

The provision of five per cent was put into the last Act after a great deal of consideration as a minimum return for the service rendered, but it was one which men of considerable experience believed to be unworkable.

He did not say he was one who believed that, but I know he was.

I can say that from that day to this the Purchasing Board has done its very best to place contracts on that basis, and has used every pressure that could be brought to bear in the form of patriotism and so on, but to date it has not succeeded in placing a single contract on that basis.

Thus ends the most fantastic political legislative pantomime that ever entertained any House. What a farce it was!

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Pressed on by a dutiful and loyal opposition which unanimously insisted that it should be done, and which carried it.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I called attention to that at the time. When a Government are seeking solely their own popularity the opposition are very likely to chime in and see if they cannot secure a share.

Hon. Mr. HORSEY: It is human nature.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Human nature, certainly. But it was utter, transparent nonsense. I opposed it with might and main. I do not know of anything I left out, but I did not paint it as bad as it turned out to be. Throughout the country resolutions were passed stating that a leader in this House had taken the side of the profiteers and condemning him as their friend. You can imagine what would have been said throughout the Dominion if this House had defeated the Bill. I ask the Government not to be guilty of that kind of conduct during war. It is not fit conduct even during peace. The Bill was just as cheap political trickery as you can imagine. Nobody doubts that Mr. Howe knew the proposal would not work. He knew it was politics and nothing else, and other members of the Government almost as experienced as he, and just as intelligent, knew the same thing. Now let us have an end of it.

Where are we to-day? As the Minister has said, this Bill provides that we can get rid of the Purchasing Board, as such. By that, I presume, he means we can attach it to this new ministry. I do not think it is intended to get rid of the board, for a tremendous organization has been built up.

Before proceeding further, let me pay this tribute to the Government. I think they appointed a good board. I do not know the third man, but I know Mr. Vaughan, and immediately upon his appointment I wrote to

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him and expressed my gratification as a Canadian. I think he is a competent man. Mr. Sherman is certainly competent, if he can give time to the work. The board is all right. Here it is, functioning with a very large organization. I presume the idea is to bring it under the Ministry of Supply. I think the whole thought in the mind of the judge was that these matters should be handled with a measure of independence from political control. I have no fear of political control where there is a real minister. Apparently everything said in support of the Defence Purchases Bill was a hollow pretence. We are getting right back to where we were before; the only difference is that this will come under another minister. If it is deemed essential to make the board a subsidiary of the new ministry, I would point out that you can never make its members civil servants. You can never make a civil servant of Mr. Vaughan, nor of Mr. Sherman.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Nor of Mr. Gravel.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Nor of Mr. Gravel. I compliment the Government on his appointment too. I do not know him personally, but I have heard him very well spoken of. So when this statute comes into force the effect must be to get rid of these gentlemen. They will not take their places as civil servants in a department. So I am somewhat mystified as to the purpose in view. I am the more mystified by Hon. Mr. Howe's statement that a War Supply Board is to be set up under the War Measures Act. In the name of reason, where are we going to end? Look at what we already have. There is in the Department of Defence the old purchasing organization, a very considerable one. I doubt that it has been reduced at all. The Defence Purchasing Board is another large organization, newly housed in a great building in this city. Now we are going to have a new ministry, and, fourthly, a War Supply Board is to be established under the War Measures Act. These boards will cost a huge sum of money. The Government must have the jitters.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: There will be confusion.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: What we want is one organization, as we had in the last war. There was a shell committee at first, and later this was merged with the Munitions Board, which purchased for Canada, the British Government and the Allies. This one organization, under an able business man, set a pace in the production of munitions, so that finally we were supplying about 45 or 50 per