

of the House and the country, expressions which the Prime Minister openly made and which he has never retracted? The quarrel of these hon. gentlemen is with their leader, and not with the members of the Conservative party.

Why did not the Prime Minister himself attend the conference in Great Britain last year to which his colleague the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur) and the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden) went? Was it because he had already placed himself on record at the conference of 1907 as being entirely opposed to Canada contributing in any way, shape or form, towards the defence of the empire? Was it by reason of the fact that he had opposed the resolution introduced by the representative in that conference of Cape Colony, Dr. Smartt? That resolution has been referred to by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), but I shall again recall it to the attention of the House in order to show that there was nothing in this resolution which the Prime Minister should have objected to, and more especially in view of what he is doing by this Bill for the construction of an independent Canadian navy. This was the resolution moved by Dr. Smartt:

That this conference, recognizing the vast importance of the services rendered by the navy to the defence of the empire and the protection of its trade, and the paramount importance of continuing to maintain the navy in the highest possible state of efficiency, considers it to be the duty of the dominions beyond the seas to make such contribution towards the up-keep of the navy as may be determined by their local legislatures—

No infringement of autonomy.

—the contribution to take the form of a grant of money, the establishment of local naval defence, or such other services, in such manner as may be decided upon after consultation with the admiralty and as would best accord with their varying circumstances.

What was there in that resolution that the Prime Minister of Canada, the representative of Canada at that conference, should object to? Does it infringe on self-government in this country? Does it infringe upon that blessed 'autonomy' of which he is the only guardian according to his own expressions? It plainly states by 'local naval defence or such other services.' But the Prime Minister opposed that resolution. And it is by reason of that, I verily believe, that Germany has been going forward, in the belief that the colonies were not at the back of the motherland, carrying on her naval preparations, thinking that Great Britain stood alone. Dr. Smartt, after discussing the question for some time, expressed great disappointment that the representative of Canada, the premier colony of the empire, should have taken such

a strong stand in opposition to the resolution. He argued for it, and pleaded that it was nearly time we did something. He said:

I thought the wording of this resolution would have specially met your views, because towards the up-keep of the navy it may take the form either of a grant of money or the establishment of a local defence force or other services.

The reply was no argument. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:

I have said all I have to say on the subject.

This was the curt reply. 'Well,' said Dr. Smartt, 'I think it is a great pity we do not pass something. We have done so much in the way of pious affirmation'—and we can see whom he had in his mind's eye when he used these words—'that I am anxious we should do something of a practical character.'

Was it because he was on record in that conference that the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) refused to attend in person the conference of last year? In view of the stand he then took, and of the stand he has taken here, is it surprising that people view with suspicion and distrust the introduction of this Bill, fearing that it is designed, as some of his followers state, as another step towards the independence of Canada? The people may well be forgiven for their distrust in view of the Prime Minister's own statements.

We have been taunted with having diverse views on this question on this side. Hon. gentlemen on the other side have stated that they are going to hang together—instead of hanging individually, I presume. There is as much diversity of opinion on that side as there is on this; more correctly, there is as much opposition to the construction of a Canadian navy amongst members on the government side as there is on our side. But, of course, they will support the Bill. Oh, you may be sure they will support the government. They dare not do otherwise.

Mr. TOLMIE. Why not?

Mr. ROCHE. Why, because you have before you such examples as Mr. Bourassa, who, a few years ago, was the pride of the French Canadian Liberal wing in the province of Quebec, a man to whom they were looking forward as a great leader, but who, because he asserted his independence and read some well deserved lectures to his own party, has been politically ostracised. And there was Mr. Lavergne, the independent young member from Montmagny, who, before he took his place in this House, found on his desk a document he was asked to sign, to support the government, to be tied hand and foot before he even knew what measures he would be called upon to sup-