

the island of Jamaica, which is not to be a party to this arrangement, the remaining portion of the British West Indies contain a very small population. While I congratulate the government on having been able to make an agreement with the West India Islands I cannot help expressing the regret that the reasons which led them to do that did not operate with them when they were considering the question of freetrade relations with a country of one hundred millions.

As to the naval question; I suppose that it will be time enough to go into the details of that matter when the papers are laid before us, if any papers are to be submitted to parliament. When I first perused the speech of His Excellency, and read this paragraph with respect to the naval business it struck me that the language—and the hon. leader of the government will feel that I am not reflecting on him particularly, because I do not suppose that he drew this paragraph—was not well chosen. It says:

During the past summer four members of my government conferred in London with His Majesty's government on the question of Naval Defence. Important discussions took place and conditions have been disclosed which in the opinion of my advisers render it imperative that the effective naval forces of the empire should be strengthened without delay.

Any one reading that paragraph would think that when the members of our government were in England they found that the empire was on the brink of some very serious catastrophe and that the British government had insisted that Canada should do something and do it quickly. Now what is the fact? At the very time that the First Minister of this Dominion and his colleagues were in London consulting with the British government I find that in parliament on the 25th July, Mr. Bonar Law, leader of the opposition, following Mr. Asquith, who had spoken in the same sense, said:

I am quite sure that if this country really believed that there was danger they would refuse no possible sacrifice which the government could ask. (cheers.) But in spite of all that has been said, does the country, do the House of Commons, do any of us really believe that there is danger and vital danger? (Cries of 'no, no.')

I confess that I have the greatest difficulty in believing it myself—(ministerial cheers)—I confess it.

And Mr. Bonar Law spoke what was the prevailing sentiment there. Lord Crewe, who was leading the House of Lords said:

So far as our existing position in any part of the world is concerned, we are not afraid to declare that we consider the security of the country is achieved.

There is a great deal more material to the same effect, but I do not wish to trouble the House reading it. How can we believe when we find the leaders of the British government in the end of July, when our ministers were over there negotiating—when we find the leaders of the government and the leaders of the opposition declaring that there was no crisis—and Mr. Asquith stated expressly that there was no occasion for panic or worry—how can we believe that these English ministers were stating one thing in the House of Lords and the House of Commons in England and stating a different thing to our ministers? The thing is unbelievable. It will be noted that this paragraph does not say that the papers will be laid before us. I think it will be found that our ministers are simply using a sort of pretext in order to do something which they think will be popular in the country. My own impression is that it will not be popular. Supposing that there were an emergency, how could Canada help England to meet that emergency? It could not be by paying for the construction of two or three Dreadnoughts, because hon. gentlemen know that it takes about two years from the time the keel of a Dreadnought is laid until she is ready for action, and by the time the two years had elapsed the emergency would have passed in some way or other. Either the dreaded catastrophe would have occurred or the enemy would have been defeated. So that undertaking to pay for the construction of two or three Dreadnoughts will not meet the emergency, if there be one. I have never said anything with respect to this naval question—never had any very strong views about it; but I think our wisest course is to keep on and gradually—not hastily—build up a fairly respectable naval force for our own protection, and if necessary in time of war to, in the first place, defend our shores and in the next place, in case of necessity, to assist the Royal