

passed through this House, and it was improved by the Senate; but the Government would rather kill it than accept it as so improved. The Bill came back to the House of Commons with an amendment. Was that amendment at all prejudicial to the provinces which the measure was intended to benefit? Why, the effect of that amendment would have been simply to provide that all the moneys which were to be appropriated for the betterment of highways should be put under the control of the governments and legislatures of the provinces. Under our constitution the highways were under the control of the local legislatures, and, therefore, it was quite in accordance with the spirit of the constitution that the moneys which were to be given for highways should be placed under provincial control. Nay, more, when the measure was introduced by the Minister of Railways, he himself stated that the principle which guided the granting of provincial subsidies would be the guiding principle of the measure; but, although he said that, he refused to incorporate that principle in the Bill; and, when the Senate did so, the Government rejected it. In many of the newspapers supporting the Government, the statement was made that the Bill had been killed by the Senate; but, let it be well understood, the Senate, instead of killing the Bill, improved it, and the Government, rather than accept the improvement, deliberately killed the measure. I express the hope that the Government may have become wiser by reflection, and that it will incorporate in the measure to be re-introduced, the principle contended for by the Senate. But I fear that it is difficult for this Government to learn, and that the Bill will come back just as it was introduced here last year.

Every one expected that there would be something said in the Speech about the naval policy of the Government, but what that policy was likely to be, no man has been so rash as to venture an opinion. What that policy would be the Lord only knew, and the Lord knew because in His omniscience He knew the minds of the ministers when the ministers themselves did not know their own minds. We have had evidence coming from different quarters that the ministers were tossed hopelessly upon the many currents and cross-currents which raged in the Cabinet, which more than once threatened its very existence, and which at last submerged one of its most important members. Evidences there were, not a few, coming especially from the many semi-official communications to the press, that the ministers were unsteady and variable; as unsteady and variable as an autumnal morning—passing from mist to sunshine, and again from sunshine to mist. At last we are told that the Government have framed a naval policy, that

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they have completed their meditations and are about to submit it to this House. The policy they are going to propose to us is foreshadowed by information conveyed in this language to be found in the Speech from the Throne:

During the past summer, four members of my Government conferred in London with His Majesty's Government on the question of naval defence. Important discussions took place and conditions have been disclosed which in the opinion of my advisers render it imperative that the effective naval forces of the Empire should be strengthened without delay.

May I be permitted to observe that this language is absolutely in contradiction of the language which I have heard from the Imperial authorities from time to time. It is in contradiction of the language of Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister; it is in contradiction of the language of Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty; who have not once but many times, on the floor of the Imperial House of Commons, at the Mansion House, on the hustings, on numbers of occasions, told us that England feared no enemy, that she was prepared and ready for all comers, now as ever. But, Sir, I will not pre-empt the question; I will not now discuss that statement in the Speech; I will maintain on the present occasion the attitude which I have maintained ever since the prorogation of Parliament last session; I will not discuss the question until the policy of the Government has been disclosed. Whatever may be the information which my right hon. friend the Prime Minister has had in England in his conferences with the Imperial authorities, we shall know by and by; and when this information has been placed before us, when the policy of the Government has been announced, we on this side of the House will judge the question upon its merits, guided only by the dual inspiration of what we owe to England as British subjects and of what we owe to Canada as Canadians.

My hon. friend from Kingston is not clear as to the attitude of the province of Quebec upon this question. The province of Quebec, whether it supports the policy of the Government or opposes it, will support it or oppose it, not because it is the province of Quebec, but we will take our stand with our fellow Liberals, and, I hope, with all our fellow Canadians as well. We cannot hope upon this question to be united. Perhaps we may be but that will depend very much on the character of the information which is placed before us. It will depend very much also upon the character of the policy which is presented to us. But whatever may be the policy, whatever may be the information laid before us, if there are in the province of Quebec a few men who say that we owe nothing to England,