

on why they should have large offices. Their agents were scattered all over the continent of Europe, they were not called home every Saturday night from all over the continent to have a jollification in these offices, and there was no reason why the company should have an office except to receive the mails or for purely clerical purposes. There are companies doing the largest business in the world which have very small offices, and in some cases you will find them without even an office but simply a desk in some other office. The hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) has had some experience of that kind.

There is just one more point I wish to explain and that is with reference to the remarks regarding certain Jewish immigration. The charge has been made that the Baron Hirsch Society took out a number of immigrants to this country, paid their way out, and located them in the west, and that the North Atlantic Company got the bonus upon these settlers. While possibly there is a chance for criticism there, it would not be fair, under the contract, to say to the company that they should not receive the bonus in respect of this special lot of Jewish immigrants who came out and settled in the west. Under the previous administration, a certain number of Jewish immigrants were taken from Europe by the Baron Hirsch Society and settled in the west, yet notwithstanding that fact the booking agents in Europe received the bonus upon this batch of immigrants, and this was under the administration of which my hon. friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) was a member. Surely it was no worse, at least, putting it this way, for the North Atlantic Trading Company to claim the bonus in this case, than for booking agents claimed and did receive the bonus, in the other case.

I must apologize to the House for having spoken so long.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Go on.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN. But I have just a word or two to say in conclusion. This question of immigration is a very difficult one. It is impossible to lay down any logical or mathematical rule which may be used in that work. There must necessarily be a great deal of give and take between the government and the booking agents and the companies. We must take a certain amount of risk. Possibly we may lose a certain amount of money. Possibly we may pay bonuses on people who never reach the country or who leave it after they come here. But there is no evidence that this has occurred, at least to any large extent. It has been the policy of this government and of previous governments to pursue practically the same course. As Lord Strathcona says, the only difference is that in this case

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN.

the bonus is paid the company direct, and in all the other cases it was paid to a great number of booking agents. So far as I am concerned, I do not know what may be the opinion of the Minister of the Interior. He has cancelled the contract with this company upon the ground that they are not fulfilling its conditions, and I presume he has some evidence to that effect, which he has not placed before parliament, and which probably refers to the period which has elapsed since June, 1905, down to the present. But I submit that in the interests of this country, in the interests of a proper and easy working of the immigration question in the Department of the Interior, this contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company, properly enforced, properly inspected, is the right kind of contract for this country to have. And unless the Minister of the Interior can give good reasons for cancelling it, in my judgment at least, he will make a mistake in resuming departmental relations with hundreds of booking agents scattered all over Europe instead of dealing with one person. That will mean decentralization instead of the centralization which is desirable in any immigration policy.

This contract has given good results to Canada, as is proven by the figures. Possibly the contract may be improved, perhaps some other countries should be cut out, it may be that the term is too long, or that there should be a more careful system of inspection. But these are matters of suggestion which should come from members of this House as well as from the Department of the Interior. But I say that the essence and principle of that contract is sound, and I believe that is far in advance of the system which prevailed from 1883 to 1899, when this contract came into force. Now, my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier asked me why, if the Minister of the Interior is going to cancel the contract, we should oppose this resolution. But surely that is not a fair question. The hon. gentleman's (Mr. Foster's) amendment asks for the cancellation of this contract upon certain grounds, upon statements which, I submit, he has not proven. And I say that no person supporting the opposition and in the sympathy with the mover of the amendment can consistently or intelligently vote for the cancellation of this contract upon the grounds given. I cannot understand, for the life of me, how any hon. gentleman even opposing the administration, will vote for the cancellation of the contract upon the grounds given in this resolution. The first of these grounds is:

That the contracts entered into by the government of Canada with the North Atlantic Trading Company were made without the authority and knowledge of parliament.

It was not necessary. The basis of the bonus provision of the contract is simply that if John Jones leaves Germany and