

money would have been spent in Great Britain, and in the second place, the British fleet would have been weakened to the extent of the number of ships she had sold to Canada.

Mr. TALBOT. Why do the English admiralty sell them if they are weakening their own strength?

Mr. HUGHES. I presume they are a lot of old things that they wanted to get rid of. They are unloading on this government a lot of old ships that they want to get rid of.

Mr. TALBOT. They are not weakening their own strength then.

Mr. HUGHES. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Congdon) quoted some gentleman named Jane, and declared in the fulness of his eloquence that it was the right of every citizen to discuss the future of this country. We are not disputing that, but when it comes to a matter of legislating for independence, then it is time that the people of this country sat up and understood what was going on. I trust that I shall be able to show before I am through that in the Bill now before the House there is the most sinister attempt at laying the foundation of the independence of Canada that has ever been presented to the public. Our good friend made various other references, but I will discuss them as I pass on. Now, Sir, what has been the policy from start to finish of this question? A mandate was issued by the conference, in which Canada took part, for the defence of the empire. Last year a resolution was solemnly passed by this House containing a mandate to the government. The absolute unanimity of the House was behind that resolution instructing the government to act. First, there was to be speedy assistance. Does the government's Bill propose speedy assistance? To my mind it proposes no assistance whatever, and certainly there is no pretense that there will be any assistance forthcoming for the next four or five years. That resolution proposed co-operation. Is there any co-operation provided by this resolution? I fail to find it. That resolution gave the government a mandate last year to stand by the unity of the empire. I fail to find in the Bill proposed any provision for standing behind the unity of the empire. Co-operation means operating together for the same end. I find nothing in this Bill providing for the operation of these fleets towards the same end. Co-operation means mutual help. The Bill before the House does not guarantee mutual help. It is a jug-handled policy; we are always to receive the help of Britain when we need it, but Canada will help Britain according to her own sweet will. Co-operation means reciprocal assistance,

Mr. HUGHES.

and under this Bill there is no reciprocal assistance proposed or guaranteed. It means concurrent effort, and under the Bill before the House there is no proposition for concurrent effort.

Now, Sir, the First Minister was even more equivocal—I hope that will not be offensive, I do not like to say anything that may offend the First Minister, I know he is in a very difficult position. He has played the game so long—appealing with one cry to certain elements in the province of Quebec, and with a different cry to certain elements in other provinces—he has played the game so long that the old adage is coming true about the chickens coming home to roost. We can all remember when in 1885 he stood on the Champs de Mars in Montreal, and stated that had he been on the banks of the Saskatchewan he would have shouldered his musket to fight the loyal Canadian soldiers who went to the front. In 1895 and 1896 in the province of Quebec, where it was congenial, he stated in regard to the vote of \$3,000,000 for the purchase of rifles for our volunteers, and his friends also stated it: Are you going to put the Tupper government in power and have your money sent to Britain to buy rifles to have your sons fight Britain's battles in all parts of the world? I need not refer to other agitations led by the First Minister. In 1896 the song that was sung in Ontario was: Hands off Manitoba. No coercion of Manitoba, and, quoting from Shakespeare he struck that beautiful attitude which he can so well assume and said: No Italian priest shall tithe or toll in these our fair Dominions. Then, the right hon. gentleman went to the province of Quebec and told the people: 'Will you trust Tupper, a Protestant and an Englishman, or me a Frenchman, and Roman Catholic, put me in power and I will give you a stronger remedial Bill than Tupper will.' I need not follow him down to 1905, and show his attitude at that time further than to point out that the chickens are coming home to roost, and in view of his equivocal language in the past I can see the position the First Minister finds himself in. Even though he wished to come up and do his duty to the old empire he has tied himself by his own past actions, so that I can easily make an apology for him which he finds it impossible to make for himself. Had the government brought in a proper Naval Bill, had the government obeyed the mandate of this House last year to give speedy assistance and co-operation so as to maintain the unity of the empire, there is not a single Conservative in this House who would not have endorsed such a proposal. Further, I wish to take my good genial friend the Postmaster General to task. In the speeches of the First Minister, and of the Postmaster General, and of the member for Pictou—I do