

37

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA,

COMMITTEE ROOM No. 301,

FRIDAY, May 4, 1917.

The Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts met at 11.05 o'clock a.m., the chairman, Mr. Middlebro, presiding.

The Committee proceeded to the further consideration of certain payments to the Canadian Vickers, Limited, for the construction of an icebreaking steamer (the *J. D. Hazen*) for \$998,583.

The examination of Mr. ALEX. JOHNSTON was resumed.

By Hon. Mr. Reid:

Q. Mr. Johnston, you were telling your story in connection with this case when we adjourned on Wednesday. Will you go on now from where you left off?—A. Just as the Committee arose, I had submitted that we had suggested to the Colonial Office our readiness to transfer this contract to the Russian Government.

By Mr. Devlin:

Q. What did you say the date of that letter was?—A. September 2, 1916. To that telegram as forwarded, there was a reply received in due time, under date of October 21, and the figures of the contract entered into between Vickers Limited in London and the Russian Government were conveyed to us for the first time. That was the first intimation we had as to what the figures were.

By Mr. Carvell:

Q. What is the date of that reply?—A. October 21, and the telegram intimated that the contract had been concluded in the early part of February, 1916, with Vickers Limited of London.

Q. Had we not better have the telegram? Is there anything in it that is confidential?—A. I pointed out the other day that the whole thing is confidential. I expressed a willingness—these telegrams were read here in full the other day; I am quite satisfied to read this one in full.

Mr. CARVELL: I think it would be much better.

By Hon. Mr. Reid:

Q. Is there anything in the cable referring to matters other than in connection with the ice breaker?—A. No, there is not.

Q. Then it is all right to read it?—A. (The witness read the cable of October 21.)

Q. What answer was sent to that?—A. That was received and the following answer was prepared and sent.

By Mr. McKenzie:

Q. What is the date?—A. October 21; it is in answer to our telegram of September 2.

Q. Last year?—A. Yes.