

in that form? No one will contend that. We accepted the lowest tender that complied with the conditions.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Is it the fact that the minister made his purchase through Mr. Lewis of Montreal? Why did he not make the purchase direct?

Mr. BRODEUR. That is quite incorrect. There was no purchase through Mr. Lewis. Tenders were called for the construction of the vessel, and Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim were given the contract. My hon. friend says the correspondence shows that Mr. Lewis communicated concerning the money due to Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim. That may be true. It is quite the common thing for these firms to have agents in Canada, and Mr. Lewis may be acting for these people.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Taking the statement of the minister, it would appear that it was impossible for any firm in Canada to tender, and the vessel would have to be got from abroad.

Mr. BRODEUR. I say the vessel could not be built on the Great Lakes, for she had a draught of 18 feet, as against a depth of 14 feet in the canal and she was wider than the canal provided for. When tenders were called for it was open to the builders on the Great Lakes to tender, provided they could deliver the ship in Charlottetown. And we gave the builders in Canada a special advantage by providing that the vessel must be delivered in Canada.

Mr. REID (Grenville). The minister gives as one reason why this vessel could not be built on the Great Lakes the fact that her draught was 18 feet, which is four feet deeper than the canal.

Mr. SPROULE. Her light draught is 15 feet.

Mr. REID (Grenville). But there would be the same difficulty of passing her through the canal. Now, if one did not understand the conditions, he would have to admit that the minister was right and that the vessel could not be built on the Great Lakes. Let me tell the minister that there is a vessel running between Montreal and Quebec which has a greater draught than the depth of the canal, and yet she was built by the Polson works of Toronto. They first built the hull and took her down to Montreal without engines and boilers. Thus, her draught was only about 10 feet. Then the machinery was loaded on a vessel and went through also, and at Montreal they simply put the machinery into the hull. The machinists could work at Montreal as well as at Toronto when their work was inside the vessel. Whoever gave the minister information to try to let him out of the hole has merely put him in a worse

Mr. BRODEUR

position. For the vessel could have been built in Toronto and taken down in the way I have indicated, even if her draught had been 25 feet.

Mr. BRODEUR. Then, why did not they tender?

Mr. REID (Grenville). Because the minister changed the plans. The minister admits that he changed the plans. These people were ready to tender on the old plans, but when he changed the plans they could not tender, because they could not get her through the canals. The minister told us he had one of the best experts in the world to design this vessel. The minister told this naval architect what was required of this vessel—to carry freight and passengers, to break the ice and so on. On this basis the expert made up his plans. Yet he tells us here that he gives these plans to a gentleman named Captain Brown, the man who is running the steamer across from Prince Edward Island, and Captain Brown has full authority to change those plans and to do what he likes. After he has got his plans all ready, he hands them to the captain of a vessel who is not an architect, and tells him to go to England with them. When he gets to England, this captain decides that this vessel must be made just one foot wider and one foot longer. It seems suspicious that everything was placed in this man's hands. Does the minister say that if this vessel had been one foot narrower and one foot shorter she would not have been just as useful a vessel in plying between Prince Edward Island and the mainland? I would like to know if this vessel has been carrying a full cargo of freight and passengers all the time. As I have heard his officers state, the chief thing required in an ice-breaker is to run as fast as she can, a few miles an hour. Now, I do not think the people of Canada will believe that it is necessary to pay thousands of dollars in addition for a vessel to break ice, the speed of which is sixteen and a-half knots an hour, or seventeen knots. The thing seems absurd. I cannot understand why the minister did that thing. I think myself that the whole deal was arranged. Lewis, of Montreal, is agent for Vickers, Sons & Maxim, and the minister knows that it was not necessary for this firm to have an agent in Montreal in order to get this business from the government. The minister picks out one of the leading Liberals of the province of Quebec, a man who assists him with campaign funds, and the minister knows well enough that Vickers, Sons & Maxim had Mr. Lewis there for the purpose of a great big rake-off. The only excuse given is that the naval architect, a former employee of Vickers, Sons & Maxim, recognizes this firm and discards all the others. He discarded the firm that built