

Defence Production Act

Mr. Fraser: The minister said that under this bill the amount of tenders is \$50,000; is that right?

Mr. Howe: Yes—or perhaps I am wrong; I think it is \$25,000.

Mr. Fraser: Well, what is it?

Mr. Howe: I do not know, but if my hon. friend will read the bill he will find it. It is as much his duty as it is mine to read legislation we are discussing.

Mr. Fraser: The minister is trying to give me a lecture about something he does not know himself. He said at first it was \$50,000, and now he says he thinks it is \$25,000. During the last war I believe the contracts were \$5,000—at least they were at the first of the war. Was the limit raised at a later time?

Mr. Howe: The provision is that where tenders have been called and the lowest tender accepted the minister has the authority to sign a contract, without an order in council, up to the amount of \$50,000.

Mr. Fraser: Up to \$50,000?

Mr. Howe: Yes.

Mr. Fraser: Are these contracts going to be made on tender or will they be allotted?

Mr. Howe: That will be decided from time to time.

Mr. Fraser: If they are allotted will you guarantee the contractor that there will be a limit on the price he must pay for raw materials?

Mr. Howe: No.

Mr. Knowles: What is envisaged by the word "printing"? Will this cover stationery and printing for the Department of National Defence?

Mr. Howe: I hate to get annoyed, but a section of this kind has been in almost every act that my hon. friend has seen passed in this house.

Mr. Knowles: That still does not answer my question. I submit that if one of the purposes of this department is to provide supplies that the Department of National Defence may require, and if one type of supplies is printing, I do not see why we should circumvent rules and practices governing government printing already in effect.

Section agreed to.

On section 38—*Orders and regulations.*

Mr. Fulton: It will be noted that there is no provision in this bill, such as is usual now in bills giving emergency powers, providing for the tabling of orders and regulations

[Mr. Knowles.]

made under the statute. The minister has made certain concessions, I think in one and perhaps two instances, where the power to be granted was placed in the governor in council rather than in the hands of the minister, but there is as yet no provision in this bill governing the laying of orders in council and regulations before parliament. Therefore I intend to move an amendment to this section in exactly the same form as the amendment to Bill No. 24, the Emergency Powers Act, which was accepted by the Prime Minister. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra:

That Bill 77 be amended by numbering present clause 38 as 38(1) and adding thereto the following:

"(2) In respect of an order or regulation made under this act, the period for laying the same before parliament under section 7 of the Regulations Act is

(a) five days after the making thereof if it is made by the governor in council, and

(b) fifteen days after the making thereof in any other case,

or if parliament is not then in session, a like period after the commencement of the next ensuing session thereof.

(3) If the Senate and House of Commons within a period of forty days, beginning with the day on which any order or regulation is laid before parliament in accordance with subsection (2) and excluding any time during which parliament is dissolved or prorogued or during which both the Senate and House of Commons are adjourned for more than four days, resolve that it be annulled, it shall cease to have effect."

I point out that that amendment would incorporate as subsections 2 and 3 of section 38 the present subsections 4 and 5 of section 2 of Bill No. 24. It will be remembered that there was originally a limited provision for tabling orders in council in Bill No. 24, but subsequently an amendment was moved making it exactly the same as this one.

Mr. Howe: This bill is quite different from the Emergency Powers Act. The Emergency Powers Act was for one year, while this bill is for five years. This bill deals with materials and things. For example, if an order is passed about copper the industry would be entitled to believe that there would be some stability to the order. If it is to be subject to reversal by parliament on short notice, say of forty days, it might cause a good deal of loss to the industry. The Regulations Act provides that orders in council shall be placed before parliament and orders in council passed under this bill would be tabled as required by the Regulations Act. I think that is as far as we should be asked to go with this kind of legislation.

Mr. Fulton: The Emergency Powers Act provides for the passing of orders in council bringing into effect price control if and when considered necessary. Surely if the price of