

Post Office, the Admiralty and the Colonial Office, for the purpose of investigating this question thoroughly and reporting upon it for the consideration of the Government. The general election ensued and, as this House knows, the Conservative party in England were brought into power with a very large majority. I at once renewed my efforts with the new Government, and I addressed to the Colonial Minister, the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain, a letter pointing out the great importance that Canada attached to this project. I also drew his attention to the fact that it was a measure that had obtained the support of both political parties in Canada. I referred to the fact that, at the conference which took place in Ottawa at which the Australasian and South African colonies were represented in conjunction with the Imperial and Canadian Governments, a unanimous resolution was passed expressing approval of this fast Atlantic service. Mr. Chamberlain promised to give the subject his careful consideration, and, having had an opportunity of discussing the matter on more than one occasion with that right hon. gentleman, he arrived at the conclusion that the measure was entitled to the support of Her Majesty's Government, and said that he was prepared to ask the Imperial Parliament for such support as might be considered appropriate. What was asked for from Mr. Chamberlain was, that the £150,000 voted by the Government of Canada should be supplemented by Her Majesty's Government by an additional amount of £75,000. Mr. Chamberlain practically adopted this proportion, but he said that inasmuch as it had not been ascertained whether the service could be obtained for a lower amount than these two sums added together, it would be absolutely necessary that tenders should be asked for. It was pointed out to Mr. Chamberlain that Mr. Huddart had devoted a great deal of time and attention to this matter under an arrangement with the Canadian Government, but Mr. Chamberlain took the ground that it would be impossible for him to ask Parliament for a large sum of money unless new tenders were called for. That policy was, of course, adopted.

After the resolution was passed by the conference at Ottawa, my hon. friend the First Minister will remember that a motion was offered in this House asking for a grant of £150,000 a year for ten years for this service. I was able to say to the authorities in England that that motion had been passed by this House without division. I may incidentally call the attention of the House to the fact that from the inception of this important scheme it had not been treated as a party measure, but had received the support of gentlemen on both sides of the House, and ultimately was adopted with practical unanimity. I need not remind the House that at a time when the Opposition decided to take such a course as to render

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the Conservative Government then in power practically powerless to carry any measure; owing to the good offices of the present First Minister who was then leader of the Opposition, we were enabled to pass a Bill through the House amending the law which, up to that time, made it a condition that this fast service should connect with France as well as with Great Britain. Finding that such a thing was impracticable by the same line of steamers, the First Minister was good enough to aid the late Government in passing a Bill to change that, but making it a condition, and a very proper condition, that any contract entered into for this service should be subject to the approval of this House. That amendment was passed for the purpose of avoiding loss of time, and in order that we might ask for tenders, and the House whatever its complexion and whoever might be in power, would thus have reserved to it the right of approving of any contract made. Under that authority obtained by the support of both sides of this House, the Government invited tenders, and as hon. gentlemen opposite know, the result was that no tender was received for a less sum than the £225,000 sterling.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Sir Richard Cartwright). You might possibly say that no tender at all was obtained.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My hon. friend will, I think, have to qualify that a little. I do not think it presents quite an accurate view of the case.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. We differ in the interpretation of what constitutes a tender.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Technically my hon. friend is right. Any variation in a tender from the terms in which the tender is invited of course technically prevents that from being absolutely a tender. But, as the hon. gentleman knows, what took place was this. Certain questions were raised which became a subject of discussion between the Government here and the Colonial Office through the agency of the present High Commissioner. There were two tenders—one from Mr. Huddart and one from the Messrs. Allan. The Messrs. Allan's tender was a little lower, because it gave the amount in pounds sterling, whereas the other gave the amount in dollars. Much as the Government regretted that Mr. Huddart, with whom they had entered into a provisional arrangement, and who had spent a great deal of time and money in prosecuting the undertaking, was not in a position to undertake the work when placed in competition with the Messrs. Allan, they felt bound to give the precedence to the tender of the Messrs. Allan, because it was a little lower than that of Mr. Huddart, and because of the much more substantial and important