

C 275892

2672

COMMONS

and beaten to her knees. What would happen? The victors would gather around the peace table to dictate the terms of peace; and do you not think that one of the first demands would be for the cession of the senior dominion, Canada? Why? Every dictator in the world to-day has declared in forcible terms a desire for colonial expansion. It is their primary objective. In Canada we have a vast territory, great natural resources, and a sparse population,—a perfect country for a dictator nation to colonize. Under such conditions what could Canada do? The United Kingdom having been defeated, we, as indeed was admitted this afternoon by the Minister of Justice, would be in no position standing alone to defend ourselves against one of the great dictatorships of the world.

Oh, some will say, the Monroe doctrine will protect us. Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the Monroe doctrine? It is not a contract. It is not a law. It is merely an expression of opinion. May I quote it? It is very brief. President Monroe, speaking in his message to congress in 1823, said this:

With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose dependence we have on great consideration and on just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

That was the declaration which is known as the Monroe doctrine. True it is that in August, 1938, as stated yesterday by the Prime Minister, President Roosevelt of the United States enunciated the same principles and the same attitude. But may I invite the attention of hon. members to the fact that neither President Monroe's message nor President Roosevelt's reiteration has ever been adopted by the congress of the United States. If the parliament of Canada must determine, and we all agree it must, the extent of Canada's participation in any war, then surely the congress of the United States must determine the extent of the participation of the United States in any war. So let us not forget that the Monroe doctrine in itself does not constitute a guarantee for Canada. Our hope and our only safety is that, first, we protect ourselves to the greatest extent possible within our resources, and, second, that we bear in mind always, if the United Kingdom is attacked, what Canada's position may be in the event of the United Kingdom failing to succeed in any such war or engagement.

[Mr. Lawson.]

Let me assume, however, that, as I said a while ago, the United Kingdom were defeated. Let me assume that the United States came to our aid and protected us from foreign invasion. We then become a protectorate of the United States. In that event, having regard to the fact that sixty to sixty-five per cent of our imports come from the United States, will it not be only a question of time until Canada, as a whole becomes part and parcel of the United States? To that, some people have great objection.

The Minister of Justice said this afternoon that he wanted to touch upon a delicate subject, and he did. I should like to touch upon the same subject, but I must confess that I do not regard it as a particularly delicate one. I am told by some that my French fellow-Canadians do not value the maintenance of Canada as an integral part of the British empire.

Mr. MARTIN: Who said that?

Mr. LAWSON: The hon. member need not stop me to ask who said that. It is a statement which has been frequently made. I am not making it; I am simply saying that it has been made, and I believe my hon. friend knows that that is so. With that statement, I wish to make it clear, I do not agree. I believe that my French fellow-Canadians have more to gain by keeping Canada as an integral part of the British empire than have any other group or class of people in this country.

Mr. MARTIN: Canada would not be in the empire if it were not for French Canada.

Mr. MCGREGOR: The hon. member is looking for an argument.

Mr. LAWSON: It might surprise my hon. friend that I agreed with him.

Mr. MARTIN: Sir Robert Borden said that, too.

Mr. LAWSON: I do not know who said it, but I agree with him, because I still have some recollection of the history of early days in this country when, upon an invasion from the United States, the French Canadian habitants—if I may so call them, as they were then—true habitants, went out poorly armed, many with only pitchforks and axes instead of muskets, and fought for the maintenance of Canada as an integral part of the great British empire.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: On two occasions.

C 275893

MARCH 31, 1939

2673

Mr. LAWSON: I hope the Prime Minister will not ask me to make this a lesson in history.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I said they did it on two occasions.

Mr. LAWSON: I made the statement that I thought my French fellow-Canadians had a greater interest than almost any other class in maintaining Canada as an integral part of the British empire. Why? The French Canadians have many minority rights and many minority privileges in this country established by Great Britain, or as it then was, England and Scotland. I think they realize just as well as any other Canadian that every right or privilege has attached to it a corresponding responsibility. When people fail to discharge the responsibilities attached to rights and privileges, history teaches us that those rights and privileges are soon lost.

If we were to become part and parcel of the United States, how long do you think our separate school system, maintained by public money, by public taxation, would survive? If we became part and parcel of the United States, does anyone seriously believe that the French language would ever be made an official language of the congress of the United States? No. Mr. Speaker, I think my fellow-French Canadians realize that they have more to preserve than almost any other class of people in this country, and I have sufficient faith in them to know and to believe that they will stand just as firmly as I, an Anglo-Saxon Canadian, for the maintenance of Canada as part and parcel of the British empire.

If that be so, let us face the situation frankly, that we cannot be part of this empire in peace and not be part of it in war. We cannot be in the empire and out of the empire at the same time. I am confident that the United Kingdom will never wage a war of aggression; I am confident that any war in which the United Kingdom may engage will be a war of defence. In view of what I have previously suggested might be the result of the defeat of the United Kingdom, surely it must be realized that there might come a time when, having regard to the conditions and the circumstances of a war in which the United Kingdom might be engaged, having regard to the exigencies of that moment, Canada's line of defence might be not in Canada, but upon a foreign soil. How then, I ask, can we now determine the extent to which Canada will participate in a future war in which the empire may be engaged?

We all want peace. Chamberlain wants peace. That has been clearly and amply

demonstrated. But Chamberlain, with a knowledge of dictators, with a knowledge of European affairs, has in effect asked where we in Canada stand in respect to the empire. May I quote from the speech of Prime Minister Chamberlain at Birmingham, England, on March 17, 1939, two short paragraphs:

No greater mistake could be made than to suppose that this nation has so lost its fibre that it would not resist to the utmost any effort to dominate the world by force. I shall have the support of people who value peace but who value freedom even more.

And then:

We ourselves will turn first to our partners in the British commonwealth of nations.

That, Mr. Speaker, is an invitation to the different dominions to say where they stand. What is to be our answer? I was much impressed this afternoon by the plea of the Minister of Justice for the unity of all the citizens of Canada. I too desire that unity, and may I point out to the Minister of Justice that all the inconsistencies in thinking are not found in the province of Quebec. You will find them in the province of Ontario; you will find them in the western provinces; you will find them in other provinces of Canada.

Mr. BOUCHARD: And provoked by each other.

Mr. LAWSON: Yes, in many cases provoked mutually, sometimes internecine in each province. I too desire unity among the Canadian people. In the past I have never failed, when I have heard a declaration by anyone, either on a public platform or in a private room, about secession of the west or of Quebec or of some other part of Canada—I say, I have never failed to declare that if Canada was ever to fulfil its destiny, Canadians must keep before them the vision of the fathers of confederation, who united two great races and many provinces in order to make what we have, a federated Canada.

Yes, I desire unity. So far as I am personally concerned, and I hope the vast majority of my fellow Canadians will agree with me, we can still preserve that unity which is so much desired, we can still maintain that unity in the Dominion of Canada, by making answer to Prime Minister Chamberlain indicating that we stand, as a general enunciation of our foreign policy, not merely in the same relation to the United Kingdom as we stand to other nations of the world who are fellow members of the League of Nations, but to the extent of all our resources, to the extent of our power, for the maintenance of Canada as an integral part of, and for the defence of, the British empire.