

started. Some hon. members are inclined to laugh but we must make a start somewhere, and my statement was that the navy has been started. Training schools have been established, training ships have been procured, advertisements calling for the construction of cruisers and destroyers issued, and tenders from the leading naval constructors of Great Britain have been received. There is no turning back on this question, we must go forward with it; and the people of Canada, particularly in this House—expect this government—this ultra loyal government at election times to come forward with its policy, with its naval programme. The policy which has already been adopted they can change if they like but the principle must remain there; and I am absolutely certain in my own mind that my hon. friend the First Minister, while he may disregard my advice altogether—although I am certain I am giving him good advice—can cut the Gordian knot which confronts him very simply if he so desires. Why in a few words, by a short declaration now or in the near future he can take the House into his confidence, he can free himself from Nationalist support if he wants to and get on this side of the House backing for a proper naval scheme even though he should lose his whole Nationalist following. I want to know from my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster)—he is usually a candid man—I want to know from my hon. friend whether he is prepared to stand by the statement which he made in this House last year in connection with the navy? Will he stand by that? If he will I am satisfied. I want to ask my hon. friend the Minister of Militia and Defence whether he will stand by the statements he made in this House less than a year ago? If he will I am satisfied and the people of the country will be satisfied. And, Sir, if any one goes away from this House in the hope that this question is going to be settled by a plebiscite or by a referendum, I for one entertain the opinion that it will never be settled in such a way. I think my hon. friend the First Minister knows as well as any body that constitutional practice, parliamentary practice, demands of him that he as the head of the government shall take a position on this great question. If his position is challenged in his own party or throughout the country he will have an absolute right to go to His Royal Highness the Governor General and ask for a dissolution and submit that question to the country. He can do so in the usual way but he cannot crawl under the gate or out through the bars of the fence by any referendum or any plebiscite to the people on this question. We on this side of the House can make up our minds on that question, just as hon. members

Mr. GUTHRIE.

opposite made up their minds not to allow the reciprocity agreement to pass. And if we have to stay here and force that question to dissolution we will do it in order to make the government—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. GUTHRIE. In order that the government may take a stand, a constitutional stand, on what is at this moment the greatest question with which that government has to deal, although they have omitted all mention of it in the speech from the Throne, I do not believe there is any reason for delay in the matter. I believe that my hon. friend the First Minister has in his possession at this moment all the information he requires. I believe he has, I know he has, the results of the Imperial Conference which took place in 1902, the subsequent conference in 1907, the conference of 1909, and the scheme mapped out by the admiralty during the present year. He knows what the British Admiralty wants. Why this delay? Why not say, within a reasonable time at all events, what he is going to do? He is the man who is responsible and the man who must take a stand on the question; and he will avoid a great deal of trouble I think in his own party and a great deal of annoyance throughout the country if he will take that stand at the very earliest date possible and let the country know where he and his party are upon the question which is very prominently before the people. Why? Because he has permitted to enter his cabinet three hon. members of whom it is said that they are in their inclinations, in their bearing, in their political life Nationalist as apart from Liberal or Conservative; and one of these hon. gentlemen, the hon. the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk) if he is reported correctly in the newspapers has said that not only was he invited to enter the cabinet but he was permitted to select all the ministers from the province of Quebec. In that selection he has included himself and two other hon. members of whose views and leanings in regard to Nationalism there can be but one opinion. All of them were not up to the election time followers of my hon. friend the Prime Minister at all.

An hon. MEMBER. They denounced him.

Mr. GUTHRIE. They are to-day led by Bourassa and Lavergne. Although my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works may smile at the remark, my statement is actually correct and we read in the papers that my old deskmate—my old deskmate in this House—Mr. Armand Lavergne has been hiring a special train to come to Ottawa at a late hour of the night to consult