

CHALLENGES BORDEN TO SHOW THAT EMERGENCY EXISTS

F. B. Carvell in Telling Speech on the Naval Question Points Out That Men Guiding the Destinies of the Motherland are Men "With Two Eyes, Who Have Them Open"

Patronizing Medlers Do Not Represent British Thought—Canada Capable and Equal to Build Her Own Navy

(Continued from first page)

"It is only a gift of money. You will never hear anything more of it. There is no danger. The British will hire men at twenty-five cents a day, and Canadian mothers and sisters will suffer no less. As for the money Ontario will pay for it, and the West will pay for it. It will not take your sons from your homes as the infernal Laurier would do."

No wonder that the Postmaster General, when this question comes up, speaks about getting rid of it. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not rid of it and notwithstanding the wish of my hon. friend the Postmaster General, the wish of my hon. friend from North Waterloo, and the wish of every hon. gentleman on that side of the House, we are not rid of it. A great constitutional question like this being sprung upon the people is something which will not down, and it is impossible to put it down in a day. We have to discuss the thing and I think it is the duty of every member of this House, no matter on which side he is, to discuss it and give reasons for the vote which he will record when this matter comes to a second reading or at the final stages of this Bill. It is the most important proposal which has been brought before this House in my time. I believe it is the most important proposal that the people have been called upon to discuss in a generation—yes, in two or three generations. I believe it is a most important constitutional question which has been presented to the people of Canada since Confederation. I submit that it was given to this country in 1867. And, Sir, I submit that if we pass this Bill, if we hand over—I will not say money, because I understand that according to the Bill we do not hand the money over to the British Admiralty. I wish we did for I would feel a great deal safer if we were handing the money over to the British Admiralty—that is a constitutional point which has not been discussed yet, and I wish to call my hon. friend's attention to it for a moment. As I understand this Bill, it proposes to hand over to the Government of this country \$35,000,000 to be expended at their own sweet will, not in Canada, but out of Canada, for the construction of three battleships by firms over whom we have no control, and we have no way of finding out whether the money has been properly or improperly expended by people who can say that they have charged \$40,000,000 apiece for those ships. We have no way of finding it out, no way of bringing them to the bar of this House as they brought a gentleman this afternoon, no way of asking them what they did with the money. I say we are raising here a constitutional question of greater magnitude than any raised in my experience, or since Confederation. I believe, they propose to hand over \$35,000,000 to the Government—I do not find any fault with the individual members—to be expended outside of the country, and give this House no control over it, and no opportunity of bringing the men who receive the money before the Public Accounts Committee or before the House in order to find out the true facts to the question. I repeat that it is a great constitutional question, and one which in my opinion should be submitted to the people before this Bill becomes law.

But as I said a while ago, I am afraid that this naval question is not out of politics. I don't wonder, as I said before, that certain gentlemen wish it were out of politics, but I would like to know whose fault it is that this naval question is still in politics. I do not want to travel over ground that has been pretty thoroughly threshed out by different members of this House since the debate began, but no gentleman can make anything like a connected argument, or give anything like a reason for his vote on this matter, unless he devotes some attention to the historical facts in connection with this transaction. We know that this matter was first mooted at the Imperial Conference of 1902. There was a discussion upon some sort of contribution, or upon the participation of some of the colonies to the naval defence of the Empire. It was only mooted at that Conference. We know that in 1907 it was again brought up. We know that in 1909 the hon. member for North Toronto, now Minister of Trade and Commerce, placed on the Order Paper a resolution to the effect that the time had arrived when Canada should take some share in the naval defence of the Empire. I have not his exact words and it is not necessary to quote them, but I think I have given the substance of them pretty correctly. That resolution was allowed to stand on the Order Paper for something like two months, and no notice was taken of it until some time in the month of March, 1909. One of those periodical German scares had taken place early in the month of March, 1909, and it is somewhat remarkable how regularly those German scares come around. It seems that a certain number of gentlemen in the Old Country are able to work up a German scare at almost any time they want to do so. And after all it does not take a great amount of money to work up a German scare—a string of newspapers, a contribution of a few thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of pounds which amount to a mere bagatelle to the great manufacturers of ships, armaments, and war material. They want a chance to sell their goods, and they start a German scare. Why, Sir, we have had German scares regularly from the beginning of 1909 down to the present time. The last of them was when my right hon. friend the Prime Minister and his colleagues went to London in the month of June or July last. Probably it did not take more than £10,000 to work up that German scare. We had the newspapers filled with German scares for something like two months. The Montreal Daily Star almost went into hysterics over the German scare in the months of July, August and September, 1912, and all the lesser lights of the Conservative party copied the Montreal Star. By the time the right hon. gentleman had returned to Canada, one would almost have thought that the German navy had sailed up to the shores of England and had blown all their defences to atoms. But they did not.

Now I find that on the 22nd of March, 1909, when one of these periodical German scares was in existence, the Government of New Zealand telegraphed an offer to bear the cost of the immediate construction of a battleship of the latest type and of a second of the same type, if necessary. I am referring now to the reports of the Imperial Conference of 1909. The newspapers were of course fully apprised of this fact. It became public property, and was commented upon by all the newspapers of the Empire, with a great deal of admiration and commendation by most of them. When the psychological moment had arrived, my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce brought up his resolution which had been quiescent for two or three months, and I am bound to believe that he brought it up from the very best of motives, although I think he was also actuated by the German scare. What may have been his anticipation as to how his resolution would be received by the right hon. leader of the Opposition, then Prime Minister of Canada, I do not know. But one thing sure is that the right hon. gentleman met him in the spirit in

which he proposed his resolution. I could be taking up the time of this House uselessly if I were to quote extracts from the splendid speeches of the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the right hon. the Prime Minister on that occasion. Suffice it to say that in my mind they were masterpieces of oratory, of logic, and of argument, and in my opinion they rank among the first productions of any deliberative body in the British Empire for logic and good sound reasoning. The burden of the argument of the Minister of Trade and Commerce was that as England had borne the brunt of Empire for 200 or 300 years, the time had come when something should be done by Canada, and the only question in his mind was how the thing should be done, what method should be taken by Canada in order to carry out that laudable ambition and desire. He discussed the two propositions which were then in the public mind. The first was, I think, the question of a contribution, suggested no doubt by the action of New Zealand, to which I have referred, and which was made public only one week before the hon. gentleman brought in his resolution. The other was the proposition as to whether we should defend ourselves, or not, or contribution on the one hand, and the construction, manning and control of the Canadian navy on the other. As I said before, it is worth any man's while to read that speech over and over again. I do not think I am doing my hon. friend any injustice when I say that without hesitation he arrived at the conclusion that the only logical, patriotic and sane proposition which Canada could accept was that of constructing a navy, manning it and maintaining it. I wish to put the matter fairly, because I realize that we are now discussing a question of great importance. He was followed by the right hon. leader of the House who made, I think, as fine a speech from the standpoint of a logician as did the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce, but who lacked in oratory. The rest of it was that after some discussion back and forth by different members, the following resolution was adopted by the House: "Resolved, that we now have a constitutional question of the members of the Opposition, now members of the House, to say they were not here at that time, and had they been, they would have voted against it. I never knew until tonight that there was more than one I do remember at a later date that the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) stated that he was not in the House at that particular moment, although he had been a few moments before, and that he was in favour of the proposition. Now the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) tonight says: 'I was not here, and therefore I am not bound by it. That is pretty close reasoning; that is something which I would call special pleading, and I do not think the hon. member for East Hastings really expects this House to take his statement very seriously, because the matter has been discussed a great many times. It was discussed in 1910 when the Naval Service Bill was up; it has been discussed in every session since 1909. So far as I can remember, this is the first time I ever heard a statement like that from the hon. member for East Hastings, and I believe it is the first time he made such a statement either in the House or out of it. With the exception of the two hon. gentlemen, I think I am safe in saying that every member of the House at that time gave his consent and I might almost say enthusiastic consent, to the resolution, which is as follows:

"This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence. The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the Mother Country and the self-governing dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the Imperial treasury for naval and military purposes is not, so far as Canada is concerned, the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence. The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire and the peace of the world."

The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises

the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the Empire. That continued to be the attitude of every person in Canada so far as we know until some time in the late autumn of 1909. The right hon. gentleman went to England; and as has been stated here before, in a speech at the High Commissioner's banquet in London, on the 1st of July, he reiterated his adherence to the proposition of a Canadian navy. He came home, and on his way back at Halifax, as was referred to by my friend from Welland (Mr. German), he made a speech in which he again reiterated his adherence to the naval policy as set forth in that resolution of March 23, 1909. He went to Toronto and found that things had been moving a little in Canada during his absence. Some of his followers in Toronto and I think in Winnipeg as well—possibly my friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers) would have some knowledge of what took place at that time, because I remember that his name was mentioned in connection with the change of front of some of the Conservative leaders—had commenced to find fault with the attitude of the present leader of the Government, because he had fallen in with the view of the then Premier and had not opposed it as they thought was the duty of an opposition. My hon. friend the then leader of the Opposition stood by his guns manfully for some two or three months. It is true, when Parliament met in the month of November, 1910, a desperate attempt was made by my right hon. friend's friends to compel him to change his mind and recede from the position which he had taken in regard to the establishment of a Canadian navy. The first thing which took place was the amendment to the Address moved by the hon. member for Jacques Cartier in November, 1910, which was as follows:

"The House regrets that the Speech from the Throne give 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 armament." This was moved as an amendment to the amendment moved by the right hon. gentleman, the then leader of the Opposition. The substance of this was that this question was so important from a constitutional standpoint, that it was such an important departure, that it was embarrassing on such an important proposition that it should be submitted to the people before being passed into law. We know that the right hon. the Premier and practically every gentleman member of his Cabinet to-day who was a member of the House of Commons then save one voted for that amendment. As I have stated, the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) could not make up his mind to vote for Mr. Monk on a proposition of that kind and he left the House. I think two of his colleagues, also members from the city of Toronto, went out with him, all except the Minister of Militia—I want to be fair to him. The Minister of Militia voted against it. But every other hon. member of the present Government who was a member of the House of Commons at that time, with the exceptions I have named, voted for this amendment—voted that before an important matter like this should be passed it should be put before the people. But that resolution does not say whether it should be submitted by a plebiscite or by a general election.

Mr. CROCKETT: How did the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) vote on that?

Mr. CARVELL: I voted against that amendment. I voted against it because I thought that Parliament of Canada had unanimously decided this matter representing every constituency in Canada, and expressing as I believe what is the proper policy for Canada. But the member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) had listened pretty carefully to his constituents, had considered the newspaper reports, and had tried to feel the sentiment of the county from the time of the resolution up to November 1909. And the member for Carleton saw no reason why he should change his views and call for a vote of the people on a question like that. Now, as the hon. member for York (Mr. Crockett) has asked me how I voted, I would ask him how he voted.

Mr. CROCKETT: The records will show.

Mr. CARVELL: My recollection is that he voted with Mr. Monk. I don't know whether he will like to have this little matter of past history raked up or not. I do not

know what the brethren in the county of York will think about it when I tell them their representative voted with Mr. Monk in a matter like this. But this was the fact. And, as he has brought the matter into the light, I might as well give him all there is about it. The main amendment was moved by the present Prime Minister, then leader of the Opposition. I thought at that time, and I think now that the difference between the two amendments was the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. The hon. member for Jacques Cartier proposed to express regret that there was nothing in the speech to state that we would take the voice of the people upon this question. The amendment of the right hon. leader of the Opposition was exactly the same thing, only that they threw the old flag around it, as they always do.

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 their 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 advisors to consult the people on the naval policy of Canada.

If there is a man who will show the difference between the two, I shall be obliged to him. However, the leader of the Government and every one of his followers, so far as I am able to recollect, except the present Minister of Militia, voted for the amendment. I am not so sure about the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). By these amendments, which were voted for by the then Opposition, this matter was brought back into politics; it was a political football, a means of trying to gain power; it was taken from the high plane on which the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) and the present leader of the Government had at one time expressed a desire to place it, and it became purely and simply a party question. And, to my mind, it comes with poor grace from the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup) to plead with us to get together, to plead with the Liberal party to recede from the position which it took in 1909 and which these hon. gentlemen themselves took a position which involves to my mind, the real national and mainly principle, the principle of doing our own fighting, of acquitting ourselves like men, of defending our own shores, of looking after our own affairs; and they ask us to adopt the unmanly, the un-Canadian, the un-British policy of handing over a sum of money to the Mother Country and saying: 'Build ships with the money, man them yourselves, pay for them yourselves, fight them yourselves.' You cannot get a question like that out of politics. It is here to stay, no matter what may become of this particular proposition. It is here to stay until the Government of this country come to a higher conception of the duties of citizenship than to hire people to fight for them because those people can be employed at twenty-five cents a day less than Canadians can be employed to fight for themselves. We may as well face that question and understand it once and for all.

Now, let me refer to what has taken place outside of Canada. I did have a brief history of this naval affair from the month of March, 1909, down to the time when the Naval Bill was introduced by the leader of the Government. The Imperial conference was held in the autumn of 1909. It will be found reported in a blue-book a copy of which I have before me. Before the conference met, a memorandum had been sent out by the British Admiralty, dated 20th July, 1909. In this memorandum sent out to the self-governing dominions the whole matter of naval defence was discussed from both standpoints. I wish to refer as briefly as possible to some of the statements in this memorandum to show that the Imperial authorities, or, if you will the Admiralty, have not changed their attitude very much to-day from what it was in 1909. I do not think there is any doubt that, if we had gone to the Admiralty in 1909, as I contend my hon. friend the Prime Minister did in 1912, if we had said to the Admiralty: We want you to tell us what you would like to have us do, not what is best for us or even best for the Empire as a whole from the point of view of the political and business conditions, but purely for the purpose of making a fighting machine, we should have got practically the same answer as we got now. In fact, we have it here in paragraph 2:

"If the problem of Imperial defence were considered merely as a problem of naval strategy it would be found that the greatest output of strength for a given expenditure is obtained by the maintenance of a single navy with the concomitant unity of training and unity of command. In furthermore, then, of the simple strategical ideal the maximum of power would be gained if all parts of the Empire contributed, according to their needs and resources, to the maintenance of the British navy."

If it were merely a question of making the British navy one fighting unit, would suggest to the governments of the self-governing colonies that they should contribute to the support of the navy; but they realized then, as they realize now, that there are many facts to be taken into consideration before a self-governing colony would decide what course it will pursue. Because they say:

"It has, however, long been recognized that in defining the conditions under which the naval forces of the Empire should be developed, other considerations than those of strategy alone must be taken into account."

I hope that the House will remember that this statement was sent out by the Admiralty before the conference met. (Reading): "The various circumstances of the overseas dominions have to be borne in mind. Though all have in them the seeds of a great advance of population, wealth, and power, they have at the present time attained to different stages in their growth. Their geographical position has subjected them to internal and external strains, varying in kind and intensity. Their history and physical environment have given rise to individual national sentiments, for the expression of which room must be found. A simple contribution of money or material may be to one dominion the most acceptable form to assist in Imperial defence. Another, while ready to provide local naval forces, and to place them at the disposal of the Crown in the event of war, may wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of its own could be raised. A third may think that the best manner in which it can assist in promoting the interests of the Empire is in undertaking certain local services, not directly of a naval character, but which may relieve the Imperial Government from expenses which would otherwise fall on the British Exchequer."

I desire to know whether any hon. gentleman reading that statement sent out by the British Admiralty before the conference of 1909, will say that the British Admiralty did not feel at that time exactly as my hon. friend professed to feel? Did they not recognize that a policy acceptable to one of the overseas dominions might not be acceptable to another? Did they not recognize that? Did they not state exactly what my right hon. friend stated, and exactly what the member for North Toronto stated? Did they not state that a policy of contribution might not meet the aspirations of that colony which might wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of its own could be raised? And, Sir, Canada before that date had laid down the principle that the people of this country had aspirations to establish a policy upon which a naval force of its own could be raised. (Reading):

"The main duty of the forthcoming conference as regards naval defence will be, therefore, to determine the form in which the various dominion governments can best participate in the burden of Imperial defence, with due regard to varying political and geographical conditions. Looking to the difficulties involved, it is not to be expected that the discussions with the several defence ministers will result in a complete and final scheme of naval defence, but it is hoped that it will be found possible to formulate the broad principles upon which the growth of colonial naval forces should be fostered. While laying the foundations of future dominion navies to be maintained in different parts of the Empire, these forces would contribute immediately and materially to the requirements of Imperial defence."

That was the statement of the Admiralty in 1909.

"In the opinion of the Admiralty, a dominion government desirous of creating a navy should aim at forming a distinct fleet unit, and the smallest unit is one which, while manageable in time of peace, is capable of being used, in its component parts, in time of war."

There is no doubt but that the British Admiralty stated at that

time that if the dominions established a naval force of their own, they should aim at a fleet unit. They did not say they must establish a fleet unit at the outset, they said they should aim at a fleet unit. The next step, then, was the conference, and at the conference the policies of each of the self-governing colonies were discussed, laid down and adopted. The policy to be adopted by Canada was that of building not a fleet unit in its entirety, but ships which could be used as the nucleus of fleet units, both on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. They discussed two schemes, one which would involve the expenditure of £600,000 per annum, and another which would involve the expenditure of about £400,000 per annum. If I remember rightly, the fleet unit decided upon by Australia was to cost that colony exactly the same amount as that proposed by Canada, namely, £600,000 per annum. So when hon. gentlemen contend that Canada was trying to shirk responsibility, and was not doing as much as Australia was willing to do, I say they have not read the records in that regard. If they would read page 26 of the report from which I am quoting, they would find this statement:

"The annual expenditure in connection with the maintenance of the fleet unit, pay of personnel, and interest on first cost and sinking fund, was estimated to be about £600,000."

And the policy proposed by Canada was one which would cost about the same. But instead of building a dreadnought as the head of the unit, they were to build, as I have said, a number of vessels to be employed on different coasts of the continent—one portion on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific. When the Bill was brought down, we followed the recommendation of the Admiralty almost in its entirety. There were one or two changes made, but we provided for ten or eleven of these vessels. The £600,000 proposition provided for four cruisers of the improved Bristol class, one cruiser of the Boadicea class, and six destroyers of the improved River class. It was admitted by all that the submarines should not be included in this proposition because of the highly technical condition of that particular branch of the service. In this report to which I refer, there is a table showing the cost of the different vessels, maintenance and annual upkeep, interest and depreciation, cost of the personnel, victualling, pay, medicines, etc., the total including about £50,000 for maintenance of the Halifax and Esquimaux dockyards, amounting to £600,000 per annum.

Now we come back to the discussion in the session of 1909 and 1910, when the propositions laid down by the Admiralty of 1909 were adopted by the Government and were submitted to Parliament in what is called the Naval Defence Bill. To that Bill, two amendments were proposed—those which I read a few moments ago—by the present Prime Minister and the member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), which were voted upon as I have already described. Up to the second reading of that Bill, my right hon. friend had certainly not changed the position which he took a year before. I desire to read to the House a statement made by my hon. friend on the 12th of January, 1910, which, to my mind, is the crux of the whole matter; which, to my mind, is as true of the situation to-day as it was in 1910, and which shows that the right hon. gentleman had given the matter very mature consideration:

"It has been suggested that instead of the organization of a Canadian naval force, there should be a system of annual contributions from this country to the Mother Country." This was not in 1909, but in 1910, on the second reading of the Naval Defence Bill.

"—and I am free to admit that, from the strategical point of view, I would be inclined to agree with the view of the Admiralty that this would be the best way for the great self-governing dominions of the Empire to make their contributions. But, Sir, from a constitutional standpoint, I am opposed to it, for many reasons." Opposed to what? Opposed to contribution; opposed to the very thing he is asking Parliament to vote for to-night, opposed to the very thing to which he himself was opposed in 1909; opposed to the very thing he was opposed to in London, and in Halifax, and I think I would hardly be out of order if I were to say opposed to the thing which in his heart of hearts he is opposed to to-night. Because he is too good a constitutional lawyer not to know the real effect of forcing this measure upon Parliament.

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I hope that the House will remember that this statement was sent out by the Admiralty before the conference met. (Reading): "The various circumstances of the overseas dominions have to be borne in mind. Though all have in them the seeds of a great advance of population, wealth, and power, they have at the present time attained to different stages in their growth. Their geographical position has subjected them to internal and external strains, varying in kind and intensity. Their history and physical environment have given rise to individual national sentiments, for the expression of which room must be found. A simple contribution of money or material may be to one dominion the most acceptable form to assist in Imperial defence. Another, while ready to provide local naval forces, and to place them at the disposal of the Crown in the event of war, may wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of its own could be raised. A third may think that the best manner in which it can assist in promoting the interests of the Empire is in undertaking certain local services, not directly of a naval character, but which may relieve the Imperial Government from expenses which would otherwise fall on the British Exchequer."

I desire to know whether any hon. gentleman reading that statement sent out by the British Admiralty before the conference of 1909, will say that the British Admiralty did not feel at that time exactly as my hon. friend professed to feel? Did they not recognize that a policy acceptable to one of the overseas dominions might not be acceptable to another? Did they not recognize that? Did they not state exactly what my right hon. friend stated, and exactly what the member for North Toronto stated? Did they not state that a policy of contribution might not meet the aspirations of that colony which might wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of its own could be raised? And, Sir, Canada before that date had laid down the principle that the people of this country had aspirations to establish a policy upon which a naval force of its own could be raised. (Reading):

"The main duty of the forthcoming conference as regards naval defence will be, therefore, to determine the form in which the various dominion governments can best participate in the burden of Imperial defence, with due regard to varying political and geographical conditions. Looking to the difficulties involved, it is not to be expected that the discussions with the several defence ministers will result in a complete and final scheme of naval defence, but it is hoped that it will be found possible to formulate the broad principles upon which the growth of colonial naval forces should be fostered. While laying the foundations of future dominion navies to be maintained in different parts of the Empire, these forces would contribute immediately and materially to the requirements of Imperial defence."

That was the statement of the Admiralty in 1909.