

was trembling in the balance of fate. Many were the hopes that peace would prevail, and many were the fears that war would ensue. During all this time offers were reaching the War Office of aid from all the colonies, asking for the privilege to serve the Queen in the war which was impending. Just about the date that my opinion appeared in the *Globe*, the Colonial Office issued a circular, not to Canada alone, but to all the colonies, stating the conditions under which aid would be accepted from the colonials. The despatch which I referred to is dated on October 3, and is addressed to Canada, to New South Wales, to South Australia, in fact to all the Australian colonies. That despatch reads as follows—

Secretary of State for War and Commander-in-Chief desire to express high appreciation of signal exhibition of patriotic spirit of people of Canada shown by offers to serve in South Africa, and to furnish following information to assist organization of force offered into units suitable for military requirements. Firstly, units should consist of about 125 men; secondly, may be infantry, mounted infantry or cavalry; in view of numbers already available, infantry most, cavalry least serviceable; thirdly, all should be armed with 303 rifles or carbines, which can be supplied by the Imperial government if necessary; fourthly, all must provide own equipment, and mounted troops own horses; fifthly, not more than one captain and three subalterns each unit. Whole force may be commanded by officer not higher than major. In considering numbers which can be employed, Secretary of State for War guided by nature of offers, by desire that each colony should be fairly represented, and limits necessary if force is to be fully utilized by available staff as integral portion of Imperial forces; would gladly accept four units. Conditions as follows: Troops to be disembarked at port of landing, South Africa, fully equipped at cost of colonial government or volunteers. From date of disembarkation Imperial government will provide pay at Imperial rates, supplies and ammunition, and will defray expenses of transport back to Canada, and pay wound pensions and compassionate allowances at Imperial rates. Troops to embark not later than October 31, proceeding direct to Cape Town for orders. Inform accordingly all who have offered to raise volunteers.

Now, Sir, when this despatch reached Canada, His Excellency the Governor General was absent in New York. I had an engagement that took me to Chicago, I came back from Chicago on the 12th, we took up the question that very day, and two days afterwards we issued an order offering our first contingent. Now, why did we do that? True, the action which we took was contrary to the opinion which I had given in the *Globe* that we had no appropriation and ought not to move without the sanction of parliament. We did not call parliament first of all for this reason: The cost of the contingent proposed at that time was so limited that to call parliament in special session would have been more expensive than the cost of the contingent.

Moreover, public opinion was then speaking in such energetic tones that there was no misunderstanding it, and we felt warranted in undertaking the expenditure, relying upon parliament to indemnify the government and to sanction our illegal action in that respect. This was on October 14, and on October 30 our contingent sailed from Quebec. Certainly, to those who were present it was a most impressive scene, it was a most impressive moment—that moment when, from the walls of old Quebec, the scene of the last great conflict between the two races in the last century, the two races now happily reconciled, Canada bade farewell to those men who were going to fight for those principles which applied here, made them the happy citizens of a free and united country.

The hon. gentleman has referred to what I said of the Militia Act. I am still of the opinion that we could not have acted under the Militia Act. We did not apply the Militia Act, we were not bound to apply it, because, under the terms of the despatch which I have just read, we could not apply it to our volunteers. The moment they landed in South Africa they became British soldiers, they did not go as part of the Canadian militia, but they went as full British soldiers, with the full quality of Tommy Atkins.

Now, Sir, the hon. gentleman having taken up this position, has blamed me somewhat in his speech this afternoon for having been, as he said, rather lukewarm—I do not exactly remember the word he used at this moment, but it conveyed the impression that I had been lukewarm in regard to the war, that I had not been enthusiastic. Sir, I have no hesitation in admitting that I was not enthusiastic for that war, or for any war. I have no sympathy for that mad, noisy, dull-witted and short-sighted throng who clamour for war, who shouted 'On to Pretoria,' who complacently prophesied that General Buller would eat his Christmas dinner in the capital of the Transvaal. War is the greatest calamity that can befall any nation, and if ever there was a calamitous war it is this one. The uncertainties of war must always make men shudder who take the responsibilities of entering into it. Sir, I have no hesitation in admitting that I entertained a strong hope that the old historic associations which, in the 16th and 17th centuries, bound together in Europe the Dutch race and the English race, would prove sufficiently powerful to keep the peace; I strongly hoped that the Dutch and English races which have done so much for civilization and for freedom, would be able to patch up their differences in Africa, and so continue the work of civilization and freedom in that continent. I deprecated the war because I have long been of the opinion, as a result of the thought I have been able to give to the problems which now