

look into, and especially my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Sir Thomas White) who is looking after the dollars. It is this: While we were on those plains, for about a month and a half, forty or fifty per cent of our men were taken away from the battalions daily by fatigues. These men were employed in building huts, digging trenches, constructing railways and carrying on great public works on Salisbury Plain and quite gladly and nobly they went to work and did their duty. We all believed we were doing our bit for the Crown, for the King, and we worked night and day struggling to get the camp into shape not only for ourselves but for Kitchener's army. We left greater monuments on those plains than did the Romans or the ancient Druids, that built Stonehenge, because we built railways and useful works of that kind that they did not know anything about. However, this is the point that I am referring to particularly: Our men received 25 cents a day from the English contractors, in addition to their pay, for working as they had done. When I had returned from the front and was in England, I ascertained that all the work that our troops had done there had been done for one or two English contractors and that the Government of this country had been giving these English contractors a free gift of virtually \$1.10 per day for thousands of men employed. I hope the Government will take that matter into consideration. I do not know that it has been made known to the minister but it is a very serious matter. The contractors who were paid for that work by the British Government should be made to make restitution to this Government the wages of the men who were employed there, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is quite clear, is it not?

That is only one example, but we must know that in times of war there are conditions under which contractors and grafters will try to get into the twilight zone between this and other colonies and the British Government. We must take very great care to see that contractors of that kind are not robbing this country or robbing the British Government. I say that unhesitatingly. There must not be any roses hung over the tables where contracts are being made between contractors and the Government. Everything must be open and aboveboard. The people of this country are desirous of doing everything in their power for the war. They

are giving their last dollar and their dearest sons to the welfare of the Empire, but that being the case we should make sure that no advantage is taken of the unusual conditions which prevail in war time. It must be remembered that they have rascals in Great Britain just the same as they have every place else. I was told that the Government had made an important contract with a German Jew for all the lumber that was used by the War Office in England, and that this man had got a commission and something like a million pounds. I understand that he was subsequently

punished. I trust that they now
4 p.m. have got him in the Tower or a concentration camp. Rascality of that kind must be stopped. Things like that have occurred also in other countries. In France much money was diverted by fraudulent contractors, and the same thing occurred in Russia, but that is all over now. The governments concerned took prompt action, and punishment followed. I trust that before this war is over steps will be taken to find out from the Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian forces how and why it was that our men were employed in that way, and why the money equivalent of their wages was not refunded to this Government. This is a very disagreeable thing for me to discuss, but it is one of the things that many officers and men asked me to take up when I came home. I could not, while wearing the uniform, say a word about it, because it was not my privilege until I spoke in the House of Commons. I have spoken of this question and I have done so in the hope that the Government will inquire into it.

After we had spent a certain time on Salisbury Plain we were sent to France. Within a few weeks after the time that we had finished the building of these huts we were taken to France. That was all right; we were anxious to go there. Would it be occupying the time of the House too much if I were to describe the trenches in France and various matters illustrating the life of our men at the front?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Go on; go on.

Mr. CURRIE: I do not wish to occupy the time of the House at too great length. Well, the troops went over to France. Some of you may have heard stories about our troops; it has been said that they were drunkards and all sorts of things. I can now state, for the information of the House, that eighty per cent of the men in my