

long before, to always have the courage of my convictions. I do not believe that this thing is proper and I do not intend to support it, although, as I said before, it would give me the greatest possible pleasure to do so because it is placing an \$11,000 contract with a manufacturing concern within the limits of my own constituency.

Mr. KNOWLES. It is a contract given to Grits though.

Mr. PUGSLEY. What is the matter?

Mr. WILCOX. Give me time to make my statement. There may be an excuse for my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes, Victoria), in making this mistake. I do not pretend to say that it was deliberate on his part, because I can see the ghost of Sir Frederick Borden in this matter. The principles which have been adopted in this and other departments of the government for the last fifteen years, in my judgment are clearly manifest in this transaction. I received a letter a few days ago from a gentleman in Walkerville and desire to place an extract or two from that letter upon the pages of 'Hansard':

Walkerville, March 6, 1912.

Oliver H. J. Wilcox, Esq., M.P.,

House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont.

My dear Mr. Wilcox,—It has been mentioned to me that you are using your influence towards a reconsideration of the order recently given by the Department of Militia and Defence to the Ford Motor Company, of Walkerville, the idea being to have the order placed with a concern established outside your constituency.

I was at a loss to know, Mr. Chairman, where that information came from for up to that time I had made no reference to it whatever, but I learned from a party of gentlemen, one of them an ex-member of this House from Port Perry, where the agent who read this order hailed from, that when he got that order from the minister he started for Walkerville, or communicated with Walkerville, and told the motor company to keep the member for Essex quiet.

Mr. MCKENZIE. He reckoned without his host.

Mr. MACDONALD. How was he going to do it?

Mr. WILCOX. It is pretty hard to do it, because I am not convinced that this is a proper transaction. I desire to place another communication upon 'Hansard.' I want my statement with respect to this matter to be absolutely clear, not so much for the benefit of the members of this House, but for the benefit of my own constituents. In answer to the communication, an extract from which I gave to the

House a moment or two ago, I wrote as follows on March 8:

I have received your favour of March the 6th, and I beg to say in reply that I consider the only satisfactory feature in connection with the order given by the Minister of Militia to your agents for twelve automobiles to which you have referred, is the fact that these cars are manufactured in the constituency which I am at present trying honestly to represent. That fact alone may prevent me from opposing the transaction and the item will appear in the supplementary estimates to meet the expenditure.

In approaching the subject I absolutely deny that upon any occasion or at any time I have exerted an influence to have the order cancelled and placed with a firm outside my constituency.

This matter was brought to my attention by a series of questions placed on the order paper by the Hon. Charles Murphy, and in view of the well established custom there was no excuse whatever that I should not have been consulted so that I might have been acquainted with the facts, but I was not.

However, that is not here nor there so far as you are concerned; I will settle this point with the minister.

The next objection is that it has not been established to my satisfaction, and I can tell you to the satisfaction of all the members that have spoken to me upon the subject, the necessity of purchasing automobiles at the country's expense for a few staff officers and generals that are now drawing salaries ranging from \$3,000 to \$6,000 a year with expenses. While we are absolutely in accord with making all reasonable appropriations for the purposes of militia, and it is the prevailing opinion here that it is the colonels, the majors, the captains and the privates that are entitled to consideration, personally, I consider it neither sound public policy nor good common sense.

The objection is that the law strictly forbids a minister of the Crown to enter into a contract with an individual, firm or corporation for a greater amount than \$5,000 without calling for tenders, and in this case the minister did not consult his colleagues nor even the representative of the constituency.

From the Hon. Charles Murphy's question, I learned that the order was given to the Ford Motor Company for twelve touring cars at the cost of \$11,419.20. That would be \$951.60 each. I have received a telegram from Windsor which gives me the information that the standard price for this class of car fully equipped is \$800 f.o.b., Walkerville, so that the minister, without consultation with his colleagues, without consultation of the representative of the constituency, without application for tenders as required by law, has given to some person \$1,219.20 in excess of what should be paid.