

to the fact that to New York they have faster lines than the line to Halifax. I think the service is not very much better now than it was forty years ago.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Considerably better.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I have seen some comparison made in the papers as to the rate of speed which prevailed forty years ago. I have not verified the record myself, but the gentleman who was making this contribution to the press proved to his own satisfaction, at least, by the records, which he alleged to be correct, that we were not very much in advance of what we were forty years ago. It has been suggested that an 18-knot service would be a sufficient service from Halifax to the mother country. A gentleman of great experience in these matters pointed out to me once that if we gave a large subsidy for an 18-knot service between Canada and the mother country, we would be practically giving that subsidy for a service between New York and the mother country. The way in which he argued it was this: He said, suppose you give \$500,000 or \$750,000, and the mother country gives half as much, for an 18-knot service or a 19-knot service, the result would be that the second-class boats now running between New York and London would be put on the route between Canada and the mother country, and the money paid as a subsidy would be used for the purpose of putting on first-class boats between New York and the mother country. There may be some force in that. I do not think that any hon. gentleman in this House, at all events on this side, desires to see this service abolished; but they would very much like to see it improved, they would very much like to see that fast line service that has been in contemplation for the last ten years, a service about which I think there was no division of opinion in the House of Commons in the spring of 1896, when the resolution passed. I would like to ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce whether, in the arrangement which was made by this government with Petersen, Tate & Company, the carriage of the mails was provided for, or was there to be an additional subsidy for carrying the mails?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. It was provided for.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). So assuming that could be done for \$500,000 a year, it really only amounted to an increase of \$350,000. Now, I was in hopes that when the Minister of Trade and Commerce brought this item before the House to-day, he would have been able to give us some more definite information as to the progress of negotiations concerning this fast Atlantic service, which we think is of a good deal of importance to the country. The negotiations, as the right hon. gentleman knows,

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).

have been going on for a long time. I may illustrate that fact to him in this way, that since they first begun, eight members have disappeared from this government and have been replaced. I think only six of the gentlemen who were in this government at the time we were assured that the service had been secured for this country, still remain in the government. So this service might very well sing the song of the brook, slightly paraphrased: 'Ministers may come and ministers may go, but our negotiations go on for ever.' Now we have had a good deal of negotiation with Petersen, Tate & Company, which have occupied wearisome time; then there was a sort of interregnum, and now we have negotiations on again by public tender and advertisements for a service, called, I think, by some of the newspaper men, a long legged and a short legged service, a 21-knot and a 16-knot service. My right hon. friend, when he laid the tenders upon the Table of the House, told us that while the government were not disposed to accept either of the tenders—I think there were only two—the government were of opinion that these tenders might form the basis of further negotiations. I was not in at the beginning of the debate upon this item; but would the hon. gentleman be good enough to tell us whether these negotiations have made any real or substantial progress, and whether we are any nearer the goal than we were at the commencement of this session?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I am sorry to say I am not in a position to give the hon. gentleman the information he desires as to what can be done. The hon. gentleman is aware that since these tenders were laid on the Table the attention of the government has been very much occupied indeed with other matters affecting transportation, and that really we have not had time to give much consideration to the question of the fast Atlantic service; though certainly we have not lost sight of it. But he can very well understand that with the work in hand it is simply impossible to find time to take up the other question.

Mr. CLARKE. Can the minister tell us what is the idea of asking for a 16 and 20-knot service?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. It was supposed we would obtain a considerable number of tenders. Several of the objections that had been raised by parties was the enormous expense of supplying four vessels of the speed that was at first asked for, or supposed to be asked for. Everybody knows that the slightest increase beyond 20 knot means an enormous proportionate, or rather disproportionate, expense in the cost of construction and in the cost of running. It was supposed, erroneously as it would seem, that we might obtain a much larger number of tenders for only