

ister or through parliament, until the matter has been settled by the board.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Not much.

Mr. ROBB. The minister is laying down the regulations. Suppose a horse takes the distemper in camp and when it returns home gives the distemper to other horses, have the owners any claim against the department?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I will refer the hon. gentleman to the legal lights on his own side.

Mr. KAY. I can support the statements of the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) as to the delay in paying for horses that are injured. I know of several cases that occurred in the last camp that were not settled for three or four months, in fact I had several applications made to me in that connection during the last election.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Not before the election?

Mr. KAY. Yes.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Then I can assure my hon. friend that it is a most serious reflection on my predecessor in office, a more serious reflection than I would make concerning him myself. I gave the department every credit for settling these claims expeditiously, and I am sorry to hear they were not.

Mr. HENDERSON. I certainly think there should be no red tape about the settlement of claims of this kind. In my part of the country the farmers freely loan their horses to the Missauga troop, and frequently the horses are returned injured and practically almost useless. I will cite a case which I think occurred about two years ago. A farmer lent his horse and it was returned to him injured. He made application for compensation through what he thought was the regular military channel, and was awarded \$21, I believe. He was not satisfied with that and I think returned the cheque to the late Minister of Militia. I took the matter up with the department and it resulted in \$130 being allowed for the horse. My recommendation in cases of that kind is to go direct to the department and get redress, because I find that the regular military channel for settling these claims does not seem to comprehend the value of a horse, or what the farmer is really entitled to. Besides I do not like the delays that occur in cases of the kind. My experience has been that the best thing is to go direct to the minister, and I have done so on different occasions.

And I would say for the former Minister of Militia that he was very fair; he did not hesitate to take the matter up himself and adjudicate upon it. Of course, I was

Mr. CARVELL.

particular to furnish him with statutory declarations and other evidence as to the facts. Then the award was made and the money paid. I think that is the proper way to proceed. When a farmer is good enough to loan his horse to a trooper and the horse is returned having caught the distemper and being made useless for the time, or injured, it is the duty of the government to give redress at once, so that next year when the troopers want to borrow horses they can get them. Otherwise the farmers will be very chary of allowing their horses to be used in this way. I trust a system will be adopted by which the farmers will not be put to extra trouble, but will get redress at once.

Mr. MACDONALD. I do not know whether it is under this vote that my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes, Victoria), made a purchase of automobiles. Some curious statements are made in regard to his action in making that purchase. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will be good enough to explain for what purpose he purchased these machines and whether they were bought by tender?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Any question the hon. member wishes to ask I shall only be too pleased to answer. I am not responsible for rumours. I have not time to read the papers, so know nothing of what the rumours are—and care less. I purchased twelve automobiles for the department. Our officers on their tours of inspection, travelling by train or stage, have to wait and often lose a great deal of time. They have to engage livery rigs to reach stations where they can take trains. We find that their time is more than five-sixths lost. We figured it up and had the advice of experts upon it. The cost of automobile travelling may be higher, by 50 per cent than the same work done by rail and stage, but we estimate that we shall do more than twice as much work. The world is going on and the department is not going to allow the little sentiment that is attempted to be created among farmers regarding automobiles to stand in the way of the effectiveness of its work. I hope our opponents will go on trying to arouse that sentiment, for the farmers appreciate automobiles, and many of them have them and know how they save time, which means money. So, the anxiety of certain gentlemen for the welfare of the farmers over these automobiles will be misplaced. We are going to do twice the work for half the money. As to the tendering, it is impossible to tender for automobiles.

Mr. MACDONALD. How much did they cost?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). They cost \$850 each, with extra tires and fittings.