

to-day discussed almost everything connected with the motion which was pending when he left, and which has been disposed of since, but he has said very little about his connection with those contracts for time fuses. He has not chosen to explain the circumstances under which the contracts were given. In fact, if I have understood him correctly, he has rather hinted that the contracts had been made without his participation. If that inference is correct, he has not explained to us how his signature and his approval is attached to them. The only reference which he made to the contracts was to explain why he had given them to two foreign firms, the information being that Canadian manufacturers had been urged again and again to enter upon the manufacture of fuses and shells and that they would not do so. He insisted that he was in a manner forced to go to the United States because the Canadian firms had been deaf to his repeated appeals in that regard. That is a matter for investigation. But, Sir, my hon. friend has chosen to go into other contracts—steel, boots, shoes, Colts revolvers, and so on.

I have to express my regret that he did not think it advisable to refer also to a contract which has been brought forward prominently in the press with regard to the disposal of small ammunition. It has been alleged in the press that his department has sold fuses and cartridges, manufactured by the Government for the benefit of the country, to a private firm. This matter is in the air to-day, it is demanding attention, and I am surprised that my hon. friend did not refer to it, since he chose to go into other matters than this one.

Sir SAM HUGHES: I shall be more than delighted, at any time, at any place, in this House or out of the House, if my hon. friend wants any data on that subject, to give him everything he wants.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: If that was the intention of my hon. friend, he has lost a fine opportunity of carrying it out. The information is desired not only by myself. The press has talked about it and has given the views of the community on the subject—not only the Liberal press, but the Conservative press as well.

Sir SAM HUGHES: I must say that I never heard of it.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: It may be; I assume that my hon. friend has not heard

it. At all events, if that is the case, he will have an opportunity of giving an explanation. At this moment I do not want to deal with the matter in any way; it is not fair for me, or for the hon. gentleman, or for the House, that the matter should be discussed to-day.

I regret that my hon. friend has gone into matters which will come before the commission. But one statement particularly struck me in the references made by my hon. friend, and with regard to it I think the House is entitled to some information. My hon. friend told us that it is not his intention to act as Minister of Militia pending this investigation, and that he is turning his department over to the Prime Minister. I should like to ask my right hon. friend the Prime Minister to inform us what is the exact condition of things—whether or not my hon. friend the Minister of Militia is still in the Government, and, if he is in the Government, why he is not administering his own department?

Right Hon. Sir ROBERT BORDEN (Prime Minister): The Minister of Militia is still a member of the Government. He has asked me to undertake the administration of his department while he is occupied with the investigation which has been granted at the instance of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. Has my right hon. friend concluded his remarks?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I have.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I desire to say that, with regard to the matters to which the right hon. gentleman has alluded, and which are now under investigation, the Minister of Militia and Defence has assured me that he not only desires, but intends that the investigation shall be full and complete to the end, and that he is prepared from now henceforth to place his time at the disposal of that commission in order that the most searching investigation may be made. I sent a telegram on Friday last to Sir William Ralph Meredith, which I communicated to the Hon. Mr. Justice Duff—I had heard that the commission had not been organized—desiring them to undertake the organization of the commission and to proceed with the inquiry at the earliest possible moment. I received a telegram in reply from Sir William Ralph Meredith, on Saturday I think it was, informing me that the commission would meet to-morrow and would then organize and continue the investigation