

when it became my privilege as well as my duty to advise His Excellency the Governor General as to whom he should call to take control of that department, I advised His Excellency to call the hon. member who now sits for the constituency of Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston). Why? Because I believed that he had a record second to none of gallantry in the defence of his country, and also because I believed that having gone through that great war from beginning to close, and having served as he did on the field of battle, there was no man in this country who was likely to be more understanding and more sympathetic with the men who had fought on the battlefield or who would be more anxious to avert another war, and because I believed that in the administration of the affairs of the Department of National Defence he would see to it that any measures that were taken would be of a character that would be effective for the purpose in view, and would be carried out above all else in a manner that would serve the highest interest of his fellowmen and of this country.

My hon. friend from Southeast Grey pays the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) a compliment and says that she would be content to have him at the head of the Department of National Defence. May I remind her that under the British system of government the cabinet is a unit in all matters of policy, and whether the Minister of Justice sits where he sits to-day as Minister of Justice, or were to sit at the head of the Department of National Defence, the policy of the government would still remain as one, and he along with others would be jointly responsible exactly as he is to-day. As a government we have a collective responsibility for the policy of national defence.

I do not wish to-night to go into the question of the estimates. My colleague the Minister of National Defence has already indicated to the house certain features, but I might repeat in one word what he has said namely, that if we confine the comparison to the militia and the naval forces, the amount which we are asking parliament to provide this year is the equivalent of what was being asked prior to the period of 1914. Will anyone in this house suggest, having the knowledge we all have of the development of aerial navigation and the possibilities of aerial attack and aerial defence, that it is not wholly essential that this country, in common with all other countries of the world, should develop an air force? Is there anyone who has followed modern scientific development or has attempted to forecast the possible develop-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

ments that will take place in the agencies of communication and transportation who does not feel that the air force is likely to play a part second to none in the future? I believe that this parliament will say that a country like Canada, with the vast distances which we have here to traverse, and incidentally to defend in case of attack at any time, is justified both for military and civil reasons in paying very special attention to the development of air forces and aerial navigation and that the addition which parliament is being asked to vote in that connection will be voted with good grace.

There is, I believe, an additional amount to pay for the cost of two new torpedo boat destroyers. If these destroyers were to be an addition to the present equipment of the naval forces, I would say that there might be some ground for taking exception to that expenditure, but actually they are in the nature of replacements of two vessels that are practically out of commission, and the alternative of the government, if we were not to drop this service altogether, was either to borrow vessels from the old country, or purchase our own vessels and own and control ourselves what we feel to be essential. I believe the members of this house will feel that Canada will wish to pay for her own vessels, and to control and manage them herself, and be under no obligation to any other government than her own for what she does in that regard. That covers the essential features with regard to any additional outlays from the point of view of national defence.

Now take the other departments of the government, and here again I wish to emphasize to my hon. friend that every department of the government is vitally interested in the promotion of peace and international understanding. Take, for instance, the departments that have to do with the development of our natural resources. How far are these resources likely to be developed in time of war? We have had an opportunity to judge, and we know that every department of government that has been concerned with the economic development of the country suffered during the period of the war, and it is to their interest to try to prevent war developing in any way they possibly can. The Department of Agriculture, the Department of Marine and Fisheries, the Department of the Interior and Mines, the Department of Immigration and Colonization, the Department of Trade and Commerce—all these departments are interested in seeking in an active way wherever they can to pro-

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