

frid Laurier) himself admits that the construction of this navy in Canada—and, if we are to have it constructed at all, we on this side as a party do not object to having it constructed in Canada—will cost thirty per cent more at least than if it were built in Great Britain, the direct opposite of the policy preached by these hon. gentlemen before they found places on the treasury benches.

Now, I mean to refer to some other expressions of the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald). But I can do so in a more connected manner as I continue my own remarks, and, as the several points arise, deal with what was stated by the hon. member. This question of national defence is one of very great importance; it is one which has engaged the attention of our public men, not only in the overseas dominions but in the motherland, for some years past to a greater or lesser extent. So far as Canada is concerned, in the earlier history of our country, when we were engaged in opening up and developing its resources, when our prairies were lying vacant, when our revenues were of a very limited character, when we were engaged in laying deep the foundations of our future greatness, there was some excuse, some reason, why Canada should not engage in duties of an imperial nature that would have resulted in too great a strain upon the exchequer of the country—greater than Canada could well afford at that time. But, now, when the initial stage of development is passed, when Canada is exporting millions of bushels of grain to other countries, when our hitherto vacant lands are filling up, when we are boasting of our so-called surpluses, and buoyant revenue, when our industries are on a substantial basis, when we take such pride in referring to the fact that Canada is a nation within the empire—and especially when England is groaning under huge financial obligations consequent upon her endeavours to maintain a superior fleet, not only for the protection of her own shores, but for the protection of the empire as a whole,—our self-respect should compel us not to withhold our aid longer, but to give in no niggardly or selfish spirit, to assume a fair proportion of the cost of protection, that protection to be used according to the best opinion of the naval experts of the empire to bring about the desired result. Surely our citizens are sufficiently patriotic, sufficiently loyal to the empire's interests, to cause us to rally to the support of the motherland in time of peril, and to assume our share and the responsibility of that share of maintaining the undoubted supremacy of the British fleet that should protect our status as a nation, and without which we should be at the mercy of every hostile foe. In reading the expressions of opinion on this subject, I have come across

Mr. ROCHE.

the suggestion that, so long as Canada remains a colony of Great Britain, so long she is entitled to and should receive the protection of the British navy. But, to say nothing of the pusillanimous spirit of a people who would expect, nay, demand, protection at the hands of the motherland, while, at the same time, refusing a proportionate share of the cost of that protection, where should we look for protection were the British fleet annihilated? Whose colony would Canada become then? With Germany as the conquering foe, having no colonies of her own in which to locate her surplus population, could we reasonably expect so rich a prize as Canada to escape her clutches, or to be closed against the German desire for expansion or colonization? Are we, as British subjects to complacently view the possibility of being compelled to transfer our allegiance to a foreign nation, and the severing of those ties of kinship and of love that have made us part and parcel of what we have proudly spoken of in years gone by as the greatest empire the world has ever seen? I refuse to believe that there is any great element of our population that would thus repudiate responsibility on our part. Now, where national status exists, national obligations follow as a matter of course. And, were Canada to be involved in serious international complications requiring any assistance, I am sure that the whole power of the British fleet would be at her back to espouse her cause, to defend her, to fight her battles if need be; and it would be a craven spirit that would thus accept and expect this assistance and protection without assuming the responsibility of doing our share towards keeping that means of defence in the highest state of efficiency. The proposition embodied in this Bill for the construction of an independent Canadian navy is one that is not designed to meet, and certainly will not meet, the immediate necessities of the empire. And, as the best guarantee of peace is to be fully prepared for war, and our course should be to show the nations of the world that all her colonies are at the back of the motherland. Viewed even from an economic standpoint, the price of peace, no matter how great it is, would be much less than the price of war, with its immense sacrifices of life and waste of money, Canada's duty, then, is to render immediate, effective assistance to make overwhelming the superiority of the British fleet so that no nation, Germany or any other, would dare to challenge that superiority on the high seas.

Hon. gentlemen opposite have quoted statements of leading Liberal politicians in the mother country, made during the excitement of an election campaign, to create the impression that no emergency exists or is likely to arise within the next few years. But it must be remembered