

naval force must be available for co-operation in that war. That is absolutely the only safe principle on which any scheme of this kind can be worked out. The moment you begin to split hairs and say: We will fight if one of our ships is captured, but will not fight if a British ship is captured; we consider this war just or that one unjust; we consider this war in the interest of Canada and the other as not in the interest of Canada;—the moment you get down to hair-splitting distinctions of that kind, you embark upon a path, which must, under section 18, lead to the complete separation of this country from the rest of the empire.

Mr. FIELDING. I accept the principle the hon. member lays down that when Britain is at war Canada is at war, and therefore it is not for the Governor in Council or for this parliament to say—in that sense—whether we should be at war or not. If Great Britain is at war with any other nation, Canada, as part of the empire, is at war. But it does not follow that in every one of these cases we shall, automatically or otherwise, place our ships to engage in that war.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The Prime Minister distinctly said that after war had been declared, and before this order in council was made, a Canadian ship meeting a ship of the enemy would not attack it, would not fight it, but that she would only fight if she was first attacked. Then I put this question to my right hon. friend, and I put it to the Minister of Finance: Supposing a Canadian ship sees a foreign cruiser capturing ships carrying the British flag and no order in council has been made, what is the Canadian cruiser to do?

Mr. FIELDING. My answer to that is that my hon. friend is entirely mistaken in creating any distinction between a Canadian ship and a British ship. There is, in this relation no such thing as a Canadian ship on the ocean; every ship of Canada is a part of the British fleet flying the British flag, subject to all the laws of Great Britain.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Why not put that in the Bill?

Mr. FIELDING. It is not necessary to put it in the Bill. There are some things so simple and so easily understood that they need not be stated. I say at once that if Great Britain engages in a war with any nation, and if that nation can get at us, they have a right to punish us because we are part of the British empire, unless we are strong enough to fight them off. But let us use an illustration. Suppose the British government proclaimed war against the Republic of Liberia. We are immediately at war, the whole British empire is at war with Liberia, Canada is

at war with Liberia. But is there any particular reason why we should order Canadian ships to go off and help the British government to fight Liberia? The thing is preposterous and ridiculous. This clause enables us to distinguish between times when we are needed to assist the British empire, and times when there is no such need, and surely that is right. Now, as to the question of whether a war is just or unjust, I have already said that while I think we should insist upon the right of the people of Canada who pay the money—and I hope my hon. friend from British Columbia will not find fault if I refer to money, a Minister of Finance must think of such things—I say the people of Canada who have to pay the money are the proper persons to decide, through their competent authority, the Governor General in Council, and later through parliament, through the voices of the people, whether their ships should engage in that war. If it be a petty, insignificant war in which Britain is engaged and needs no help, then our ships will not take part in it, not because we are not at war with Liberia, but because Great Britain does not need any help to look after it. But if you come to a really great war, if you come to a war in which the commerce of Great Britain, and that means the commerce of Canada, is being attacked on the ocean, or liable to be attacked on the ocean, I say then that Canada should instantly go to the relief of the mother country. While we, by this Bill, would simply maintain our right of judgment, I have not the shadow of a doubt how that right would be exercised, I do not believe there would be much discussion whether the war was a just war or not—we would have a right to consider that, and it is right that we should maintain that position. But until we have developed some system by imperial federation, that magnificent dream—and we are all the better for dreaming it. Though we may fail to accomplish it—but until we have developed some system in which the various over-seas dominions shall have a voice with regard to the making of war, we must be content to accept the war-making machinery which now exists in the British empire. There will come a time, I have no doubt, when, in the development of the British system, Canada and the various great over-seas dominions will be consulted; nav, I believe they would even be consulted now before any great war would be undertaken by the British empire. There will come a time probably when they can be consulted in a more formal manner, but until that time shall come, until we have a constitutional right to take part in making a declaration of war, it seems to me that as loyal citizens of the empire we must be content to accept the judgment of the government of the day in