

hon. friend in his contention that a protective system is not a producer of trade and is the sworn foe to foreign commerce.

Mr. J. J. HUGHES: What are the figures for Great Britain?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I am making an argument with reference to the argument made by the hon. member for Red Deer that protection is the sworn foe to trade and foreign commerce; that is all I am now doing.

But the most singular statement made by the hon. member for Red Deer was that protection is a failure as a fleet builder; that is, protective states do not build fleets. Well, the second largest fleet in the world, on the 1st of August last, was the German fleet, absolutely built under the late years of Germany's protective policy. The next largest fleet, and now, probably, the second fleet in the world, is that of the United States, built by a protected country from funds which were gathered in a protected country. Australia has built a small fleet, which only a few days ago covered itself with glory. Australia is a protected country, too. In fact, if you take the countries of the whole world, the exceptions to big fleets are found in China, in Turkey, in Holland, in Belgium—countries that are free trade or so near to free trade that they cannot be classed among protected countries. This is just a sample of the strange doctrines enunciated by the hon. member for Red Deer, and I thought it was well that they should be brought to the public gaze and counter facts placed against them.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I have kept this House longer than I had expected, and quite too long. I have not finished up with any perfectness some of the arguments I have advanced. I leave, as I know I can well leave, very much to the thought and the deduction of the intelligent members of this House. To them a suggestion is the next best thing to an argument at any time, and

sometimes far better than a laboured argument. I have but one word to say in conclusion, and that is this: to-day Canada and the Empire are engaged in a colossal contest, the inner meaning and possible consequences of which not one of us has an adequate idea. But we know that that contest is on. We know that in that contest Britain and the British power is fighting for its very life. You can hear the quick short pants of the contending forces, and you can easily translate that to the breathless vigour of an empire in a series of nations which feel that in this long line of contests they are fighting for their very life. We are in the midst of that war. Our own friends, our brothers, our sons, are there, or soon will be. There is glory on the fighting line, but there is death in the fighting line as well. As we take up our papers from day to day and read that fraction that comes to us, the sorrowful, saddening, and yet glorious fraction of what comes to us, it brings us every day and every hour nearer to some adequate comprehension of the mighty struggle, of the blood and tears and tribulation, through which alone final victory can be won. What I plead for in this House, in this country, everywhere, is that the best of the Canadian Dominion, Liberal as well as Tory, outside of race or of creed or of political faith, may look upon the verities of this war and may learn to value, as in only such cases we can learn to value, the comparative merits of the trivial and of the absolutely important. These things I plead for; and until this war is determined, let us all in this House and in this country, as much as in us lies, bend our backs to the burden, putting behind us what is trivial and not of moment, and facing steadfastly the mighty issue in which the proudest and highest and best of the civilizations that the world has ever developed is fighting for its life and its continuance, in the trenches, and under circumstances of terrible difficulty and peril.