

sessions have been long and very arduous, and that during the past eight months the conditions of urgency have been such that it was absolutely impossible to take up that general question in any effective way. The Department of Militia and Defence was, of course, never organized for the enormous work that is cast upon it at the present time. I have seen the officers of that department, especially the director of contracts, in a state of mental and physical exhaustion that was really pitiful, because of the tremendous amount of work imposed upon them. I have brought the director of contracts into my own office and asked him whether it would not be possible now, even under the stress of this war, so to reorganize his department as to safeguard the health of the men who are working there sometimes eighteen hours a day, Sundays included; and also more adequately to protect the public interest. But the difficulty has been that these men are absolutely submerged by the stress of work which is imposed upon them, and have no opportunity to reorganize their department. So it has gone on, and they have had imposed upon them not only the additional work caused by the furnishing of the supplies necessary for the Canadian expeditionary forces, but also the necessity of dealing with enormous contracts which the British, French and Russian Governments desire to place in this country, the inspection and arranging and handling of which cannot be done very effectively except through the officers of the Department of Militia and Defence.

### **Conditions in England.**

One can readily understand that persons may desire from time to time to practise fraud or impose exorbitant prices upon the Government through the very conditions which have arisen. I do not speak of that in a general sense, because I think that there are few people in Canada who would be guilty of anything so dishonest and unpatriotic. But we know that there are men who, even in time of war, will seek to make undue profits out of their business relations with the Government, even when all the people of the country are straining every effort and are inspired with the most patriotic desire to assist, and to sacrifice their own interests for that purpose. Let me point out to the House and to the country that this is not true of Canada alone; it is true