

I now desire, for a few moments, to say something in reply to what the right hon. gentleman, who, last night, occupied the attention of this House, said in answer to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition upon the subject of the Transvaal contingent. There are three accusations which are made by hon. gentlemen opposite, from the Prime Minister down, against the Liberal-Conservative party on this matter, and I propose, briefly, to touch upon them. The first is that the hon. leader of the opposition and the Liberal-Conservative party are agitating this matter for party purposes and for party purposes alone. That statement was made on the floor of the House last night, and echoed by hon. gentlemen sitting behind the ministry. Now, all I need to do is to appeal to the record, and the first record I will appeal to is the statement made by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, in this House and before the country, last night, on that subject—and I defy any honest-minded man to show, that in the whole relation of the history of his action, and that of the Liberal-Conservative party in that matter, there is anything which can be fairly called an excess of party spirit. I for my own part listened with pleasure, and I believe the country will read with pleasure the unimpassioned, straightforward and frank way in which that statement was made before the House, and every accession of fact that was gathered to the one that preceded it showed my hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) as far from moving in the interest of party, and as being actuated by broad patriotic motives in the interests of Canada and the empire. There is only one party advantage that ought to be, or that will be allowed to be taken by any party in this country on a matter of this kind. It is the party advantage which fairly accrues to the opposition because of hesitancy, because of incompetency, and because of incapacity on the part of the government in dealing with even the most important questions. All that fairly goes to the discredit of the party that is guilty of it, and accrues to the advantage of the party which points out the better and the surer method. That party advantage, if there be any, is fairly due to the Liberal-Conservative party. The advantage to hon. gentlemen opposite, if any, will be derived from a fair and cool and collected review of their action by their friends. But, Sir, from the first time that Sir Charles Tupper rose in this House, when our hon. friend from North Victoria (Mr. Hughes) brought up the idea of in some way showing active help for Great Britain in the then probably coming struggle; from the first time that Sir Charles Tupper rose in this House to make a suggestion (and he gave it merely as a suggestion), from that time to the present, every suggestion that Sir Charles Tupper

Mr. FOSTER.

has made has been an offer of frank and fair support to the Prime Minister and the government of the country, in forwarding what he believed, what we believed, what we all believe, I hope, is the sentiment of this country, namely, that there should be a hearty and united effort made to help the empire in this crisis. I am not going to debate that question any further.

There is another cry that is raised, and I propose to say something about it. I am sorry that any one in this House is obliged to say anything about it. It is a matter which I would rather see both parties relegate into the limbo of absolute forgetfulness and oblivion. But it is here, and it is my duty to speak of it. It has been urged against the Liberal-Conservative party and it becomes the duty of the Liberal-Conservative party to sift it out; anyway, to make a statement on it and let it go to the country. What is that allegation? It is in the words of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte): That there would have been nothing heard of this agitation if it had not been that there was a Frenchman at the head of this government. What does that mean in plain language? My right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) last night, in a passion, with quivering lips and with pale face, hissed out his condemnation of what he called the reptile press which dared to criticise his high mightiness. The reptile press! No paper supporting the Liberal-Conservative party is to-day fawning on the hand of my right hon. friend or on any one of his cabinet colleagues for favours, present, past, or prospective. No Liberal-Conservative newspaper to-day is feeding at the trough so liberally supplied by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte)—

An hon MEMBER. They cannot get anything.

Mr. FOSTER. I thought I heard a sound. There will be enough left for my hon. friend and the others—the trough is not yet empty.

Mr. LANDERKIN. It was nearly empty when you left it.

Mr. FOSTER. The good tax-payers of Canada have been called upon to fill it up since. Every Liberal-Conservative paper in Canada to-day is maintaining itself through its own honest, assiduous endeavours, and is doing its work independent of subsidies or fees of any kind, and it ill-becomes my right hon. friend to try to stop the mouths of independent critics in the great Liberal-Conservative press of this country by hissing out the word 'reptile' in connection with them. If there is a reptile press anywhere—and I do not like to think there is within the broad bounds of Canada a paper on either side of politics, which would sink its manhood and its principles, and trim its advocacy of those princi-