

being done was practically useless. Those were his exact words, and he stated that the minister went on with those works only under the flimsy pretext of employing soldiers. I think if my hon. friend is going to contend that a fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, he had better bear his own words in mind and start getting wise before he so greatly misquotes the words uttered by a responsible minister of the Crown last night. He certainly cannot find in the statement made by the Minister of Railways that these works were practically useless, and that it was a flimsy pretext to go on. What the minister argued was that while there might not be a pressing necessity for going on with this work immediately, in view of the fact that there were thousands of soldiers returning to Canada and looking for work and also a great deal of unemployment in the country, which might create a dangerous situation, he thought it best to go on with the work now instead of at a later date. I will leave it to the House if that is not a fair statement of the situation.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I do not wish to be unfair. Last night we were discussing the Trent Valley canal, and I read this in *Hansard*, page 3298:

Mr. Lemieux: How many ships passed through the canal last year?

Mr. J. D. Reid: I have not the record here. I have always been under the impression that the building of the canal was really throwing money away.

Mr. BURRELL: I think my hon. friend will recall the fact that (Mr. J. D. Reid) was referring to the Welland canal when making those remarks, and the point he raised in regard to the soldiers was on the Welland canal.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Yes.

Mr. BURRELL: And if my hon. friend will take the context of the Minister of Railway's remarks, I do not think he will find that the minister said it was useless, whatever objections he may have raised in regard to the Trent canal years ago, and I do not think my hon. friend can twist the statement of the Minister of Railways into a statement that the work was practically useless. I thought it worth while to refer to this, especially as the motives and results as regards the soldiers have been very frankly and fully stated to the House by the Minister of Railways.

Let me refer to another argument of my hon. friend, and one which seemed to me rather extraordinary. He asked: Is this

present commission necessary? Is it necessary to make what was a temporary body during the war, a permanent body now that peace has come? My hon. friend referred to the absence of British blood in his veins, but said in passing that he had that French logic in his anatomy that would make reason apparent in his argument. All I can say is that there is not much logic when my hon. friend says in one breath that the purchases during the war, which amounted to very large sums, made the creation of a commission necessary, because it protected the public treasury, and then at the same time argues that the commission is not necessary, because, apparently, the public treasury has not to be protected in times of peace. If his argument was true in times of war, it would, with the exception that there may not be so great purchases now, be equally justified in times of peace. My hon. friend seems to argue—and this is his main argument—that in some strange way we are smashing the constitution because a commission is being appointed to transact the business of buying the various departmental needs and requirements. He pointed out that under the old method there was governmental responsibility, ministerial responsibility, that the requisitions passed through several hands; that they were carefully scrutinized by the officials of the department, the deputy minister and so on, and that, therefore, there were all the necessary safeguards. Surely, my hon. friend cannot so misunderstand the purport of this Bill as not to know that the needs and requirements of the various departments for the requisitions that are put up will go through the same processes so far as requisitions go. As far as knowing what the actual needs of the department are, the department will be responsible, and those matters will be placed before the commission in the net result of a requisition for departmental requirements. The commission which has been established is not for requisitions; the responsibility for that is on the department, but it is for the purpose of putting in a business organization which will gather up all the multitudinous threads going through sixteen or eighteen departments where, perhaps, there may be seven or eight different experts or officers buying the same type of thing, into the hands of the central business organization which will be in touch with the whole of them. I cannot see what my hon. friend is afraid of in the way of responsibility. The minister will have to