Minister, instead of acting upon what I hoped would be a suggestion that would meet with his hearty concurrence and approval, a suggestion that he knew I would not take the responsibility of making unless I believed it would meet with the concurrence and approval of the great party that I have the honour to lead, that instead of taking the suggestion I had hoped he would, he stated, in an elaborate communication to the *Globe* reporter, which appeared in the *Globe* newspaper the next day, on the 4th of October, that he had carefully examined the law and found that it was impossible for him to do anything, that, in fact, he would do nothing because he could do nothing, that under the law and the constitution of the country he was actually precluded without the direct authority of parliament, from spending a single dollar in regard to this very great and very important measure. Well, Sir, the right hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals may accept my statement or not as they please, when I say that I read that statement with the greatest regret. I felt not only that the right hon. Prime Minister himself—and it was not on that ground I regretted it, I may say—had lost a great opportunity, but I regretted it because the country had