

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I ordered a large number of extra thermographs and have given most positive and reiterated instructions to the officers in charge that no chamber shall be allowed to go without a thermograph in it. If it is there it will show the temperature, and we shall be able to know whether the fans are used or not. My instructions are plain and positive and I believe they will be carried out.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). I am glad to hear the minister say that. It has taken a long time, but at least we seem to be getting to the point where we may hope to get a good service and be able to carry our perishable goods across in good condition. If the people are allowed to know which vessels do carry cargoes perfectly, it will be a great advantage to the country.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. These thermograph records are posted on the board of trade of Montreal, and there the people in the trade who are interested can examine them and see for themselves.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). Do the steamship people, or those in charge in this country make every effort to resist the government—

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Oh, yes.

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth). It appeared to me that the fault lay with the officers in charge of the vessels.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I cannot say positively as to that. I would not like, without greater knowledge than I have, to accuse anybody. But the hon. gentleman can understand that a new system—for, though it has been working for a number of years here, it is still new to a great many people concerned—will not be worked perfectly for some time. But I am satisfied that the ship owners, and, as a general rule, their officers are desirous of carrying it out properly and are doing all they can to that end.

Mr. CLANCY. I am sure the committee has listened to the Minister of Agriculture with no small degree of disappointment. The hon. gentleman has been very profuse in his advertising, especially on the occasion of election contests, advertising the success of his department, and particularly of the cold storage. And now we have the deplorable spectacle of the hon. gentleman admitting that cold storage under his administration has been a dismal failure and that to-day it is worse than it was the day he took hold of it. Immense sums of money were voted by this parliament for cold storage. The hon. gentleman has abandoned the undertakings one after the other, and those systems that have been put in have turned out most unsatisfactory. My hon. friend from Wentworth (Mr.

Smith) has pointed out what seems to be a severe lesson to the hon. gentleman; I hope he will take it to heart, and I am quite sure the people of this country will take it to heart. He has pointed out that the cold storage system is a mere mockery, and there is no hope that it will be brought to a proper condition. It is used to-day for butter almost alone. The hon. gentleman stated on a former occasion that outside of poultry, meat and butter, the shippers would not pay the extra sum they were being charged for cold storage. The country has learned long ago that there was no such thing as cold storage in the sense the hon. gentleman speaks of; and after he has been nearly seven years in office, and after declaring that he had made it a perfect system, he is to-day compelled to come before the House and admit that his system is in a most deplorable condition. He has not said so in so many words, but he has disclosed the fact by his admissions to my hon. friend from Wentworth, who has gone somewhat thoroughly into this matter. I think this House would be prepared to vote any reasonable sum of money for a service of that kind. But the hon. gentleman has squandered thousands and thousands of dollars to no purpose. There seems to be but little hope that the hon. gentleman will be able to offer to the fruit growers and shippers of this country any relief from the present unsatisfactory condition of things. I do not know whether this committee would be justified in giving the hon. gentleman the additional sums of money that he is asking for. We had a cold storage service which was said to be very expensive, steamships were assisted by the government, but at the end of a three years' contract it has been abandoned. I want to repeat what my hon. friend from Wentworth has said, that there has not only been carelessness in taking a contract for so short a period as three years for so large a sum, but that during the period that contract was in existence there was either gross negligence on the part of the steamship companies or their officers, or on the part of the Minister of Agriculture in failing to enforce the conditions of the contract. I repeat that it is a dismal condition of things, and that we stand precisely where we were, if not infinitely worse off than we were in 1896.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I suppose the hon. gentleman is disposed to be a little facetious on this matter. I will not go into details, but I will only say that if he should to-day propose to the shippers of Canadian produce to return to the condition of affairs that existed in 1896-97 he would be met with a storm of indignant protests. I have before me a statement which was made by the chairman of the Home and Foreign Produce Exchange, Limited, of London, England, in which they state that two steamers which sailed from Montreal to London fitted with cooled air

Mr. SMITH (Wentworth).