

in the estimates and not subject to that restriction.

Mr. BORDEN: The terms of the statute would not have included these ships, they relate only, I think, to public works, and I am not sure whether it is a statute or an Order in Council.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think it is an Order in Council.

Mr. BORDEN: I think it relates to public works and would not include ships. But the late Government took the reasonable course of calling for tenders. It is exceedingly probable that that course would be adopted by this Government. We would have no disposition to depart from the usual practice. I am simply pointing out that there might be conditions which would make it undesirable to have the grant tied up in this way and also that when the grant was made on a previous occasion by the late Government no such condition was attached to it. Parliament placed the money in the hands of the Government in the expectation that they would deal with the subject in a reasonable way and the Government called for tenders. It is quite possible that these ships would be built in one of the Government dockyards in Great Britain. As to all these matters we must be governed by the experts of the Admiralty who know more about the construction of ships than any person in this country or any of the experts in the employ of this Government, and under these circumstances it would not seem to me to be a reasonable thing that it should be tied up in that way.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Has the Government been approached by some firms for the construction of ships?

Mr. BORDEN: No, there has been no approach at all except that in Great Britain, of course, my attention was directed to the fact that there are many firms over there capable of building the vessels, but there were no negotiations of any kind that took place. The Government are absolutely free to deal with the matter in such way as they may deem best in the public interest.

Mr. LEMIEUX: The reason I ask is that I saw in the morning paper the other day a statement that the Armstrong firm had approached the Government.

Mr. BORDEN: There have been no negotiations on the subject whatever.

Mr. MACDONALD: The motion of my hon. friend from Carleton simply asks that the principle of tender and contract for the expenditure of public money be recognized as a principle in this measure. I do not

understand that my right hon. friend the Premier undertakes to say that that principle should not be recognized. I venture to say that no responsible minister or Premier in this country would undertake to assume that position and if the Premier does not take that antagonistic attitude there is no reason why such a provision should not be put in the Bill, subject to such reservations, if there are any, as would enable the Government to deal with the particular cases. There is no reason why this committee or this House should accept any assurance from any government of any political party in regard to such a large expenditure and decline to put in the resolution authorizing an expenditure those wise restrictions which have long been settled under the parliamentary system. My right hon. friend tells us now, after six months of discussion on this measure, after prolonged interviews with the Admiralty, that he does not know whether the ships he proposes to build are to be built by tender and contract or not. His inquiries into the method of dealing with the building of ships have not gone so far that he is able to tell the House and the country how the ships are built by the Admiralty. It seems to me, that, since this measure has reached a stage where probably no further opportunity will be given to hon. gentlemen in this House to suggest any amendment that will be accepted, the Prime Minister is assuming a very great responsibility if he undertakes to say that he will not put in this measure these natural and proper safeguards in regard to tender and contract that ought to be found in regard to the expenditure of public money in every statute. If there are any exceptions that the hon. gentleman thinks can exist, let him put them in the clause but let the principle of expenditure by tender and contract be included in the Bill. My right hon. friend can draw a clause perfectly apt in every way to provide for any contingency which he might think could possibly arise in connection with Admiralty expenditure but I think he can hardly undertake at this stage, having regard to all the circumstances, to refuse to recognize in regard to this measure the principle of tender and contract with reference to expenditures.

Mr. CARVELL: I do not wish to enter upon an extended discussion of this as it is nearly one o'clock. There are many reasons which might be advanced why this should be adopted. Let me tell my right hon. friend one reason. He seems to be under the misapprehension that if this amendment were adopted he might not be allowed to make a contract with the Admiralty dockyards because possibly their tender might prevent it. There is nothing in