

which imagine that the British preference was proposed by the government in the hope that Great Britain would offer a preferential tariff in return, and that Canadian Liberals are disappointed because their action has not had that result, are imagining a vain thing.' The hon. gentlemen knew that their preference would not get it, and they knew that by giving that preference, and by increasing it, they were putting off the day when this policy should be accomplished, as it will be accomplished before the empire is very much older.

I say, Sir, that the speech of the hon. member for Norfolk last night was a poor imitation of the speeches of the little Englanders who helped to keep England back in so far as the development of her colonies was concerned. What did the hon. gentleman say last night? He said: England has not time in these hours of competition, and is not in a position to deal with her colonies, she is meeting the severest form of competition in all her manufactures, she is being driven by the United States iron manufacturers practically from the markets of the world. I say, aye, aye, to what the hon. gentleman said; I say that England's hope for the future, England's hope of maintaining her strength and of increasing her influence, is to hold, as she holds to-day, the mistressship of the seas; and to people the colonies with sturdy British toilers, and to have a mutual preference between herself and those colonies as the best means of consolidating the empire. Sir, England's weakness to-day is not only that she has to meet with great competition; but her weakness in war is that her food supply must come from other countries, that she has to depend upon hostile peoples, peoples who may become hostile any day, for her food supply; and while she is depending upon those hostile peoples for her food supply, millions of acres of fertile soil in her colonies are lying waste. I say that the policy for England to adopt is the policy of a still greater Britain, the policy of sending her sons to cultivate those fields and to give them a preference in her markets at home, and thus to consolidate an empire which shall stand not only for this century but for all the centuries to come.

Mr. R. R. DOBELL (West Quebec). I desire to add a few words to this debate, and in doing so I feel as if I were almost trespassing upon the time of the House, because the subject-matter which I desire to touch upon is hardly pertinent to a debate on the budget. However, as the hon. leader of the opposition and his first lieutenant, the member for York N.B., (Mr. Foster), expended some time in talking about that unfortunate fast line enterprise—which I think it was rather needless for them to do—I may perhaps be justified in dealing with that question briefly. In doing so I feel the absence of my hon. colleague and friend the Minister

Mr. MONTAGUE.

of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright), but I shall try and refute some of the statements to which the hon. gentlemen opposite have given such prominence. I may say that not only in this House but also as late as last week the hon. leader of the opposition in a speech he made in Quebec, reiterated very strongly the version of the negotiations which he claimed took place with Her Majesty's government with respect to this project. Now, Sir, before I sit down I hope that I shall satisfy not only the members of this House, but also my constituents in Quebec, that there is little ground for the statement that was made by these hon. gentlemen. If they were not experts, if they were without knowledge, if they had not the check of parliamentary experience, I would make some allowance for them. But, these hon. gentlemen, and none have a keener appreciation of what is necessary than they have—make the astonishing claim that they had made an engagement with Her Majesty's government and that the contract for the fast Atlantic service was only awaiting completion by the signature and acceptance of this country. I think I can show that this is a visionary assertion, and it has been made, not once or twice, but repeated in different parts of this Dominion, and many times repeated, that the fast line contract was made by Messrs. Allan, that it was accepted by the British government, and that it only awaited the approval of this country. I will read the exact words which fell from the hon. member for York, N.B. (Mr. Foster). Speaking of this government, he said when they came into power:

They found at their hand, when they came here a contract ready to be signed which would have put into work an ocean fast service in July of last year.

The hon. leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper), spoke in an even stronger way. He called it a magnificent project, and he used these words:

The contract was ready for signature, the British government joining with Canada and giving £75,000 sterling a year for ten years to enable us to have a fast Atlantic service. . . . When that contract was ready for signature, it was not signed, although the British government were perfectly satisfied.

What I wish to state, and very briefly, is that the British government had not even considered the document which had been submitted to them. It never was a contract. At the best it was only a submission, and that submission was for a contract to be made, but it was so one-sided that the contracting parties had several months allowed them before they became obligated, while they wanted to obligate this country at once. The document was merely a proposal, asking for an option to do this work. I know it was never submitted to the Treasury Board of Her Majesty's govern-