

attempts to discuss or not, it is equally his duty to take part in that discussion, and to bring to bear upon it such knowledge and information as he has of the subject. For after all, it is only in the consensus of opinions that are given in this House that the opinion of the country can be ascertained by those who, for the time being, are charged with the responsibilities of government. For that reason I have not always refrained from taking part in the discussion of military or any other questions because of a timid feeling that others might think it was improper for me to do so.

People do not see the necessity of keeping up the force, the hon. gentleman said. Well, I believe there is a good deal in that. But I have always thought that if there is one thing more than another that stimulates ambition and attracts people's attention to military matters, it is a taste of actual war. If the hon. gentleman thinks back for a time he will remember the circumstances of 1866. I remember them very distinctly, for we had a little excitement in the part of the country where I lived, and a great many men joined the force at that time. He will remember that the military spirit was very low at that time; but so soon as the announcement was made through the press, or by telegram, that the country was actually invaded, there was suddenly aroused a military spirit that was unknown before, and the result was that, although there was no preparation for war, every person seemed to be desirous to take up arms and take part in the defence of the country. Although the military operations were very short, still that invasion gave a stimulus to the military activity of the country that continued for a good many years; and because after a while there was nothing to keep up the attention, public interest in military affairs began to die out again, but how soon did it reappear when we began to enlist men for the South African contingent. Why is it that to-day we see the military spirit and the military enthusiasm so awakened in the Dominion of Canada. It is on account of the taste of war that our people have had, and the evidence that has been brought to our senses of the necessity of the defence of the British Empire even in the Dominion of Canada. That has aroused the military spirit in every part of the country. Active military operations and a taste of war are the greatest incentives to generate and keep up the military life in the country. Now, I believe it has done us a great deal of good, because at this stage in our national life we are not only taking on the responsibilities of nationhood, but we are developing a national spirit very rapidly. But heretofore we have been somewhat behind the age in the matter of national defence. In the matter of providing, as we ought to do, for our military defence, we ought to be moving, *pari passu*, with our development in every other line of national

life. When I speak of national life, I do not mean to confine it to the limited sphere of the Dominion, but as part and parcel of the British empire of which we are a very important part.

I believe I express the sentiment of the people of Canada when I say that they regretted to read in some of the morning papers that the present premier had practically refused to discuss with the Imperial government the question of Imperial defence. It was thought that it was something entirely out of keeping with the spirit of the age or the sentiments of the Canadian people, but I am quite sure that he gave offence to very many of his warm friends by that intimation. No doubt it was done with good intentions, but still it seemed to leave the impression upon the Canadian people that there was less of a desire than should have been displayed by the head of the government in Canada to seriously consider the important problem of national defence. Now, there are two lines in which national defence may be undertaken; first of all by the military force of the country, and, secondly, by a naval force. I think we have reached a time in the life of our country when we should begin to create something of a naval nucleus, but there is no possibility of accomplishing much, in my judgment, except after an earnest conference with the Imperial authorities, so that we might act in concert with them along that line, and to my mind, there could be no more opportune time than when the Coronation ceremonies are being carried on, and when all the representatives of the various colonial empires, as they may be called, are there, and are consulting with each other. The people regard this as an opportune time, above all others, in which a discussion may reasonably take place in regard to what lines may be profitably pursued for the purposes of military defence either in the military or naval lines. But, it left the impression on the minds of the Canadian people that the right hon. gentleman was not as much interested as he ought to be, holding the high position that he does in the Dominion of Canada, in defence of the empire when he refused even to discuss that question at the time when he goes to attend the Coronation ceremonies. A great many people believe that we are spending too much money for military purposes. A few years ago I thought so and I felt that there was no need of it, that we were creating a military spirit, that we were attracting attention to that line, that we were taking the people away from the peaceful and industrial pursuits of life and rather inducing them to engage in the lazy pursuits of life, and that as ours was an industrial country, the more men you take away from the industrial pursuits the more you take away from the wealth of the country, but, we have all had such a lesson as has opened our eyes since then, and every one will admit that there is a great neces-