

is to spend \$35,000,000 towards increasing the naval forces of the Empire?

Mr. LAPOINTE: (Translation.) I may say to the hon. gentleman that the amendment of the hon. leader of the Opposition had for its object the establishment of a Canadian navy, to be built in Canada and to remain the property of the Canadian Government. Moreover, my hon. friend will allow me to point out that his question has not much bearing on the statements I have been making. I was just saying that Great Britain is not much in need of a present from Canada, as she is cutting down her indebtedness from year to year, and her surpluses reach high figures. She does not need any of our money.

That amount equals seven times the valuation of the rateable property in the constituency I have the honour to represent. We are called upon to disburse five dollars per head of population in the Dominion, and the electors of the county of Kamouraska, whose representative I am here, are unanimously opposed to such an absurd act of generosity.

Besides, I think I have shown that this Bill implies the sacrifice of a precious right and franchise, and constitutes a flagrant violation of our constitution. Such a radical change in our political system should not be effected without the consent of the Canadian people, and that is why we ask that they be consulted.

The British North America Act provides for the establishment of a Canadian navy; it is the continuation of the traditional policy of Canada, framed by Macdonald, Cartier and other fathers of Confederation; while the payment of that tribute is opposed to the primary principles of responsible government.

The Government tells us: That \$35,000,000 contribution is only a provisional policy, which it is not necessary to submit to the people; we will submit to the people our permanent policy which we are just now working out.

Mr. Speaker, if the vessels built with our money are to remain the property of Canada, while at the same time becoming a part of the British fleet, does not the proposal of the Government, from that very fact, take the character of a permanent policy? Will not the obligations which that state of things will impose on the people be of a permanent nature?

If an expenditure of \$35,000,000 for naval purposes is considered by the Government a mere trifle, in connection with which it is not necessary to obtain beforehand the consent of the people, I wonder what fabulous amount these hon. gentlemen will require when they come to frame their permanent policy as forecasted, which they consider will warrant an appeal to the Canadian electorate.

Are we not justified in calling on the Government to come out from under the

Mr. SEVIGNY.

cover of diplomacy and tell the country, previous to the voting of that \$35,000,000, what will be the purport and what will be the cost of the permanent policy they hold in reserve?

I shall say a word only in connection with the amendment to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. Guilbault). What is the motive for making such a proposal? There can be only one, fear of defeat, as a result of elections, both for the Government and for the wing of which the hon. member forms part.

The amendment of the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Turriff) asks that we should proceed at once to a redistribution of seats, so as to ensure to every province its fair quota of representatives, and that the people be afterwards consulted before the Bill is carried. The hon. member for Joliette (Mr. Guilbault), by adding the words 'by plebiscite,' merely restricts and diminishes the effect of that amendment.

On this side of the House we say: We do not wish your proposal to be adopted previous to the people having been consulted. The hon. member for Joliette comes in and says: We, the last remnants of the great Nationalist army, we say to the Government: 'We also are desirous that the people be consulted; but, pray do not decide on having a general election; it is too dangerous a thing; do not grant anything more than a plebiscite.'

It is fear of the electors which inspires the promoters of that amendment to the amendment. It is also the fear of being obnoxious to the Government whose faithful supporters they continue to be. On that question, as on that relative to the schools of Keewatin, they have not the courage to vote once in favour of a proposal emanating from a Liberal member.

I will say to the hon. member and to his friends: You may keep up the game, the people are not going to be deceived. Seven of them have voted timidly against the resolution of the Prime Minister, muttering as an excuse for doing so the lack of information such as the ministers have in hand, and which justifies the latter in the course they have followed.

All have voted against the appeal to the people proposed by my hon. friend the member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville), on the false and entirely erroneous grounds that such a proposal would have no reference to any of the two schemes submitted by the leaders of both parties respectively.

Are these hon. gentlemen opposed to the contribution Bill of the Government? What have they said, what have they done, in what way have they helped us to forestall its adoption? The hon. member for Joliette has taunted us with making long speeches against that proposal, while he, in the course of a speech which lasted fifteen minutes, gave twelve minutes to complimenting the Government, re-hashing old