

let the people of Canada judge between us. If you say that there may be occasions in which Canada would have no reason whatever for taking part in a war, the question arises, when, and where, and who is to determine that? I answer that the question is to be determined by the men who, for the time being, are responsible for the welfare of Canada. My hon. friend will say: But what will happen if our ship is on the high seas and it is attacked? Sir, if it is attacked it will defend itself, and I have no doubt will give a good account of itself.

An hon. MEMBER. By running away.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Does any one believe that the men who are on that ship will run away?

Mr. HUGHES. I was only quoting from the right hon. gentleman's own organ, which said that the boat was built to escape.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend should not bring up such a petty argument as that in a matter of this kind. We are discussing a grave subject. I say this, that if it should happen that our ships were attacked on the high sea, no matter under what government, no matter under what provocation, or without any provocation, I hold that under such circumstances any ship built in Canada, manned by Canadians, and sailing the British flag, would give a good account of itself.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Would the right hon. gentleman permit me to ask him a question? Suppose a Canadian ship meets a ship of similar armament and power belonging to an enemy, meets her on the high seas, what is she to do? I do not ask now what she will do, if attacked; but will she attack, will she fight?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know that she would fight, I do not know that she should fight either. She should not fight until the government by which she is commissioned have determined whether she should go into the war. That is the position we take, my hon. friend takes a different position. He says that without any question, under all circumstances, we are bound to send our ships into the war. We take a different position, and we say: Let the country judge between us.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Would our ports and harbours be neutral like our fleet until an order in council had been passed?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not understand what my hon. friend means by asking if they should be neutral.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I understood the Prime Minister to say that our ships would

not fight until they were ordered to do so, and, therefore, they would in effect be neutral until the Governor in Council had made an order that they should participate in the war. Have I misstated my hon. friend's position?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Then, inasmuch as our ships, under the conditions mentioned, will be practically neutral, I would like to know whether our ports and harbours will also be neutral in the same way?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not understand what my hon. friend means by asking if they would be neutral. If he means after an enemy has come into our harbour, then it will be time to resist them with our fleet.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But if our ships do not attack the enemy when they meet the enemy on the high seas, on the same principle, may not the enemy's fleet come into our harbour without resistance or attack, without fear of aggression. Surely, that can be done; it is feasible for the country owning those harbours to maintain neutrality on the high seas?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That would be a question to determine any time that a warship entered a Canadian port.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The position of the Prime Minister is that ships flying the British flag should meet an enemy on the high seas and not attack them. That is a new tradition for the British navy.

At six o'clock, committee took recess.

#### After Recess.

Committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I was alluding before six o'clock to some curious conditions which might be brought about as a result of the provisions of section 18 in view of the interpretation that the Prime Minister has placed upon that section. I would like to allude to one or two more. As I have already pointed out there are, of course, wars in which Canada would not be expected to participate, such as small frontier wars, and wars in which no navy would be engaged. In these it could not be expected that the Canadian naval forces would take any part. The British naval force would not take any part in them. Then there are operations such as those to which the Prime Minister alluded—the operations in Egypt in 1882, when the naval force upon the spot acted under the directions of the home government and acted without any formal declaration of war. Then there is a third-class of wars, those to which allusion was also made before six o'clock, wars in which the naval forces of the em-