

(January 5, 1914.)

The Navy Question.

BY MR. Z. A. LASH, K.C., LL.D.*

AT a regular meeting of the Club, held on the 5th January, Mr. Lash said:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I found the subject upon which I had promised to address you to-day was so wide a one, and the time within which the address was limited so short a one, that it was impossible for me to attempt to speak from notes in order to condense properly and give you what I want to say at the one time. I found it absolutely necessary to place what I was going to say in writing, and with your permission, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I will read what I intend to say.

The Navy Question in Canada in 1913.

Stripped of the fireworks which have been let off very freely by speakers and writers on both sides of this question since it unfortunately got into the domain of very fierce party politics, and confined to the admitted or readily established facts, the material issues which up to the present time lie between the Government and the Opposition are comparatively easy to define, though they are not so easy to solve. I shall endeavor to strip away the fireworks and present to you the material issues.

I regard as fireworks all charges of disloyalty or bad faith or ulterior motives, no matter by which side made. I regard as fireworks all charges of inconsistency between views and opinions previously expressed and subsequently expressed, no matter by or against whom the charges are made. I regard as fireworks all charges that the Government or the Opposition has been coerced to take its position, or any position upon this question, to gain support or avoid opposition, or because it has made any alliance, holy or unholy, with any faction or interest. I regard as fireworks all charges that either party is or is not willing to deal with this great question in the way

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best suited, in its sincere opinion, to the welfare of Canada and the Empire.

All these charges are not material to the real issues involved. I shall assume that the great bulk of the people of Canada and of their representatives in Parliament, being Canadians, are sincere Canadians, and are loyal to Canada and the Empire, and are taking their stand and expressing their views honestly and with conviction, and not under compulsion.

The question is a national and not a party one, and it is not too much to hope and believe that the reasonable-minded and thoughtful men on both sides (and they, holding the balance, can create the majority) will consider the real issues involved, strip them of all irrelevancy, and exercise upon them a calm, sincere and non-partizan judgment. (Applause.)

As the question has been debated by the political parties I shall, in endeavoring to reach the real issues, refer freely to the deliberate utterances of the responsible leaders on both sides, and to their action in Parliament, and to the official records and documents of the House. To make either party responsible for the utterances of each of its supporters, or supposed or alleged supporters, and to introduce these utterances into the discussion, would be but a waste of time. If such utterances support the position of the leaders, reference to them is unnecessary. If they differ from that position, it would be unfair to make the party responsible.

Fortunately there was a time when both sides rose above party and came to a unanimous decision as to the prime duty of Canada and the principles involved in performing that duty. This decision affords me a good starting point.

Years ago but few people in Canada gave much thought to the fact that Great Britain was bearing alone the burden of securing, from attack by sea, our ships and our country, and was alone bearing the great expense involved. As we grew in numbers and wealth and began to realize more clearly our position in the Empire, a feeling arose that we should not go on indefinitely allowing the mother country to bear all the expense. This feeling grew stronger and wider as time went on. The Press began to reflect and support it; public speakers took occasion to promote it, but it was not until it had taken hold of the masses that any one in Parliament had courage to propose a specific resolution there in its support.

On the 29th of March, 1909, the Hon. George E. Foster, a member of the Opposition, moved in the House of Commons a short resolution expressing the opinion of the House that

Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibility and financial burden incident to the suitable protection of her exposed coast line and great seaports.

This resolution was supported by him in a speech commencing with the wish that the subject of national defence should be "kept as far outside of party politics and party contentions" as it is in England, and with the statement that it was in that spirit and with that intent that he made the motion.

Mr. Foster was followed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then Premier, in a speech commencing with congratulations for the temperate and moderate manner in which Mr. Foster had approached a difficult and very important subject. Sir Wilfrid continued on the same high plane. These two speeches gave a superior tone to the debate, in which about a dozen leading members of the House took part, and the subject was kept out of party politics. As a result, a unanimous resolution was passed.

The debate, though earnest, was not acrimonious; the speakers expressed fair minded and sincere views, and for this reason it affords unusually satisfactory evidence of the real attitude of both parties, stripped of that which I have termed "fireworks."

The Government offered a much longer resolution in substitution for that moved by Mr. Foster, and Sir Wilfrid hoped that it would meet with his concurrence.

Mr. Borden, then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, followed with a speech on the same high, non-partizan plane, in which he offered suggestions for changes in Sir Wilfrid's resolution, and gave his reasons.

At the conclusion of the debate Sir Wilfrid accepted Mr. Borden's suggestions, and the following resolution was passed unanimously. I quote it in full because of its importance.

"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 the 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 would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be 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."

The Imperial Conference referred to took place in 1907.

Each party claims that it desires to carry out the terms of this resolution, but each party has charged the other with departing from the true meaning and spirit of it. This charge was made against the Laurier Government during the debate upon the Naval Bill introduced by that Government in February, 1910. The same charge was made against the Borden Government during the debate upon the Bill, to provide \$35,000,000 with which to build battleships, introduced by that Government in December, 1912.

We can clear the air a little by considering what the resolution meant, and what the House meant when adopting it.

A glance at its form when first proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier will help. The words then used in the second clause were that "the payment of *any stated* contributions to the Imperial treasury" would not be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence.

The words of the clause as passed are "the payment of *regular and periodical* contributions"—an important difference in substance, made at Mr. Borden's instance. When speaking upon this clause he said,—“It seems to me that this is a little inconsistent with the last paragraph of the resolution. The day might come—I do not know that it will come—the day might come—it might come to-morrow, it might come next week, it might come next month, when the only thing we could do in the absence of preparation in this country would be to make some kind of contribution.”

At the conclusion of the debate Sir Wilfrid Laurier said,—“The suggestions which have been made by my hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, are such as can be accepted by

this side of the House.” He then moved the resolution with the changes made, and it was passed in the form quoted.

The distinction between a gift of money for a special purpose and on special terms, and gifts of regular and periodical contributions, is too clear for argument. That a special gift could not be, and could not be honestly claimed to be, a *solution* of the question of defence within the meaning of the resolution, is also clear. What might be called the permanent policy or solution of the question is that aimed at by the third clause, viz., the organization of a Canadian Naval Service of the kind outlined in the clause. There would be nothing inconsistent with the resolution in a measure or in measures providing for the organization of a Canadian Naval Service or for a special contribution, or for both, and it would be immaterial which was provided for first or whether both were provided for simultaneously.

The Laurier Government in January, 1910, determined to make a beginning in the organization of a Canadian Naval Service, and on the 12th of January introduced their Naval Bill for that purpose, but did not ask for a special contribution. This was entirely consistent with the resolution. Whether they should have asked more for the new navy, or should have asked for a contribution as well, was a matter for debate. They decided to submit to the House the Bill as introduced.

The Opposition did not agree with the Government policy or with the measure in detail, but the Bill was passed and became law. It is called “The Naval Service Act” (being Cap. 43, Statutes of 1910).

The most serious difference between the parties as to the meaning and effect of the resolution, and the main question upon which the people of Canada must ultimately pass, is involved in the words “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 Naval Service Act of 1910 makes detailed provisions for the creation of a Canadian Naval Service under the control of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries. The crux of this Act, so far as it relates to the Imperial Navy, is contained in sections 22 and 23, which are as follows:

“22. The Governor in Council may place the Naval forces or any part thereof on active service at any time when it appears advisable to do so by reason of an emergency.

"23. In case of an emergency the Governor in Council may place at the disposal of His Majesty, for general service in the Royal Navy, the Naval Service or any part thereof, any ships or vessels of the Naval Service, and the officers and seamen serving on such ships or vessels, or any officers or seamen belonging to the Naval Service."

The Act makes it the duty of the Government to call a meeting of Parliament within fifteen days after the Navy has been placed on active service.

"Emergency" is defined by the Act to mean "war, invasion or insurrection, real or apprehended."

When introducing his Bill Sir Wilfrid Laurier was asked whether the "war" referred to was war in any part of the Empire or in Canada only, and he replied, "War everywhere. When Britain is at war Canada is at war; there is no distinction. If Great Britain, to which we are subject, is at war with any nation, Canada becomes liable to invasion, and so Canada is at war."

During the same debate Sir Wilfrid defined more clearly the effect of his Naval Service Act. He was asked by Mr. Borden, "Suppose a Canadian ship meets a ship of similar armament and power belonging to an enemy, meets her on the high seas, what is she to do? I do not ask now what she will do if attacked; but will she attack, will she fight?" Sir Wilfrid replied, "I do not know that she would fight. I do not know that she should fight either. She should not fight until the Government by which she is commissioned have determined whether she should go into the war." Mr. Borden replied, "I understood the Prime Minister to say that our ships would not fight until they were ordered to do so, and therefore they would in effect be neutral until the Governor-in-Council had made an order that they should participate in the war. Have I misstated my hon. friend's position?" To which Sir Wilfrid answered "No."

The serious difference referred to arises here. By the Act as it stands, the Canadian Navy would form part of the Imperial Navy *only* if the Governor-in-Council thought fit to place it at His Majesty's disposal for that purpose. The present Opposition claim that this conforms to the terms of the resolution. The Government claim that the reservation to the Governor-in-Council of the power to place, and consequently of the power to withhold, is not "co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial navy along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference,"

within the meaning of the resolution; and in support of this they quote the following statement of the Admiralty from the Notes of Proceedings at the Conference of 1907,—

I quote: "The only reservation that the Admiralty desire to make is that they claim to have the charge of the strategical questions which are necessarily involved in naval defence, to hold the command of the naval forces of the country, and to arrange the distribution of ships in the best possible manner, to resist attacks and to defend the Empire at large, whether it be our own islands or the dominions beyond the seas,"

and they contend that the resolution contemplated the control and command of the Canadian Naval Service, in time of war, in some central authority, such as the Admiralty, in order that the whole forces of the Empire may be concentrated effectively for the purpose of a great battle, whether on our coasts or elsewhere.

If the meaning of the resolution and of the lines laid down by the Admiralty were material to the main question involved and had to be decided, it might be difficult to resist the conclusion that the reservation of the power to place or withhold is not consistent with the resolution, but the main question is not "what is the intention of the resolution of 1909"; it is "what do the people of Canada intend shall be the permanent relations of Canada with Great Britain and the Empire on the great question of naval defence."

To prove that the policy of one party in 1913 was inconsistent with the terms of a resolution passed in 1909 may give the other party a tactical or party advantage, but it leaves unsolved the main question, which is a National and not a party issue.

I now come to the action of the present Government.

On November 24th, 1910, during the debate on the address, Mr. Borden, referring to the question of the Naval Defence, said:—"It may be fairly asked what we would do if we were in power to-day with regard to a great question of this kind. So far as I am concerned our plain course and duty would be this: The government of this country are able to understand and 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 or not. If we were in power we would endeavor to find that out, to get a plain, unvarnished answer to that question, and if the answer to that question, based upon the report of the government of the mother country and 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 to the people of the country. Then, sir, as to the permanent policy, I think the people have a right to be asked about that.”

In considering the main question it must be remembered that the people of Canada have not yet been consulted about it. The Naval Service Act of 1910 was passed without being submitted to the people, and without a mandate from the people with respect to any permanent solution of the question. Mr. Borden and some of the speakers during the general election of 1911 did refer to it, and, so far as it could have been considered an issue in that election, the verdict did not support the Laurier Government's position, but the main question decided by that election was upon the reciprocity agreement with the United States of America; the Navy question was not decided, and the position taken upon it by the then Opposition is important only in considering whether their attitude then is consistent with their attitude now.

No one can truthfully say that up to the time the present Government assumed office much effective progress had been made by Canada in carrying out the substance of the unanimous resolution. It certainly devolved upon the incoming Government to take some action. They assumed office in October, 1911. Parliament met in November, 1911, and was prorogued in April, 1912. Mr. Borden then followed the course indicated by him in 1910. He went to England, consulted the Government and Admiralty there, and brought back their statement.

In this remarkable document the Admiralty refer to the self-evident fact, that the power of the British Empire to maintain the superiority on the sea which is essential to its security must obviously be measured from time to time by reference to the other naval forces of the world. They give the facts relating to the increase of the German fleet from 1898 onwards, and compare it with the British fleet and its increase during the same period. I shall not weary you with details and figures, or with a confusing comparison between the strength and numbers of the different kinds of ships, but a short allusion to the increase in numbers of officers and men of the German fleet will be illuminating. The Admiralty state that in 1898 the number was 25,000; in 1912 it was 66,000, and in 1920, under the new law, it will be 101,500. They call attention to the explicit declaration of the tactical objects for

which the German fleet exists, as set forth in the preamble to the German Naval Law of 1900, as follows:

I quote: “In order to protect German trade and commerce under existing conditions, only one thing will suffice, namely, Germany must possess a battle fleet of such a strength that even for the most powerful naval adversary a war would involve such risks as to make that Power's own supremacy doubtful. For this purpose it is not absolutely necessary that the German Fleet should be as strong as that of the greatest Naval Power, for, as a rule, a great Naval Power will not be in a position to concentrate all its forces against us.”

The Admiralty point out the rapid and increasing expansion of Canadian sea-borne trade, and truthfully say, “For the whole of this trade, wherever it may be about the distant waters of the world, as well as for the maintenance of her communications both with Europe and Asia, Canada is dependent and has always depended upon the Imperial navy, without corresponding contribution or cost.” They emphasize the fact that Great Britain's present naval power must be diminished with the growth, not only of the German navy, but by the simultaneous building by many powers of great modern ships of war, and that the existence of a number of navies comprising ships of high quality must be considered in so far as it affects the possibilities of adverse combinations being suddenly formed, and that anything which increases the margin in the newest ships diminishes the strain and augments the security and the chances of being unmolested. They state that, whatever may be the decision of Canada at the present juncture, Great Britain will not in any circumstances fail in her duty to the Overseas Dominions of the Crown; that the aid which Canada could give at the present time is not to be measured only in ships or money, and that any action on her part to increase the power and mobility of the Imperial navy would be recognized everywhere as a most significant witness to the united strength of the Empire and to the renewed resolve of the Overseas Dominions to take their part in maintaining its integrity. The memorandum concludes with the following now historic words:

“The Prime Minister of the Dominion having enquired in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective, we have no hesitation in answering after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and

strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply."

With the promise made by Mr. Borden in opposition, with the information obtained in England, with the statement of the Government and Admiralty of Great Britain, with the people of Canada clamouring for some effective action, what was the duty of the Government? Was it to give no aid until the years had elapsed which it would take, first to establish ship yards in Canada, and then to build the ships in them? Was it their duty to solve permanently, without consulting the people, this great question of Naval Defence, involving as it must in case of war the status of Canada with respect to Foreign Countries and with respect to Great Britain and the Empire? Or was it to make provision for the building at the earliest possible date of "a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply," and in the meantime to consider carefully the permanent policy and submit it to the people for their verdict?

The Government conceived it to be their duty to adopt the latter of these alternatives, and when presenting to the House the statement of the Admiralty the Prime Minister presented also a Bill to authorize (a) the expenditure of \$35,000,000 "for the purpose of immediately increasing the effective naval forces of the Empire . . . (b) under the direction of the Governor-in-Council, in the construction and equipment of battle ships or armoured cruisers of the most modern and powerful type, (c) the ships when constructed and equipped to be placed by the Governor-in-Council at the disposal of His Majesty for the common defence of the Empire," the whole (d) "subject to such terms, conditions and arrangement as may be agreed upon between the Governor-in-Council and His Majesty's Government."

In his speech when introducing this Bill, Mr. Borden indicated one of the terms of the arrangement which would be made. He said, "We have the assurance that if at any time in the future it should be the will of the Canadian people to establish a Canadian unit of the British Navy these vessels can be recalled by the Canadian Government to form part of that Navy."

It would not be possible within the time limit for this address to refer in detail to the reasons given by the Prime Minister in support of this measure. They may be summed up in the short statement that Great Britain needed the aid and support of Canada before it might be too late to give it, and that such aid and support could now best be given in the

way pointed out by the Admiralty, and that years would have to elapse, with greatly increased expenditure, before Canada could give the aid and support by a navy of her own, and that during the construction of the ships in Great Britain with the money granted the permanent solution of the question of our part in naval defence would be sought for and submitted to our people for approval or disapproval.

The position of the Opposition was crystallized into a resolution offered by their leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and from this resolution the real issues between the parties can be gathered.

During the debate a number of imaginary issues were set up, and time was wasted in discussing them. For instance, it was stoutly asserted that this special contribution was but the beginning of the regular and periodical contributions which the unanimous resolution had declared would not be a satisfactory solution of the question, and much time was consumed in debating this, notwithstanding that in presenting the Government proposals Mr. Borden expressly stated: "We are not undertaking or beginning a system of regular and periodical contributions. I agree with the resolution of this House in 1909, that the payment of such contributions would not be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence." Because Mr. Borden, after having satisfied himself by enquiries that immediate aid was requisite, asked the Admiralty in what form it would be most effective, it was stoutly asserted that before he went to England he had abandoned the policy of a Canadian Navy, and much time was consumed in debating this imaginary issue. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said that Mr. Borden "went to England to ask what England would accept in case of an emergency, although there was no emergency." Much time was consumed in debating the meaning of this word, which was not used by the Admiralty or by Mr. Borden in introducing his Bill.

The questions involved cannot be described by the dictionary meaning of one word, though one hon. member read a dictionary definition and made a speech upon it. (Laughter.)

Other imaginary issues were raised and debated, and many fireworks let off on both sides, and much smoke created, which clouded the real position. Let me try to clear away this smoke.

The proposal of the Government was simply to contribute \$35,000,000 for a specific purpose. No announcement of their intentions with reference to the permanent solution of the question, or as to the extension or modification of the Laurier

Naval Act, was made. On the contrary, Mr. Borden had affirmed and reaffirmed (I quote his words) that "a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy has 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."

He had also affirmed and reaffirmed his approval of the unanimous resolution, and his adherence to its terms and spirit.

I now come to the amendment offered by the Opposition. It is as follows:

"This House declines to concur in the said resolution, and orders that the same be referred back to the committee with instructions to amend the same in the following particulars, namely, to strike out all the words after clause (a) (This is the clause granting the \$35,000,000.) and substitute therefor the following:

"The memorandum prepared by the Board of Admiralty on the general naval situation of the Empire and communicated to this House by the right hon. the Prime Minister on December 5th shows that several of the most important of the foreign powers have adopted a definite policy of rapidly increasing their naval strength.

"That this condition has compelled the United Kingdom to concentrate its naval forces in home waters, involving the withdrawal of ships from the outlying portions of the Empire.

"That such withdrawal renders it necessary that Canada without further delay should enter actively upon a permanent policy of naval defence.

"That any measure of Canadian aid to Imperial naval defence which does not embody a permanent policy of participation by ships owned, manned and maintained by Canada and contemplating construction as soon as possible in Canada, is not an adequate or satisfactory expression of the aspirations of the Canadian people in regard to naval defence, and is not an assumption by Canada of her fair share in the maintenance of the naval strength of the Empire.

"This House regrets to learn the intention of the Government to indefinitely postpone the carrying out by Canada of a permanent naval policy.

"It is the opinion of this House that measures should be taken *at the present session* to give effect *actively and speedily* to the permanent naval policy embodied in the Naval Service Act of 1910, passed pursuant to the resolution unanimously approved by this House in March, 1909.

"This House is further of the opinion that to increase the power and mobility of the Imperial navy by the addition by Canada under the above Act of two fleet units, to be stationed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada, respectively, rather than by a contribution of money or ships, is the policy best calculated to afford relief to the United Kingdom in respect to the burden of Imperial naval defence, and, in the words of the Admiralty memorandum, to restore greater freedom to the movements of the British squadrons in every sea and directly promote the security of the dominions; and that the Government of Canada should take such steps as shall lead to the accomplishment of this purpose as speedily as possible."

What issues did the resolution raise? The grant of \$35,000,000 was not opposed. The Opposition wanted a much larger sum (probably double) spent on naval defence, but they wanted the money expended under the Naval Service Act of 1910, and they wanted the permanent policy to be the taking of measures at the then session to give effect to that Act. They wanted such policy to embrace aid to Imperial naval defence by ships owned, manned and maintained by Canada and constructed in Canada. These are the issues raised by the Opposition resolution. The other parts are argumentative only.

In the debate it was said that there was no "emergency" calling for immediate action by Canada. The resolution does not raise any issue on this question; it expressly calls for action by Canada "without further delay" and "at the present session."

After a long debate the Government measure was carried in the House of Commons. In the Senate the Bill was defeated on the motion of the leader of the Liberal Party there, in the following words:

"This House is not justified in giving its assent to this Bill until it is submitted to the judgment of the country."

From what I have said you will see that there are four material issues between the parties, which may be stated shortly as follows:

(1) The Government wanted \$35,000,000 expended now for the purpose of increasing the effective naval forces of the Empire in the construction and equipment of battleships to be placed at the disposal of His Majesty for the common defence of the Empire.

The Opposition did not object to the expenditure of even a larger sum for the same purpose, but they wanted the expenditure to be made upon two fleet units, one to be stationed on the Atlantic and one on the Pacific, neither of which would be placed at the disposal of His Majesty unless the Governor-in-Council saw fit so to place them.

(2) The Government wanted to provide for aid at this time by the construction of battleships in Great Britain, where the necessary shipyards and plant already exist, and where the construction could be made with the least delay.

The Opposition wanted the aid to be given by the construction of ships in Canada, where there are at present no shipyards or plant fit for the purpose.

(3) The Government wanted to submit for the approval or disapproval of the people of Canada their permanent policy or solution of the question of naval defence.

The Opposition wanted the Naval Service Act of 1910 accepted as the solution of this question, without its being referred to the people, and they wanted any expenditure by Canada upon ships of war to be made under the provisions of that Act.

(4) The Government wanted the people of Canada to pass upon the question whether the command and control of the Canadian Naval Service in time of war should as of right be in some central authority such as the Admiralty.

The Opposition wanted the decision of this question left to the Governor-in-Council from time to time.

I have endeavored to state frankly and as clearly as I can the issues between the parties. It would not be possible to argue their cases now.

Before closing I wish to refer to some of the matters which seem to me to require consideration in connection with any permanent solution of the problem of Canada's part in the naval defence of the Empire. I shall do so by asking questions.

Can such defence be best accomplished by having the movement of all ships intended therefor subject as of right to some central control, or by having this control depend upon the consent from time to time of those who own the ships?

If there is to be a central control, how is it to be constituted, and what part is to be taken in it by Great Britain and by her Dominions and Colonies?

On what conditions and in what events is this control to be exercised (a) in case of war; (b) during peace?

By what authority is war to be declared?

What part is each member of the Empire to have in the decision upon the question of declaring war?

What part is each member of the Empire to have with respect to the Foreign Policy of Great Britain?

What control over its own Foreign Policy is each member to have?

If the control by the central authority of the movements of ships owned by a Dominion or Colony be made to depend upon the consent from time to time of the Dominion or Colony, then if such consent be withheld—Great Britain being at war—what effect would the withholding of such consent have (a) upon the status of that Dominion or Colony with respect to Great Britain and to the Empire; (b) upon its status or position with respect to the enemy?

These are some of the main questions which must, sooner or later be answered. They are not easy of solution. All can not be answered at the same time. They can only be solved gradually and after mature consideration and discussion with the interests involved. This will take time, but the solution will surely be found; it will not come all at once, but, like the development of the Empire itself, it will be gradually unfolded.

The question is a great National question, far above and beyond party, and every Canadian, as a Canadian, and not as a party man, should form his own opinion upon it. (Applause.) I shall defer any expression of my opinion until I hear what the Government, whose duty it is to act, may propose. Meantime, as a Canadian addressing this Canadian Club, I am entitled to express an opinion upon the present position.

I think the Government should outline their permanent policy during the coming session of Parliament, (Hear, hear.) and have it discussed in the House and in the Press and country.

They should treat the subject as a National one, outside of party politics, and they should be free to consider impartially all suggestions which may be made, whether by the Opposition or their own supporters, having in view only the lasting interests of Canada and the Empire.

They should then mature their policy as soon as possible and in such way that it can be submitted clearly and succinctly, and apart from any other question, for the approval or disapproval of the people, but not at a general election. (Hear, hear.)

Meantime the building of battleships with money supplied by Canada should be gone on with (hear, hear, and applause) in Great Britain, where the construction can be completed without delay, in order that Canada may at the earliest date have ships ready to take part in the Empire's naval defence, and ready to form part of the Canadian Navy under any plan which the people may sanction.

I am among those who regret that the majority in control of the Senate saw fit to refuse the aid asked for.

I hope that the Government will ask for it again during the session now approaching, and that it will be granted, (hear, hear) and that Canada will be saved from the humiliating position, upon this great question, which she now must occupy in the eyes of Great Britain and of the other self-governing Dominions. (Applause.)
