

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: That would more properly come within the province of the King's Printer.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Does not the King's Printer come under this Bill?

Mr. ROWELL: All supplies purchased by him ordinarily must come under this commission.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I would like my hon. friend to think the matter over.

Mr. ROWELL: In any case it would come under the interpretation clause of the word "supplies."

Mr. COPP: The first two lines of the clause state very definitely that the commission shall have the exclusive power and right to purchase, contract for, inspect and accept supplies for the public service. Then it continues:

Provided, however, that the commission, when it deems it advisable, may, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulation or by the commission authorize any portion of the public service to purchase, contract for, inspect or accept supplies.

In other words, they may delegate their powers back to the departments—the very thing which the minister wants to avoid.

Mr. ROWELL: That was intended to cover such small purchases as have been mentioned. I intend to amend that clause by making it a little more specific. I therefore move to amend the clause, first, by striking out in the fifth and sixth lines the words "or by the commission," and by adding at the end of the first paragraph of the said clause the words, "of small value or quantity or of special character." So that the first paragraph would then read as follows:

The commission shall have the exclusive power and right to purchase, contract for, inspect and accept supplies for the public service. Provided, however, that the commission, when it deems it advisable, may, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulation, authorize any portion of the public service to purchase, contract for, inspect or accept supplies of small value or quantity or of special character.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Of small value—not to exceed a certain amount?

Mr. ROWELL: That will be defined by regulation.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I remember a minister of the Crown buying a certain number of padlocks worth only a dollar each, but he bought 350,000 of them.

Mr. ROWELL: That would not be "of small value." On the suggestion of my hon. friend the Acting Minister of Trade and Commerce, I have added the words "or quantity," so that it limits the proviso in that way.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I gave a moment ago the precedent followed by the Department of Public Works. In the statutes it is provided that the minister cannot authorize, except under the Governor in Council's warrant, for unforeseen expenditure any expenditure over \$5,000 unless it is voted by Parliament. You mention a small expenditure without specifying the amount. I know the hon. gentleman would not spend thousands of dollars under that expression, but it is vague.

Mr. ROWELL: My hon. friend will see that it will be finally settled by a regulation under that clause.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Will the regulations be made by the Governor in Council?

Mr. ROWELL: They must be approved by the Governor in Council. That is provided for later on in the Bill. The commission when organized will have to take over all these branches one at a time in order to avoid congestion of its work, which will probably take six months, because the work must be carried on continuously—

Mr. COPP: Is not the system in vogue now?

Mr. ROWELL: No; all the commission does at present is to direct and supervise purchases; tenders must all be passed upon by the commission.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I understand the commission is now adjusting some of the old war contracts which the armistice terminated.

Mr. ROWELL: Quite so. I propose to add by way of amendment to subsection 1 this further proviso:

Provided also that pending the complete organization of the work of the commission, the purchasing for any portion or portions of the public service may be carried on by the responsible officers thereof under the direction and control of the commission.

That would facilitate the working out of the arrangements.

Mr. COPP: For what length of time?

Mr. ROWELL: It is not limited. There will be no objection to a limitation. It is intended to proceed with the organization just as rapidly as possible, and this amend-