

Mr. FOSTER. And my hon. friend has only to think for a moment to know perfectly well that his recommendation simply goes to the council of Ministers, and that the Ministers in Council decide whether his recommendation shall be carried out or not. That is not a contract under an Order in Council.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The hon. gentleman must not escape in that way. In the first place, he must know that no Minister of the Crown, with a proper sense of his responsibility would send a telegram of that character unless he had every reasonable assurance that his view was going to be concurred in by his colleagues.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend must know that I have been a member of a Dominion Government as long as he has, and that I have looked into these matters a little; and I say that the statement that a Minister will recommend a thing is not to be considered as an actual carrying out of the thing.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I hope not to make a statement in my official capacity that I will recommend a thing to Council, leaving another party to be led astray by my statement, unless I have the concurrence of my colleagues.

Mr. FOSTER. But an intelligent party will not be led astray by that.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. But when a gentleman in a foreign country receives a telegram from a Minister of the Crown stating that he is prepared to accept his tender if the details can be agreed upon, he understands that he is dealing with a responsible Minister, and that the Government of Canada will not, and ought not, to repudiate that undertaking.

Mr. FOSTER. Sometimes the responsible Minister makes a rash promise.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. On that point my hon. friend is speaking in the light of a very considerable experience which I have not had. But we need not discuss the question how far the Minister binds the Government, for my hon. friend will find that two days later there was an Order in Council, dated the 7th of January, whereby my action was confirmed, and that was eight days before Mr. Burland wrote this letter.

Mr. FOSTER. What is the order?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The hon. gentleman will find it on page 51. The Minister having reported the transaction, the order concludes as follows:—

The Minister, therefore, recommends, in view of such saving, that he be authorized to accept the tender of the American Bank Note Company, provided that the details of the contract can be arranged with the company to his satisfaction.

The hon. gentleman will find, therefore, that not only had I agreed to recommend the acceptance of the tender, but I had agreed to do so with the knowledge and concurrence of my colleagues, and it was put in the proper form and confirmed by His Excellency in Council more than a week before Mr. Burland wrote his letter.

Mr. FOSTER. Then, why on the 5th of April was it necessary to get an Order in Council to authorize the concluding of the contract?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Because it was exceedingly proper, when the details of the contract came to be arranged, that it should be submitted for the approval of His Excellency in Council. But, nevertheless, there was in the first place the acceptance of the tender by the Minister of the Crown, which a gentleman dealing with the Government, and especially a gentleman in a foreign country, had a right to accept as a definite statement of the views, not merely of the Minister himself, but of the Government for which he was acting; and then we have the report to Council, and the confirmation by the Governor in Council, many days before Mr. Burland sent this letter. But even if there had been no acceptance of the tender of the American company, I believe it would have been a scandal and a great injustice to have permitted Mr. Burland, after he had had a fair chance in a free and open competition to tender for the work, to come in afterwards and make changes in his figures. Let it not be said that the other parties were allowed to make changes. They were not allowed to change a figure or a line. There were statements in their tender which required explanation; the warning note of my Deputy Minister suggested certain things which had better be cleared up, and I took steps to have them cleared up; but the American Bank Note Company were not allowed to change one line or figure of their tender. They were asked to explain their statement in regard to the dies, and their explanation resulted in this conclusion, that while it was desirable that the work should be done in Canada, it was not desirable, for the sake of preventing 1 per cent of that work being done abroad, that we should pay \$153,000 of the people's money above a fair price. That is the whole story. We put the work up to public tender; we opened it widely to all skilled men to come in and tender; we accepted the tender of a responsible party, a tender which we were satisfied was made in good faith, and which we are satisfied will be carried out in good faith. We believe the work will be done no less excellently than Mr. Burland's work—and I am finding no fault with his work; 99 per cent of the work will be done within sight of the Parliament building, in a handsome structure put up by the American company,