

order. They are coming to us and asking that money be appropriated for the Naval Service, and they tell us that a year or two hence they will announce what their naval policy is. That is no way to treat Parliament, and in order so far as possible to uphold the rights of Parliament we on this side are determined not to vote appropriations as a mere matter of temporary expediency, but at a time like this to demand from the Government in the first instance a statement of what their policy is. If that policy commends itself to us and to the country we will give it our support; if it does not, we will do our utmost to oppose it, believing that our opposition will be supported by the country at large.

Let me remind the House that at the beginning of this session during the first debate that took place I emphasized very strongly our disapproval of the habit that this Government have fallen into of leaving over until the very last days of the session matters of great national importance, and in particular asking Parliament to vote millions of dollars for expenditure which the people's representatives have had no opportunity to consider and discuss. I then stated that if the Government continued that objectionable course, we on this side of the House would be doubly careful before we acquiesced in the passage of any measure that would be the means of furthering that kind of action in the future. Notwithstanding that the Government has had ample warning, it is simply repeating this method, particularly in reference to the naval service.

On the 22nd of March the Main Estimates were presented to the House, and they contained the item:

Naval service—To provide for the maintenance of the Royal Canadian Navy, 1920-21, \$300,000; 1919-20, \$600,000.

Or compared with the Estimates of 1920, a decrease of \$300,000. On the 25th of March, just three days later, the Minister of Naval Affairs made a statement in this House on what he termed the naval policy of the Government, which contained the following:

In view of Canada's heavy financial commitments and of the fact that Great Britain has not as yet decided on her permanent naval policy, and if the approaching Imperial Conference at which the question of naval defence of the Empire will come up for discussion between the Home Government and the Overseas Dominions, it has been decided to defer in the meantime action in regard to the adoption of a permanent naval policy for Canada.

The House—

Mr. BALLANTYNE: Read on.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I will in a moment. The House and the country generally read these two statements together—the statement the minister gave three days after the Estimates were brought down, and the figures quoted in the Estimates. When they saw that the Government proposed a decrease of \$300,000, as compared with the amount expended last year, they warmly approved and applauded that action, because it was generally felt that at this time before the work of demobilization arising out of the great war had been completed, and while Parliament was still voting vast sums of money for demobilisation, the Government was at least showing a sense of perspective in not asking for additional sums for the creation of a naval service.

Mr. BALLANTYNE: Why does the hon. member not read the whole of my statement?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I read the whole statement the other day.

Mr. BALLANTYNE: It would do no harm to read it again.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The next paragraph which my hon. friend is so anxious that I should read is as follows:

The Government has decided to carry on the Canadian Naval Service along pre-war lines and has accepted the offer of Great Britain of one light cruiser and two torpedo boat destroyers to take the place of the present obsolete and useless training ships, the Niobe and Rainbow.

What I have to say to my hon. friend is this. When he made to the House the statement that the Government had decided to carry on the Canadian naval service along pre-war lines, and there was before the House the item in the Main Estimates I have quoted, if he had anything else in his mind, if he contemplated an Estimate, not of \$300,000, but of \$2,500,000, he should have told Parliament so at that time. Either he had not anything in his mind at that time and the whole business is as I have described it—my hon. friend shakes his head. Well, then he had in his mind that he was going to come to Parliament in the last days of the session, and ask Parliament to vote \$2,500,000, and he was afraid to mention it when he thought we would be able to discuss the whole policy without any need of haste.

Mr. BALLANTYNE: When I made the statement that the Government was going to carry on along pre-war lines, if my hon. friend had looked up the former Estimates, he would have seen that carrying on along