

work much too slowly to meet the stress of war, and it may well be that the department, having examined the field, will decide to organize another system of consultation. It should be borne in mind that there may be necessity for co-operation in the purchase of supplies for other governments, and consequent need for enlarging the operation of a purchasing board. It is somewhat difficult to visualize how a board could be set up outside the Government for, say, Imperial purchases, which should not be co-ordinated with a purchasing board attending to Canadian purchases. This is something which the Minister of Finance will have to consider, and therefore it is difficult to say to what extent the present Purchasing Board will be utilized. It may be transformed into an organization within the Finance Department in order to act with celerity and give as much protection to the public generally as is provided for in the enactment of last session.

Hon. Mr. BLACK: Does the Purchasing Board still exist?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Oh, yes.

Hon. Mr. BLACK: It is still functioning?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Yes. It is the intention of the Finance Department to utilize the board for the present. We shall very likely have to co-ordinate it with any special organization that may be set up by the Imperial Government. Naturally this step would be taken with the approval of the Imperial authorities. We are entering a field of such importance that it has been deemed necessary to constitute this department, which will be enlarged only when necessary. In Great Britain, at a certain stage of the last war, it was felt that a Department of Munitions should be created. As I quoted last night, Mr. Lloyd George in his post-war memoirs stated the steps then taken accelerated the supply of munitions on a proper basis and in such a way as to help win the war. Of course, we would not for a moment think of giving such wide powers to any department in time of peace; but we are at war.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: A great Englishman once wrote—I omit the irrelevant part: "And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe; and thereby hangs a tale." How applicable to the history of this Bill and of its forbears! Last session a measure was before us to establish a Defence Purchasing Board. This action was heralded, with no small measure of propaganda, as a great forward step. The measure was born of the finest lineage that any legislation could have—the recommendation of a judge of the Supreme

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Court. Its aim was to get the purchasing of supplies for defence out of the incompetent, or rather politically blemished, hands of ministers and into the hands of an impartial and competent commission, where, of course, wisdom and capacity always reside. Well, the Bill passed. It had to include a number of special features—just about as fine political provisions as I ever saw in any measure; provisions sentimentiously designed to usher in a new reign, wherein profits in relation to war contracts should be no more.

Who does not remember the 5 per cent clause? Who does not remember the history of the part it played all through last session? When the boys were fighting and dying the profiteers were not going to make money under this Government. Profits were to be limited to 5 per cent. I do not like to say it, but at the time I questioned the good faith of the Government in that measure. I have not now a bit of confidence it was introduced in good faith.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: In what?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: In good faith.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The Bill?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: The Defence Purchases Bill of last session.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: But I thought my right honourable friend and I had agreed not to look back.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I could not possibly leave to my honourable friend so good a legacy of love as that—a promise never to look back. Really, the situation is worth reviewing for the amusement it affords.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Is this the proper moment?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: We need it for the revivifying of our morale. The Minister says, now that things have to be done faster, we must get rid of this Purchasing Board, as such.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: We may.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: If this Bill has any purpose at all, that is it, the reason being that we have to move faster and cannot do so under the Defence Purchasing Board which was established just about three or four months ago. When the lightnings were flashing and clouds were black, when we could hear the thunder, not distant, but near, we did not need to move fast! What were the trammels in the Defence Purchases Act which held us back and strangled our action?