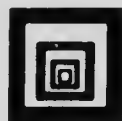


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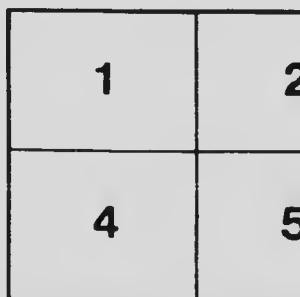
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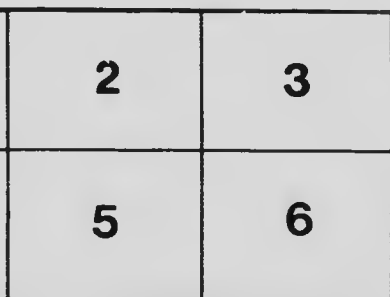
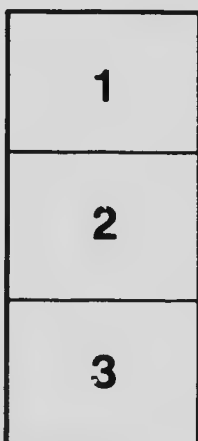
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NAVAL POLICY

of the
Liberal Conservative Party,
as set forth by

R. L. BORDEN

in the House of Commons on
November 24th, 1910.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have been rather peculiarly situated in one way. It has pleased the Nationalists in the province of Quebec, as has already been pointed out in the course of this debate, to declare that the Conservative party in Canada is in alliance with Sir Wilfrid Laurier on this naval question. I do not think that the Prime Minister himself was of that mind during the last session; I do not believe that he has changed his opinion since.

I have had the good or bad fortune, according to the point of view that may present itself to any one, to be denounced beyond measure by Nationalist speakers on every platform where they have spoken in the province of Quebec. I do not complain of that; I have taken my stand on this question, and as a public man I am open to criticism and open to denunciation at the instance of any man who does not happen to agree with me. I share the honour of being so denounced with about 80 Conservative members of parliament, and also with a number of gentlemen on the other side of the House.

No Alliance With Nationalists.

It has also pleased Liberal speakers and the Liberal press of this country to declare that the Conservative party is in alliance with the Nationalists, and if you work that out to its logical conclusion then there cannot be any difference of opinion whatever on this naval question in Canada, because we are in alliance with the government party thereon and we are also in alliance with the Nationalist party, and there is absolutely no difference of opinion. Well, we are not in alliance with the government on this question. Our policy differs from theirs, but if any proposals which the government bring down to parliament are in accordance with the policy which we have announced and for which we stand this year as last year, then we will support those proposals. We are not in alliance with the Nationalists, and we have been denounced by them even more strongly than we have been denounced by hon. gentlemen on the

other side of the House. We will retract no part of our policy because Nationalist or Liberal agrees or disagrees with it. We will stand by it as we laid it down last year, and we will not be swerved from it by any taunt, whether of Nationalist or Liberal, that we are in alliance with some other party.

I come now for a moment to the motion of my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). That motion was in these words:

That the said motion be amended, by adding to the proposed Address to His Excellency the Governor General the following paragraph at the end thereof:

The House regrets that the speech from the Throne gives no indication whatever of the intention of the government to consult the people on its naval policy and the general question of the contribution of Canada to imperial armaments.

Conservative Attitude in Session of 1910.

I have already explained in speaking upon this subject this session, the nature of our proposals when the government's measure was brought down last year. We then proposed a resolution which I read in this House only the day before yesterday, and need not read again. We declared by that resolution that the proposals of the government were dangerous, useless and expensive; we declared that before any permanent policy of this character involving large and unknown future expenditures was entered upon, it should be more carefully considered and thought out, and should be submitted to the people of Canada for their mandate. We also said that in the meantime and under the conditions which in our apprehension at that time confronted this empire, we ought to bring immediate and effective aid to the mother country and to the empire as a whole. That, in brief, was our position of last year. So far as the motion of my hon. friend is concerned, it deals with one aspect of that case. It does not, it is true, deal with every aspect of the case.

Disunited Navies Useless.

Perhaps I should say a word or two on the subject of naval control which has been spoken of during this debate. While I respect the opinions of able and earnest men who disagree with me, I cannot see that it is possible to maintain the naval supremacy of this empire by a series of disunited navies, not under one central control. We may be of different minds as to whether Canada should contribute to the defence of the empire outside of her own territory, but if we once make up our minds that Canada is so to contribute, then it seems to me absolutely sure, certain and beyond argument that the naval supremacy of the empire can only be upheld by one great naval force under one great central control. That is my conviction, that is one great reason why it seems to me the naval proposals of the government are useless and could not be carried out effectually.

Policy Which Conservatives Would Carry Out.

It may be fairly asked what we would do, if we were in power to-day, with regard to this great question. It seems to me that our plain course and duty would be this: The government of this country are able to ascertain and to know, if they take the proper action for that purpose, whether the conditions which face the empire at this time in respect of naval defence are grave. If we were in power we would endeavour to find that out, to get a plain, unvarnished answer to that question, and if the answer to that question, based upon the assurance of the government of the mother country and the report of the naval experts of the admiralty were such (and I think it would be such) as to demand instant and effective action by this country, then I would appeal to parliament for immediate and effective aid, and if parliament did not give immediate and effective aid I would appeal from parliament to the people of this country.

Permanent Policy Involves Wide Considerations.

Then, Sir, as to the permanent policy, I think the people have a right to be consulted. I do not know whether I have made my position clear, but I have done so according to my humble capacity. I think the question of Canada's co-operation upon a permanent basis in imperial defence involves very large and wide considerations. If Canada and the other Dominions are to take their part as nations of this empire in the defence of the empire as a whole, shall it be that we, contributing to that defence, shall have, as citizens of this country, abso-

lutely no voice whatever in the councils of the empire touching the issues of peace or war? I do not think that such would be a tolerable condition, I do not believe the people of Canada would for one moment submit to such a condition. Shall members of this House, representative men, representing 221 constituencies of this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, shall no one of them have the same voice with regard to those vast imperial issues that the humblest taxpayer in the British Isles has at this moment? It does not seem to me that such a condition would make for the integrity of the empire, for the closer co-operation of the empire.

People Must Be Consulted.

Regard must be had to these far-reaching considerations, a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy had been worked out and explained to the people of Canada, to every citizen in this country, then it would be the duty of any government to go to the people of Canada to receive their mandate and accept and act upon their approval or disapproval of that policy.

Monk's Motion Unsatisfactory.

The hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) has moved this motion. I am not particularly satisfied with its phrasing. With the object which my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier has in view I am absolutely in sympathy because I think the mandate of the people should be taken on so great a question. I have considered the words of my hon. friend's amendment with some care and I think that the object he has in view might be expressed, according to my humble appreciation at least, in words of more satisfactory import.

I am speaking entirely of course from my own standpoint, and I acknowledge that my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) has the same right to his opinion as I have to mine. I beg, therefore, to move:

That all the words after the word 'thereof' in the proposed motion in amendment be omitted and the following substituted therefor:

We beg to assure Your Excellency of the unalterable attachment and devotion of the people of Canada to the British Crown and of their desire and intention to fulfil all just responsibilities devolving upon this country as one of the nations of the empire. We desire, however, to express our regret that Your Excellency's gracious speech gives no indication whatever of any intention on the part of Your Excellency's advisers to consult the people on the naval policy of Canada.



