

ment, for in its appointments of commercial agents abroad, by its National Policy inaugurated in 1879, by its several administrative measures since it is in power, consciously or unconsciously, its policy has tended towards independence. What really does the word National Policy mean if not a Tariff made by an independent nation, or one striving to become so. Mr. Speaker, I think it is but logical to vote against the resolution of the hon. member for West Durham, because it proposes an impossible method of attaining what he seeks, and, secondly, I repeat it, the policy of the Government itself tends towards national independence. Moreover, I think that the time is not far distant when that question will force itself upon the attention of the members of this House. I think the time is not far off when we shall have to take that question into consideration and pronounce the word independence without fear of being charged with disloyalty to the Crown or to the constitution of our country. But the question must come before us in a clear, precise and defined form, and then we will discuss it, but not in the shape in which it has been placed this evening before the House by the hon. member for West Durham. This question, which is already a theme for discussion in the household, in merchant's offices, in the press and in public, must ultimately come before the House and compel us to discuss it. But, Mr. Speaker, the present moment would be inopportune for its discussion, when Ontario, or at least an important portion of the Province of Ontario, is uttering threats which threaten to imperil our very constitution, and when we see the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. DeCosmos) give utterance to a wail which bears a strong resemblance to a threat of secession. Consequently, I say and believe that at the present time it is the duty of all to vote against the resolution, because the affirming of it would be to cast a blame upon that policy which logically tends towards independence, a policy which has been approved of by all the members of the great party to which I have the honor to belong; to resume, because the method proposed by the resolution of the hon. member for Durham West is not the proper one according to which a question of this importance should be discussed.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN (in French). Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Ouimet) finds that the motion of the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake) does not necessarily tend to the independence of this country. My hon. friend from Laval should nevertheless have remembered that the motion of the hon. member for West Durham must have, as a natural consequence, the political independence of the country, although it does not say so in so many words.

Mr. BLAKE. Hear, hear.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. If the hon. member for West Durham, who thoroughly understands French, will permit me, and will give what I say a little of his attention, he will see what I want to say. The hon. member wishes us to go to the British Government and ask of it to allow us to appoint diplomatic agents abroad, and to conduct ourselves our diplomatic and commercial negotiations, with foreign powers. Now, let us suppose that the Mother Country allows us to appoint our agents abroad, the first thing we shall have to do will be to pay those agents, accredited to the various foreign Courts, provided always that those foreign Courts are willing to receive them; and then, when the time shall come for us to enter into negotiations with those powers, what additional strength can we bring to bear upon them to that which we enjoy to-day? We shall find ourselves alone, a country with a population of 4,000,000, possessing neither an army nor a navy to enforce our rights, and being consequently without any moral force in the eyes of those powers; and if these same powers enter into commercial treaties with us, what will there be to prevent them, the day following or

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the day following that, should their interests demand it, from violating those treaties. Thus will we find ourselves stranded, without the strength, without the power, without the authority to cause our rights to be respected; for we have neither army nor navy. Perhaps the hon. member will say: "But if we are placed in such a position, we shall necessarily have the necessary force to enforce our rights." That is where the question of the political independence of the country will at once come in, for England will, as a matter of course, say to us: "You have wished to conclude your commercial treaties by yourselves; those treaties are not in harmony with the policy of the Imperial Government, now defend yourselves." Such will be the necessary consequence, and the force of circumstances will compel us to have prematurely an army and a navy to defend us. And I would very much like to know who there is in our midst who could go before the electors of the country at the next election and say to them: "We are ready to incur the responsibility; we are desirous of enjoying commercial independence. We wish to have the right of concluding commercial treaties with foreign powers, but remember that this brings with it the obligation of having an army and a navy; millions will have to be spent to keep them up; but it is the necessary consequence of the policy which we have adopted." Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the country is ready to assume such a responsibility. We are but 4,000,000 of a population; we are now opening the country by railways and canals from one end to the other. We are calling thither a population from abroad to settle upon our soil and to people it, and it is not a suitable time for us to incur the responsibility of having an army and a navy, and to send our consuls and ambassadors abroad. Nevertheless, the hon. member cannot say that such is not the logical consequence of the position which the hon. member for West Durham wishes us to assume to-day. We saw a short time ago the junior member for Victoria (Mr. DeCosmos) in conversation with the hon. member for West Durham; the hon. member for Victoria took special care to speak of his hon. friend on his right in order to countenance him and endorse his contention, and he told us that he supported that policy, because the natural consequence of it was the independence of the country, and that he himself was in favor of that independence. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is well that such a policy should reveal itself clearly before the House and the country; it is as well that we should know what we are to expect. If we are to have elections this summer, or next year, it is as well that the people should know by the vote we are about to record this evening if we are in favor of that independence, and if we are prepared to assume the responsibility of the expenditure which we should have to incur, were we to adopt the position which it is attempted to make us take. For my part I do not think that the population of Lower Canada, or of the Dominion, is in favor of the independence of the country. At present we enjoy, relatively speaking, a considerable amount of independence. We enjoy independence almost wholly, and the large cost of it is paid by the Mother Country. If we get into difficulties with a foreign power, who pays for the army and navy? Who comes to our defence? It is England which supplies the necessary funds, merely calling upon us to supply our *pro rata* share, as indeed we ought to do, to the expenditure of the Empire on our soil. But should we become independent to-morrow, we are left entirely to our own resources; we are left alongside a neighboring power which has a population ten or eleven times as numerous, and that will act as does every neighbor in politics; the big swallow the small and we shall find ourselves at his mercy. We are, to-day, the best of friends because England is there with her army, her fleet, her money, her prestige, and her flag to defend us, and hence it is that we are respected. It is not because we are strong of ourselves, but because England stands by us