

public beds in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia is open to those who have licenses from the Dominion Government to rake oysters. These public beds are being looked after and kept in order, and as far as possible improved, by Mr. Kemp, the advisor of the department in regard to oysters.

Mr. MACDONALD: By permission of the minister and the committee, I desire to call attention to another matter, as I was not here the other night when, perhaps, it might more properly have been brought up. I have a letter from a gentleman in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, who is interested in an account for food material supplied to Mr. Byrnes, steward of the Minto, on 24th November, 1913. The amount of the account is \$74.91, and the food supplies were procured to serve the passengers on the D.G.S. Minto. He was an official of the department, and it is stated in the correspondence that he gave bonds to the department that all these accounts would be paid. It is said that the bondsmen were John Messerny and Maurice Blake, of Charlottetown. I do not know what became of Mr. Burns, but he did not pay all the accounts, and they are still owing. The department said to those who supplied these goods: "You will have to go and collect the accounts yourselves." Subsequently, it appears that they said that they had so much money in their hands and they were making a pro rata division. These are the facts as they have been presented to me. It is hardly fair to people who supply goods to the Government steamers, in the belief that they are being supplied to the Government, and, therefore, that they have the Government to look to for payment should be told afterwards that the persons who purchased these goods, and who had all the ear-marks of purchasing for the Government, was purchasing for his own account, and when it turned out that he was financially embarrassed the Government would not see that the accounts were paid where the goods were actually furnished. I have read the correspondence and I think I am fairly stating the case. I would not ask the minister to give me an answer to-night, but if he has another item relating to marine matters I would like him to get the facts and let me know why it is that the parties who supplied goods to Government steamers are not able to get their money.

Mr. HAZEN: I think my hon. friend has stated the facts of the case correctly. This

man, however, was not an official of the Government. The Government made a contract with him to supply food to the officers and crew on board this Government boat. For a great many years a system prevailed by which the Government appointed a steward on a Government boat and the steward purchased for it, charging the accounts to the Government. It was found that that system resulted in a great deal of extravagance and a number of years ago a different system was entered into under which the Government made a contract with the steward who undertook to supply, according to a bill of fare that had been laid down, the officers and men at so much a meal. The Government, every year now, gives notice in the newspapers in the localities that the boat will visit that the Government will not be responsible for the bills contracted by this steward. In the first year or two of this new system these notices were not given and it was represented to us on a number of occasions that stewards got credit through representing that they were acting on behalf of the Government, and that they went away, or disappeared, or did not pay their bills and the people came and claimed these bills from the Government. I remember that when the first of these items was claimed, and before public notice was given in the newspapers, I got authority by an estimate in Parliament to pay to these people seventy-five per cent of their claims, it being felt that was a fair amount to pay and that they would have to forego any profit that they would have made. We then undertook to get bonds for these stewards. We found it impossible to get any guarantee

10 p.m. company to guarantee them.

However, they gave individual bonds. Mr. Burns gave the bond of two gentlemen resident in Charlottetown and when we demanded payment of the bills left unpaid there was objection made. Then we placed the matter in the hands of the Department of Justice and I understand that an arrangement has been come to by which the amount has been paid and it was distributed pro rata among the creditors of the steward. That is my recollection of the circumstances but I will endeavour to look into the case and see whether my recollection is absolutely correct or not. I have no doubt that in some cases people may have been deceived and may have thought that this Government was at the back of these people and was responsible. But in none of the cases where they claimed that, we found on investigation that the charges