

progress in the past two thousand years. I trust that the day is rapidly drawing near when differences between the nations may be settled by appeal to some great tribunal established under international authority, and so constituted that its decisions will command unquestioning respect and obedience. But, until that day dawns, and while war is still the last court of appeal between the nations, we cannot forget that a great heritage has been committed to our keeping, and that we are the trustees of its safety, not for ourselves alone, but for those who are yet to be born.

The Government are naturally most desirous that the aid which we proposed last year, under conditions of urgency and need, and which we still propose to bring in due course to the common defence of the empire should be so proffered or given as not to prejudice or retard any international agreement for the cessation of battleship construction. When we are in a position to press the Naval Aid Bill to a final and satisfactory conclusion in the Senate, it will be our duty to consult with the Imperial Government respecting these grave and important considerations. If it should then appear that, by any naval arrangement entered into or about to be entered into by the great powers, a restriction or diminution of the present lamentable rivalry in armaments could be brought about, we should always be ready, until our ships have actually been begun, to review the situation so far as these proposals are concerned; and if a general cessation or temporary suspension in the building of great ships of war were at any time to be seriously entertained, Canada would gladly participate in such a desirable result. Otherwise, we should proceed in due course with the construction of the three ships, holding it to be our duty, under the conditions disclosed last year, and for reasons then elaborated with great fullness, to bring this assistance as speedily as possible to the great purpose of our common defence and security.

Our opponents, especially in the Senate, have taken the ground that our temporary proposals of last year, although not embodying a permanent policy in any respect, ought not to be undertaken without an appeal to the people, but that a permanent naval policy might properly be formulated and carried out without such an appeal. We entirely dissent from that remarkable and unjustifiable view. So far

[Mr. Borden.]

as a permanent policy of naval defence is concerned, I gave my pledge to the people, on more than one occasion previous to the last election, that it would be submitted to them at a general election before it should effectively be undertaken. That pledge still holds good, and faith will be kept with the people in that regard.

Now, my right hon. friend, in the course of his remarks, went into some matters upon which I do not desire to detain the House at any length. He spoke of the good relations between the British Empire and the German Empire. I am glad to know that they are good relations. It is my fervent hope and wish that those relations may always continue to be as satisfactory as they are at present; but, as I pointed out last year, the destinies of the world are sometimes influenced by the mere fact that predominant naval power does exist and can be utilized in one quarter or another, and I venture to think that if the right hon. gentleman will look at the observations made by the First Lord of the Admiralty in the British House of Commons on the 5th day of June, 1913, and on the 17th day of July, 1913, he will find that his view as to the necessity of maintaining and even increasing the strength of the naval forces of this empire is not borne out by the view of the British Admiralty. Mr. Churchill, in the observations which I have under my hand, but which I will not weary the House with repeating here to-night, takes it to be the duty of the British Government to make good that which was lost to the Empire by the unfortunate action of the Senate. That is the situation, so far as I understand as it exists to-day.

Just one other observation with regard to my right hon. friend. He has on various occasions during the recess urged that the people of this country should not embark on any project of aiding in the naval defence of the Empire; and he put the question of the high cost of living, I think, against dreadnoughts in the speech he made at Hamilton. He deplores, and his organs deplore, the establishment of any armament trust in Canada. Well, who was it that, last year in this Parliament, advocated the establishment of an armament trust? If I mistake not, it was the right hon. gentleman who has since made these interesting speeches in various places throughout the country. Who was it that last year desired this country to embark on a permanent naval policy which within the next ten or twelve years would have cost this