

although we may be willing to contribute troops I do not see how we can do so. Then again how could we do so without parliament granting us the money? We simply could not do anything. In other words we should have to summon parliament.

There was not a very great delay before my hon. friend altered his opinion in that regard, but I would like to interject this observation that a delay such as that which then occurred might spell ruin to the empire if it took place with regard to the employment of our naval forces. I venture to recall to my right hon. friend the reason which he gave in a speech delivered at Sherbrooke, in the province of Quebec, in the month of January, 1900, that was after he had reconsidered his attitude with regard to the participation of this country in the South African war. His words are as follows:

We believed it our duty as a British colony to take part in the war, and permit two thousand Canadian volunteers to enlist in the English army and to fight for the mother country. We did it because we believed it our duty to do it, in response to the unanimous sentiments of the people of this country. We are a free country; ours is a constitutional government, and our duty is to put into execution the popular will, and the moment the popular will was known to us we had but the duty to discharge, and we discharged it of our free will. There was no power to constrain us to act as we did; but in the plenitude of our legislative independence we had the right to reply to the popular will.

I would invite my right hon. friend to-day to respond again to the popular will, and the will of this country to-day is that these different proposals ought to be submitted to the people and the people ought to be permitted to pass upon them before any permanent policy of this kind is engaged in. I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of that course. I am as strong as any man in this country in the belief that it is the duty of Canada to participate upon a permanent basis in the defence of this empire and to do our reasonable share in that regard. But I say that to attempt to force a policy of this kind upon the people of this country without giving them an opportunity to say yea or nay with regard to it, would be one of the worst mistakes that could be made by any man who really favoured that policy. If my right hon. friend was able, in very short meter indeed, in 1899, to respond to the popular will, there seems no reason he should not to-day be equally ready to respond to the popular will upon this question. What the people of this country want, as far as any man can judge who has observed the currents of

public opinion, what the people of this country desire, is immediate and effective aid to the empire, and to have any proposals of a permanent character very carefully considered and matured, as they ought to be considered and matured, before any such policy is embarked upon, because there are a great many considerations that must be taken into account. There is the consideration, and not an unimportant one, to which I alluded, in speaking on this subject on the 12th of January, as to the voice of this country with regard to matters of international concern. These matters must be dealt with and considered by the great dominions of the empire before any permanent basis of co-operation by those great dominions in the naval defence of the empire can become thoroughly established. That is a question which must be taken into consideration and must be faced.

Inasmuch as the proposals of the government are weak and ineffective, as they afford no immediate aid and assistance, as they could not be carried out for ten or fifteen years so as to become efficient, I say it would be the proper course to mature more thoroughly those proposals, to take up all matters that concern our relations to the empire in respect to co-operation in imperial defence, and in the meantime to do that which, after all, is the most important thing, stand side by side with the mother country under the conditions which confront her at the present time. The needs of the empire are before our very eyes to-day. We have the splendid example of the other great dependencies of the empire. Are we of less faith and of less courage than they? Shall an Australian fleet and a New Zealand Dreadnought defend the flag which floats above us while our little cruisers are fleeing helpless before an enemy? I do not so understand the spirit, the intention, or the desire of the Canadian people. I believe they are ready to assume their full share of meeting any peril that shall assail the empire, come when it may. Their hearts and their hands are as strong to will and to dare as were those of their fathers before them, and I do not doubt that, as my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has eloquently expressed it, the men of French descent in this country will be as prompt and ready to do their share with the English speaking citizens of Canada, as they have proved themselves in days gone by. Thus, let our aid be prompt and generous, so that it may bring to the motherland the assurance not only of material support but of a courage, a faith and a determination which shall proclaim alike to friend and foe that whether in peace or war, the empire is one and undivided.