

parliament—control this naval force and it could only engage in war after it saw fit.

Now, I am extremely sorry to take up the time of the House, and I will not insist further upon that point, though I should like to have done so; not in order to instruct the members of this House—I have no desire to take that position—but in order that the people of this country should see behind this measure, which is apparently rather inoffensive, and see what the policy is concerning which my right hon. friend did not make in those explanations which seemed to me to be due, in the first place to this House, and in the second place to the nation at large. What, I say, are the consequences of this policy? If we have, or are about to undertake that we will build a navy or make contributions upon the understanding laid down in good faith by the British government and by the delegates at this conference, if we are going to move beyond the defence of our own country as a legitimate part of our burden—a part that has never been denied by Canadians, never from the first day, never, even at a time when they had against the mother country most serious grievances—I say, if that is the policy, as I claim it is in the very words laid down in this document, what are the consequences? Let me sum up these consequences briefly:

1. We become more strictly bound by the foreign policy of the British government, its alliances offensive and defensive, for the reason that we engage to support by force the empire's exterior action.

This, I say, is the first consequence: We enter actively into the exterior policy of the British government. We no longer say: We are a dependency; we are a possession; we will not attack, we will continue the role we played for more than half a century and will undertake that burden which will otherwise rest upon you, the defence of this country.

2. If the scheme of the imperial defence conference is approved by us, we are bound to participate as belligerents in all British wars.

I say it is impossible for us, under the agreement arrived at, to avoid this; it is a necessary consequence. My friend, Mr. Bourassa, pointed out in Montreal the other day what a number of wars had taken place even since we had undertaken the defence of our own country. On no occasion, except under the peculiar circumstances of the South African war, was it thought by the mother country that we should participate in those wars. We were entire strangers to those countries, entire strangers to the causes that led up to those wars. Some of them were wars of

conquest, I do not say unjust conquest; perhaps some of them were necessary on the part of Great Britain, but we were never asked to take part in them.

3. We become parties to all British guarantees to foreign nations.

Great Britain has undertaken very serious responsibilities, involving possibly very extensive wars, towards those foreign nations. I say that we in Canada, under pain of being branded as unfaithful to this agreement, and worse than that, as cowards, would be obliged to take part in those wars, and in those terrific conflicts which may be occasioned by her guarantees, and which may be brought on at any moment. Let me point out what those guarantees are. They result from treaties which, from time to time, Great Britain has entered into, treaties with which we have nothing whatever to do. But they are binding all the same, and I venture to say that, with my small knowledge of history, and of the circumstances which surround these agreements, they will have to be performed, and they will be the occasions of war, and in those wars we must participate. We cannot possibly and honourably avoid them so long as we are bound by this agreement. Let me refer the House to a work by Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, 1856, in which he says:

It is sometimes assumed that the responsibilities of Great Britain begin and end with the defence of her islands against invasion. This is far from being the case. She is in no whit less responsible for the defence of India and of her other possessions and colonies scattered throughout the world. Besides that moreover, she is bound by the most solemn engagements, some of them of great antiquity, with reference to the territories of other countries which she has guaranteed.

She could not allow those guarantees to fail, and we could not allow her to stand alone isolated, after having made this agreement in defence of these guarantees.

Thus she has guaranteed that Belgium shall form an independent and perpetually neutral state by article 7 of the treaty of 1839.

She has undertaken, in case of the attack of an invader, to protect Chusan (an archipelago off the east coast of China) and its dependencies and to restore it to the possession that end, by the treaty of 1885.

She has guaranteed that the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg shall henceforth form a perpetually neutral state, by the treaty of 1867.

She has guaranteed the integrity and perpetual neutrality of Switzerland by the declaration of 1815.

She has guaranteed, as against Russia, the territories of Norway and Sweden, undertaking to furnish naval and military forces to that end, by the treaty of 1855.

She has guaranteed the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire in Europe, by the treaty of 1856.