

In the light of these facts I am unable to see upon what ground this deal can be justified or defended when it is brought up in this House by the opposition, and I am inclined to the view that if the facts as they were presented to me are true, and that if this gets into politics there are two parties that will not be benefited by a discussion of it; one is the Minister of Militia and the other is the Ford Motor Company of Walkerville.

Now, in conclusion, I am always open to conviction, and if you or your company can give me a satisfactory explanation of my objections, I will be just as enthusiastically in favour of the proposal as I am now opposed to it. If the minister had not approached me in room 16 in the presence of our members and we had some argument it would not have become the subject of so much discussion here as it is; and I may say that I have so far not taken any position that would jeopardize the interests of your company. I was not complaining because the contract had not been given, but the advisability of purchasing these machines for the purpose the minister has in mind is questionable, and the method which he has adopted in securing them has not been met with favour by many of his supporters, and I absolutely refuse to support that which I believe to be wrong. But, as you have been good enough to communicate with me. I will make no further reference to it with the hope that you may be able to give me a satisfactory explanation.

I remain, dear sir,

Truly yours,  
OLIVER WILCOX.

That communication was forwarded by me to a shareholder of the firm. I received a reply. But there is an interesting piece of history here that does not satisfy me. This agent went to Walkerville, or directed a communication to Walkerville, or telegraphed to Walkerville, or in whatever way he let that company know, I was not satisfied with that transaction. He gave that intelligence to Mr. Gordon McGregor, the manager, as I am informed, who happens to be a Liberal. Instead of Mr. McGregor communicating with me, he impressed that knowledge on a shareholder who happened to be on the other side of politics and a friend of mine. This is my information. He wrote to me and answered that communication in which I stated my objections. On March 15, 1912, one of the stockholders of the Ford Automobile Company wrote to me as follows:—

Dear Mr. Wilcox,—I received your kind favour of 8th inst. and contents carefully noted. I thank you very much for so carefully giving me such full detail, and I must confess that your arguments are sound.

But I have here a communication that was directed by the president of this company, in which he attempts to explain some of the objections I had to the order. He said:

Mr. WILCOX

Dear Sir,—Answering the questions which you have put to me, and which I assume are indirectly questions that have come from Mr. Wilcox regarding the order that was given by the Department of Militia and Defence, from information we have received indirectly in regard to this matter, we are led to believe that Mr. Wilcox has failed in placing this order with another concern, with the Reo concern. In this we might be mistaken, and it might be the Hupmobile or the M. and F. or Flanders, as these concerns are located in his constituency.

Let me say I never asked for that order to be given to any firm in my constituency; and in my firm judgment such an order or contract as that should be given upon tender, with opportunity allowed to all the various companies in this country to file their tenders. Now, with regard to the increase of price, Mr. McGregor says:

Regarding the price which has been paid us for these automobiles, \$951.60, as you will note, the advertised price of our car is \$850 f.o.b., Walkerville. But for this purpose there have been a lot of extras added in order to have the cars complete and in order to avoid the necessity of continually purchasing extras. For instance, the cars are specified with traction treads, which add an extra of \$3,020 to our list for the set. There is also one extra traction tread casing, \$1.25; 4 Dunlop tubes, \$24.20; one top envelope, \$5; one jack, \$2. In addition to that there is a muffler cut-out, a tire envelope and a set of tire holders. I have not before me the exact prices of these, but you can easily see that the price for a car with all these extras which have been specified would be more than \$951.60. . .

So far as opposition from the Liberal side of the House is concerned, we don't think there will be any opposition and if Mr. Wilcox can indicate that there is any possibility of any coming up we will be very glad to take the matter up with some of the members on the Liberal side of the House.

He says he has forwarded me a copy of the special list; but not one of these items which he has mentioned in this communication is on this special list. Therefore, I take it, these extras which are referred to belong to the standard car which was sold for \$850. In my judgment, as I said before, this contract should be let by public tender. It is with the greatest regret that I rise to oppose this order, and if a motion is made in this House against it, I should support the motion.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I regret exceedingly the line of action my hon. friend has chosen to take. I have to say about the contract, that stands on its own merits. But knowing that the Ford machine was made in the hon. gentleman's riding, I thought I would please him by telling him that we had purchased for the department these 12 machines. What was his first remark? 'Can't you put in a word with that concern to help me?'