

I said, 'Certainly I will do so.' Accordingly I promptly notified the agent to that effect, that my hon. friend was in favour of the purchase. The next day he came to me and said, 'Why, the head of that concern is a confounded Grit named McGregor; during the election he placarded his shop all over with appeals to his men to vote against me, and all that sort of thing.' I said 'It makes no difference if the head of the firm is a Grit, the company is largely Conservative, and the men are always intelligent enough to vote Conservative. Then he asked me why I didn't get some other machine, and he mentioned two or three others with agencies in Walkerville that I had never heard of before. He said, 'It would be far better for me if you would cancel the order and put it with some other concern.' I need not go any further.

Mr. MACDONALD. Did the hon. gentleman desire the purchase to be put up to tender?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). You cannot get tenders for automobiles. He never asked me to invite tenders. I found then that my hon. friend misunderstood the situation entirely, he thought his was the only concern in Canada that was making automobiles, and that I should have got them from his riding. I thought I was doing the hon. gentleman a kindness in giving him the information. I have given him the facts of the case, and from that time to this I have had nothing more to do with it. I will only add that when I found he was dissatisfied I told him one day what I thought about it, and I think he understood my position pretty well. From this very concern, when we tried to get them down we got a notification that if we ordered 100 machines they would not be sold for one cent less than we are giving for these machines. I do not know whether Mr. McGregor is a Grit or not, and I do not care. But I do know that the workmen in any establishment in Canada would be largely Conservative. There are the facts of the case, and they cannot be contradicted.

Mr. WILCOX. The question is whether the minister has taken the proper course. If he has, and if the price was in excess of the value of these machines, as I believe it was, then it is an improper expenditure; if not, then it is a proper expenditure. I have always had a high regard for the Minister of Militia and Defence. I dislike to offer any criticism of his official conduct, but I want to say to him that he is the only minister of the Crown that does not consult me upon matters pertaining to my constituency. I saw in one of the Canadian newspapers an item

last year taken I think from one of the English papers which seemed to set forth one of the weaknesses of my hon. friend. The paper said that during the coronation proceedings in England he was invited to a place upon the platform with King George, and immediately he stepped upon the platform he spread all over it and there was not room on it for the King. Now I want to say to him that he is not going to spread all over North Essex on matters which affect the people of that constituency, which they have to pay for, without letting me know something about it. If he does not consult me I will consult him on the floor of parliament.

Mr. MACDONALD. Would the minister tell me out of what vote he has purchased these automobiles?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Out of the stores vote.

Mr. MACDONALD. Was there a balance of last year in existence?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). They are all paid for, and are to be delivered at various points all over Canada.

Mr. MACDONALD. Who was the person to whom the order was given, spoken of by the hon. member for North Essex (Mr. Wilcox)?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I think they are delivered through an agent in Toronto. I have driven a Ford automobile, and know what it is. I am surprised at the line of action my hon. friend has taken. I did not know what he meant when he said it would be much more to his advantage if I bought from another concern.

Mr. MACDONALD. Had the member for North Essex called the attention of the minister to what he has stated to the committee to-night, that these automobiles were purchased at a cost of almost \$100 a piece more than the price he indicated they could be purchased for?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). The hon. gentleman has given all the figures in the list, showing at what price they were purchased.

Mr. MACDONALD. The hon. minister said that he had gone through the price list, and his opinion was that the price was \$100 more than what they could have been purchased at.

Mr. WILCOX. Mr. McGregor, the president, sent me the previous list, and upon that list not one of those items appeared as extras which he states in his communication were extras. Therefore, I spoke of these items as belonging to the machine?