

is made. Will it then be within the power of this Parliament to put any of these articles in schedule B on the free list?

Mr. FOSTER: Certainly. Neither the colonies, nor ourselves, as far as schedule A and schedule B are concerned, curtail themselves of any rights of tariff legislation; the guarantee of each country is that at least one-fifth preference shall be given, whatever the duty may be.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I understand in schedule C we tie ourselves up for ten years, so that we cannot put any article in that schedule on the free list?

Mr. FOSTER: With reference to schedule C, the position is as my hon. friend has stated, during the continuance of this agreement, with reference to cocoa-beans, lime-juice and limes, there is a stated minimum impost upon foreign countries.

Mr. MACDONALD: Since the treaty was agreed on in April of last year, has the minister gone into the matter of better steamship service with the West Indies? I am disappointed to find that while it is contemplated that at some future time power will be taken to pass Orders in Council for this purpose when you have steamers, still you go on in disregard of the fact that we have on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of this country a maritime condition which ought to be especially guarded and looked after. We are providing for goods coming from and going to every other country without paying any attention to these matters. My hon. friend was very strong two years ago about trade being East and West, instead of North and South, but still we go on trading North and South; we are making special arrangements with the West Indian islands, and are bringing in the goods through the United States. This North and South, and East and West business is all very well at election times; but it does seem to me, when the opportunity came to my hon. friend to make this bargain, he should have gone into the matter of better steamship service. Of course, there are contingent clauses here, but what has my hon. friend been doing since April last in the way of providing steamship connections, and when are we going to have this service?

Mr. FOSTER: I have no objection to making the statement now, if the committee would rather have it now. I was trying to carry out the general rule of debate that we take clause by clause, and not jump from one to the other. My hon. friend has put a question which was asked before, when the resolution was under consideration, as to the desirability of having improved steamship communication between the West Indies and Canada. I do not think that my hon. friend believes for a moment that

I am not as anxious as he is to see improved steamship connection. It is of very great moment to the country as a whole; it is especially of great moment to the Maritime provinces which lie contiguous to the West Indian islands, between which this communication by direct steamship would be carried out. I think I brought down to the House the papers embodying all the correspondence that had taken place up to a short time ago. That has been before the committee; and I have no doubt that my hon. friend has seen and read it, and knows exactly the course of the negotiations up to the present time. Tenders were called for which were due about October 1. When these tenders came in they were not satisfactory; they did not propose to give the kind of service that it was thought was best suited. In fact, there was but one tender. That was not satisfactory; and the period for tendering was lengthened, and everything was done that could be done to induce others to tender for those services. On the 15th of December, I think it was, those tenders were due, and they have been under consideration since. I am not able to say yet what conclusion will be come to with reference to them. All I can say is that for the last three or four weeks, I have been giving personal attention almost every day to that matter. I hope to be able, within a short time before I go away, to give to the House the conclusion which has been arrived at. There are various difficulties, and no difficulty is greater just at the present time than that which is induced by shipping conditions. Every shipping man knows that at the present time freights are high, vessels' charters are high, vessel building is high, shipping and shippers are engaged almost to their limit; and it is almost impossible to get strong reliable firms to enter into a competition at present for the West Indian business. There is the greatest difficulty that confronts me, and the House will appreciate the difficulty when I bring the matter before it, as I expect to do within the next few days. My own conviction about this service is that we do not want a long-drawn-out, slow service. In some way or other, we must get fairly rapid communication between Canada and the West Indian islands. We do not want a service which does not compare favourably with any service carried on from United States ports to the West Indies. Contrasts are very inconvenient when they tell against us in the eyes of the travelling and shipping public. So, we are trying to get a service which, in speed and in general makeup so far as comfort and conveniences both for freight and passenger traffic are concerned, shall be the best possible. I am not telling any secrets, and I am not going into figures; but I must tell the House that if it wishes an up-to-date ser-