

On another purchase of medical supplies, the highest tenders totalled \$940.80, and the accepted tenders totalled \$611.94.

On a further purchase of medical supplies, the highest tenders totalled \$4,046.54, and the accepted tenders totalled \$2,701.44.

Those figures should demonstrate to the House the necessity for having this business handled by men who are experts in the different lines, and also of having this business open to the free tender of any Canadian citizen who thinks he is in a position to bid for the business. I do not see how it is going to be possible for the country to get a proper system of purchasing except by adopting the policy laid down in this Bill. Probably some modifications will have to be made to the Bill, but I believe the general principles of it are absolutely sound and will commend themselves to the good judgment of the members of the House as well as to the general public. It will give the people of Canada a square deal, and they are certainly entitled to a square deal from the public servants in charge of the country's business.

This is the first occasion on which I have had the honour of addressing you, Sir, and I feel it a great privilege to be able to say a few words of congratulation on the Government's action in this respect. I believe this measure will help to demonstrate to the people of Canada that this Government desires to do the right thing in its administration.

Mr. J. H. BURNHAM (West Peterborough): I should like to draw the attention of the minister to a little incident which will serve as an illustration of something that has happened very frequently, and may happen much more frequently, very much to the detriment of the member for a constituency. Under the old system it used to be known that tenders for coal were required. Now this Bill does not apply to the whole system of tendering. Consequently, there is just as much room for inefficiency and for doing evil that there was before. There is no way under Heaven by which business can be properly done if you cannot rely on the honesty of the people doing it. Let me give an instance. Instructions were sent to a janitor to find out how much coal was required, and what the price would be. He did so, but instead of asking several people what their tenders would be, he asked only one man, and he sent that man's tender to Ottawa. It was accepted, and then the people rose up on their hind legs and said "What sort of a member of Parliament are you to allow such work

as this to go on?" I said "I did not do it." "Oh, yes, they said, that won't go here. You are the member for this constituency and must watch the Government in everything. You must look into this matter." So having ascertained the facts, I communicated with the Minister of Public Works, and in due time he communicated with the officer he had employed at Peterborough, one of his own officers, and found I had stated the matter correctly. I said to the Minister of Public Works "What are you going to do about it? This man is perfectly honest. I do not think he intended to do anything wrong, but the efficiency of your system is now on trial. What are you going to do?" He replied "I will have to fine him five dollars." So the Minister of Public Works fined his own agent in Peterborough for inefficiency in a transaction under this brand-new system which the member had nothing to do with, but which he will have to watch very carefully.

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK (Red Deer): If I may be permitted to do so, I should like to offer my congratulations to my hon. friend for Brant (Mr. Harold) upon the easy fluency which characterized what he informed us was his maiden speech to this House. I do that more sincerely because I regret to add that his speech did not succeed in removing some distrust which I have of this legislation. Indeed, some of the facts to which he referred rather increased than allayed that distrust. He made some references and gave us copious figures regarding certain purchases which we made in war time that would have been a good justification of this legislation in war time, but I understand that the object of the Bill is to perpetuate in times of peace the machinery which was found necessary during the war.

In my opinion, one of the most fundamental principles which the Government need to observe, if they are going to be a successful Government now, is to make as rapid a transition in their thought from war time to peace time as is consistent with the situation. There are a good many things we had to do in war time which I think we shall be glad to discontinue, and be compelled to discontinue, in times of peace.

My hon. friend for Brant referred to the great success this commission had had in purchasing salmon, but I do not apprehend that the Government of Canada are going to be perpetually in the fish-dealing business. They had to purchase the salmon,