

Mr. Borden himself is saying at the present time that Canada should do nothing of a permanent nature in the matter of imperial naval defence until she has a voice in the issues that determine peace and war, and is giving this as a reason why he is unable to adopt a permanent policy. A despatch, dated London, December 10, 1912, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Rt. Honourable Lewis Harcourt, to His Royal Highness the Governor General of Canada "for the information of Mr. Borden's Cabinet," states that "policy is and must remain the sole prerogative of the Cabinet, subject to the support of the House of Commons" (at Westminster). Without expressing any opinion as to these matters, it is to be observed that **what Mr. Borden is proposing to do is the very thing which he says should not be done.** By the gift of the three largest battleships in the world to the British Admiralty, he commits Canada irrevocably to participation in any and every conflict that may arise into which these ships may be brought, and places it wholly beyond the power of the Canadian Parliament to exercise any control should there be a course of policy or action of which the people of Canada do not approve.

Circumstances afford only one of two possible explanations of this complete reversal of what, wholly irrespective of party, has come to be understood as the accepted basis of relationship between the United Kingdom and the self-governing Dominions with respect to national and imperial defence,—either that, entirely irrespective of the will of the people, Mr. Borden deliberately proposes to **substitute a policy of centralization for one of co-operation in matters of defence,** or, that because of the compromised position of himself and his party through the alliance between the Nationalists and the Conservatives, he is prepared to resort to the expedient of voting thirty-five million dollars for dreadnoughts, to escape, for the time being, the framing of a permanent policy, and yet appear to be doing something substantial in aid of Britain. No matter which explanation is accepted, the consequences are the same; **a complete reversal of the position which the Canadian parliament and people have hitherto maintained with so much pride and with results so wholly beneficial to British connection,** and the opening of the way to endless possible dissensions both in the United Kingdom and in Canada as to what is, and is not understood, and what may, or may not be involved, with all the elements of possible disintegration and estrangement with which these differences may be fraught.

It may be that a section of the Canadian people are willing to forget with what difficulty Canada has attained her rights of self-government and control, and the advantages she derives from them, and are ready to substitute **centralization without control, for co-operation with control** in inter-imperial relations, but Mr. Borden is hardly justified in forcing the whole Dominion into this position, without giving to the people of Canada an opportunity of expressing their views in a matter which vitally affects the present rights, and future position of the Dominion.

The following brief chronology will serve to illustrate the events and considerations which have determined Canada's part in the past, in the matter of military and naval defence and may serve to throw some light on the conditions which have helped to bring about the present extraordinary position.