

desirability of any such legislation, which would apply to people of other countries whose legislation is, perhaps, most favourable to contractors belonging to this country, such as Germans, French, Belgians, and other Europeans. Canadian contractors might also go into South America and make contracts for any public work. This Bill would apply to all these. It would also apply to contracts for locomotives, or materials for a railway, and to any contract which a Government might enter into for building a railway for which material could be got from a foreign country. Surely the hon. gentleman does not intend that his Bill should have a scope of that kind. He intended, perhaps, that the Bill should be allowed to go to committee, and that its scope should be limited to that class of aliens who reside in the United States. Legislation of that kind is exceedingly objectionable. We could not embody in a Bill passed by this House a direct statement singling out the inhabitants of the United States as against the inhabitants of any other country, and say that any alien from any other country in the world could enter into a contract in Canada, while an inhabitant of the United States could not do so. The policy of the Government, in reference to these matters, without any legislation at all, has been proved in the contracts which I myself have let on behalf of the Crown for carrying on works in certain portions of the country. I make it a condition that the labourers employed on these works shall be Canadians, or British subjects, or such labour as would be acceptable to the people of Canada; and I think that might be fully protected if left to the Government. The Government might also make it a condition that the parties tendering for any contract let by the Government should be British subjects; or, in awarding a contract, they might skip a lower tenderer who was an alien. They could regulate the matter in that manner, without the objectionable form of an Act of Parliament, by which aliens, no matter from what country they came, would be deprived of the opportunity of entering into a public contract of any kind with Her Majesty in Canada. There may be times when it may be requisite to enter into a contract with aliens, and it might be against public policy, and the interest of the country to deprive the Crown of the liberty to secure what might be a benefit to this country. Under the hon. gentleman's Bill, ipso facto, a contract with a foreigner would be void, and penalties would be attached to it. I know that the hon. gentleman has no other object in view than to secure legislation of a reciprocal character, applying to others the same measure that they apply to us; and his intention was solely to prevent citizens of the United States competing with contractors in this country, when the United States Government do not allow the

Mr. HAGGART.

same privilege to our contractors going over there. But that might be accomplished without this Bill at all; and I think the hon. gentleman should take the assurance of the Government that in any contracts which may be entered into, the Government can exercise the liberty of rejecting any tender which they think is not in the interest of the inhabitants of this country, by skipping a lower tenderer from the United States, and awarding the contract to a resident of this country.

Mr. CASEY. The hon. Minister of Railways has concluded with a very remarkable proposal. He proposes that the Government should do something which, under the Public Works Act, I do not think they can do—which they have always felt it necessary to give some technical excuse for doing when they have done it. He says it is open to the Government to accomplish the purposes of this Bill by passing over a lower tender put in by an alien in order to accept a higher tender put in by a Canadian, if they see fit to do so. That is how I understood him, and I was astonished that he should make that statement at the close of a speech which, in the main, tended towards opposition to the Bill introduced by my hon. friend from Glengarry. As to that Bill, I am sorry to say that we in this part of the House have only the face of the Bill to go upon, as the hon. gentleman's explanations were entirely inaudible here, although, from the voluminous nature of his brief, they were doubtless very valuable. The Bill, on its face, is a move in the direction of creating a new monopoly—a monopoly distinctly opposed to the public interest. We have already, I think, as many monopolies as the country can afford. We have a sugar monopoly, a cotton monopoly, a woollen monopoly, an agricultural implement monopoly, and so forth; and now, the hon. gentleman, a contractor himself, who knows the needs of that poverty-stricken class, who have not yet, apparently, shared in the benefits of the National Policy, wishes to create a monopoly for the Canadian contractor. Judging from the remarks of the hon. Minister of Railways, the hon. member for Glengarry must have said something about the Alien Labour law of the United States. That has no connection whatever with the subject-matter of this Bill. This Bill does not deal in any respect with the employment of aliens to work on contracts in Canada. It deals purely and simply with the letting of contracts. The question before the House is: Shall we limit the choice of the Government in letting contracts to such tenders as are put in by Canadians? I say that would be limiting the power of the Government in letting a contract, in a way that would be distinctly inconsistent with the public interest. It would mean that rings could be formed amongst Canadian contractors in the same way in which