

I was told that when the commission first asked for prices on typewriters, they received from all the companies the same price based upon the price for a quantity of ten. The commission protested against this and said that as the Government was a very large purchaser it was entitled to a further discount, and the commission were given a further discount of ten per cent which represents a very substantial saving. I was also informed that in their purchases of Kraft paper which are very large, they were able to buy it at ten per cent less than any one else.

With regard to boots, since the establishment of the War Purchasing Commission in May, 1915, over two and a quarter million pairs of boots have been purchased. When tenders were called in 1918, the boot manufacturers blamed the tanners of leather because prices had advanced so much, and they in turn, blamed trade conditions. By co-operation with the War Trade Board, a fair price for leather was arranged with the tanners; a fair price for boots was then arranged with the makers, and I give the House these figures as an instance of the work of the War Purchasing Commission in this large item which is much more important than some of the smaller ones to which they could not give the same attention. The United States' boots cost \$6.45 per pair as against our price of \$5.40 for Canadian pattern, and as regards British War Office pattern, the United States' price ranged from \$7.15 to \$9.05 per pair according to size as against our price of \$6 for all sizes. That demonstrates that the War Purchasing Commission have done a most useful service to Canada during the past few years.

Purchases amounting to \$200,000,000 were made or supervised by this commission, and the work they did must have taxed their time both night and day. From May 4, 1915, to May 31, 1918, the commission held 672 sessions, and they passed upon items which were entered on minutes, the minutes of those meetings numbering 22,610. From April 1, 1918, to the third week of February, 1919, they held 277 sessions, and they passed 15,000 minutes. The increase during the past year was due to the fact that there was placed upon the commission the additional labour of supervising purchases of all other departments of Government.

They were entrusted with making adjustments on \$8,000,000 worth of salmon that the Government took over, and they were successful in arranging a satisfactory price

[Mr. Harold.]

between the canners and the British Food Minister. They were also entrusted with adjusting the cancellations of \$8,000,000 worth of orders after the armistice, and they were successful in adjusting these cancellations on a compensation of less than ten per cent. They also had in hand the sale of surplus stores of the Department of Militia and Defence and the Department of the Naval Service. These articles which were left over after the armistice were disposed of by the commission, I believe, in a fair and a reasonable way. The commission also had charge of arranging the rates for the transportation of troops by rail. The first-class rate was arranged at one and one-half cents per mile where there were over 350 troops in the same train or being transported at the same time, and when there were less than 350, the rate was two cents per mile. The commission also arranged for the transportation of officers and men from overseas; the rate for officers averaging \$61, and for men \$35.

If any hon. member has any doubt as to the desire of the commission to carry out, in a businesslike, just and fair way, the policy of calling for tenders, he should visit the offices of the War Purchasing Commission and make personal investigations. I had an opportunity of looking over their files in which their tenders were recorded, the books and files showing clearly what each company bid, which tender was accepted and the reason for such acceptance. I have here, without any names, some facts that will demonstrate how this policy was carried out.

For example, this is a purchase of 200 sanitary flat-top desks of a certain adopted pattern. Twenty-four firms were asked to tender; eighteen replied, of whom fourteen quoted, the tenders ranging from \$9,900 to \$6,300, and the lowest tender was accepted.

This is a purchase of medical supplies. Sixteen firms quoted, the total of the highest tenders was \$1,969.50, and the accepted tenders totalled \$1,281.

This is a purchase of surgical supplies. Fourteen firms quoted, the total of the highest tender being \$2,098.30, and the accepted tenders totalled \$765.80.

Of another purchase of medical supplies seventeen tenders were received, the highest bids totalling \$4,069.68, and the accepted tenders totalled \$2,916.88.

On a purchase of drugs, seventeen tenders were received, the highest bids totalling \$7,593.85, and the accepted tenders totalled \$5,014.21.