

Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster). I am aware that that hon. gentleman is absent in England, and that he is attending the sittings of a commission appointed in consequence of a resolution passed by the last Imperial Conference. These duties are important, but they are in no way connected with the Department of Trade and Commerce; in fact, such duties should never have been entrusted to a Minister of the Crown. The late Government had recommended a man of great commercial ability, and of high standing in the financial world, Mr. P. C. Larkin; but this recommendation was disregarded and the appointment cancelled by the present Government when they came into office. This was, I believe, the first act in their debauchery of dismissals; the last we have not heard. The Minister of Trade and Commerce should never have taken these duties to which I have referred. He should have remembered that, according to Scripture, no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. This is exactly what has taken place. My hon. friend has adopted his duties as commissioner and he has forgotten his duties as minister. He was absent during the greater part of last session; he may be absent the greater part of this session. It is true that last year he had the excuse, as was hinted a moment ago by the mover of the Address, that he was in search of trade for the growers and producers of Canada—a most laudable ambition. He went to China, and he went to Japan. I speak not by way of condemnation, but I may add that we have it upon good authority that my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce contemplates sending bakers to China and Japan to teach the Chinese and the Japanese the superiority of a wheat diet over a rice diet. Again I say I do not condemn; I entirely approve. Let the Minister of Trade and Commerce send not only bakers, but confectioners, pastry cooks, and culinary missionaries of every description, and let their mission be to wean the celestials from their gastronomical proclivities; from swallows' nests, sharks' fins, bamboo roots and ducks' eggs two years old, and induce them to substitute for these delicacies the modern preparations of wheat flour, and anything and everything in the way of cereals, not forgetting porridge, the food of the strong and the free in this part of the world. If my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, as a result of his pilgrimages to Japan and China, will succeed in obtaining for this country the sale

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier].

of one more barrel of flour than we have exported hitherto, the Government will have done more than they have so far accomplished during their four years of office.

The Speech from the Throne is remarkable for two things: first, for what it contains, and, second, for what it omits. Before I pass to what it omits, let me refer to what it contains. It has a paragraph referring to the Hudson Bay railway, about which I do not propose to say anything upon this occasion; we must have more information than is contained in the Speech from the Throne before we discuss that subject. But let me read this paragraph with regard to the Transcontinental railway:

The work on the National Transcontinental railway has been rapidly advanced during the last year, and, notwithstanding the difficulties attending the construction of the Hudson Bay railway, and the provision of terminals, every possible progress has been made in bringing that important project nearer to completion.

If the National Transcontinental railway has been rapidly advanced, we have only the word of the Speech for it, and we are not in much of a position to discuss the whole matter. At all events, we know enough to say, without any fear of contradiction, that if the work of the Transcontinental railway has been advanced, it has not been on the section between Cochrane and Quebec city. This part of the road should be open to traffic to-day, but it is yet far from completion. On the 19th of February last, in the other branch of the legislature, a question was put by Senator Casgrain with regard to the section of the railway between Cochrane and the city of Quebec, in these words:

Q. What was the length of the gap, in miles, on the 1st of November, 1912, where the grading has not been made between Cochrane and the city of Quebec?—A. Thirty-five miles.

Q. What is the distance between both ends of steel of this gap to-day??—A. Eighty-eight miles.

So at the end of the season last year there were thirty-five miles of grading and eighty-eight miles of steel to be laid on that section; not a very heavy task, and one that should have been accomplished during the summer. I believe that the thirty-five miles of grading has been done, and that the section between Cochrane and Quebec has also been graded.

But yet the road is not in operation in any way and cannot be put in operation. For what reason? For the reason that the Government of the day have completely neglected to provide terminals at the city