

the purchasing agent of the department and failed, with the result that the department was able to purchase cheaper than the War Purchasing Commission did. When an analysis was made it was found that the prices paid by the War Purchasing Commission were for almost all commodities, higher. I know instances where local men were asked to give a quotation and their quotations were fifty per cent under the price that the War Purchasing Commission was furnishing to the department. I know of the manipulations that went on by the War Purchasing Commission to see that contracts were landed in the right centre. There will be under this system no direct responsibility and we must have responsibility when we are dealing with the administration of such large sums as this. I agree with the objection which has been pointed out by my hon. friend from Red Deer (Mr. Clark) on the question of responsibility. The minister of the department for which the purchases are made is not responsible and no one will care except the young purchasing agents who will make their millions out of it if they are permitted to go on long enough. One of the presidents of a large American railway corporation said: I would rather be president of the Inter-State Commerce Commission than president of the United States at \$750,000 a year. The gentleman who will get the management of this commission will consider himself one of the most successful operators in the Dominion of Canada. The whole thing is an attempt to get this Government away from its responsibility to the House, to the members and to the people and that is one of the things that I want to fight against. Let the members be responsible to the people who elect them and let the people hold the members responsible. I am not afraid of that responsibility in my county, I never have been afraid and I never had a bit of trouble with any one in connection with this matter. Let the members, for once in the history of Canada, hold the ministers responsible.

Mr. E. W. NESBITT (Oxford North): I am sorry I was not in the House when the minister who has charge of the Bill (Mr. Rowell) gave his explanation of the measure. I have been reading the Bill and I cannot understand the necessity for three commissioners to purchase the supplies for the departments of this Government. I will guarantee to supply them with a man who, if he is furnished with a good, clever stenographer and one or two inspectors, will pur-

chase all the supplies that the Government will require in a year and who, even then will not be any busier than the purchaser for any large institution in this country. Referring to clause 5, I find that the Governor in Council may appoint an officer to be called the director of the Purchasing Commission for Canada. What is he going to do? Is he going to direct the commission how to purchase? As I understand it, the deputy minister, or some other head of a department, may put in a request for supplies and the commission will purchase them. I suppose this director will direct them how to purchase the supplies.

Sir SAM HUGHES: And where.

Mr. NESBITT: And where. I do not know what else it can mean. I believe that under the present system there is a waste in purchasing for the Government departments. This will mean not merely three commissioners; a whole department will be built up with forty or fifty clerks, stenographers and so on. It will run into a department and a very expensive one. We want to economize. That is what we were told to do yesterday, and by the looks of the financial statement, it is necessary not only as a people but as a Government. I see no economy in this Bill as introduced. I am sorry I did not hear the minister's explanation for it. There may be a reason for it. I understand there is a great deal of waste in the purchasing of supplies by the different departments. This new department will require, I suppose, a lot of typewriters. There are plenty of typewriters in the different departments that are not in use, but this new department will not have any old typewriters; they will insist on having new typewriters, new furniture, new stationery, almost everything new, and they will not under any possibility gather up equipment that might have been used by commissions and departments that have been abolished. There is no necessity for waste in purchasing if it is properly conducted. Why we want three commissioners to do the purchasing when one man could easily do it, is more than I can comprehend; besides which there is to be another man who is to be called the Director of the Commission. I see no sense in the Bill at all.

Mr. G. B. NICHOLSON (Algoma): With the details of this Bill I shall not presume to deal at this stage, but dealing with the principle underlying the Bill, if I understand it correctly, it means the employment by the Government of a competent pur-