

The minister says that we do not cast any reflections upon him. Of course we do not, but it does not necessarily follow, because we have every confidence in him personally, that everything in his management of public affairs was done in the best interests of the public. For instance, there was a most unfortunate condition of affairs in connection with the administration of the Seed Grain Act in former years. The Government, under the Minister of the Interior, set out to get the farmers seed grain at \$1.50 a bushel. It was sent out to all the different villages and some of them refused it; they would not allow it into the settlement because it had so many weeds.

Mr. ROCHE: That is not quite in accordance with the facts.

Mr. KNOWLES: It is true in one case to my knowledge. There are whole districts out West in which the farmers hold up their hands in distress because the homesteads on which they had worked so diligently are now full of dirty weeds. I do not blame the minister for that, but I am saying that we should have more information about these matters before we vote the money; otherwise, we might as well vote the money in blank. I may say that I never saw as poor a crop of oats as this year. I do not say it is the minister's fault.

Mr. BURRELL: The hon. member surely does not put that down to me?

Mr. KNOWLES: It may be due to something else, but still it may be due to rotten seed. I think this item should stand for further information.

Mr. MACDONALD: The House is certainly entitled to information as to what the Government paid with the seed, what they received back, and what the cost of depreciation was. Was any profit made upon this transaction, or was any profit sought? What was the cost of organization? These are natural and reasonable questions to ask in connection with a transaction involving the expenditure of this large amount of money.

Mr. BURRELL: We have not got all those details yet, as the whole thing has not been cleaned up. But I am in a position to say this: so far as the Government is concerned, we have actually made a little on the transaction, not that we wanted to make anything out of it, but by virtue of the fact of purchase and sale and the differences in markets, we have repaid every

cent of the money and have a balance in hand at the present time.

Mr. MACDONALD: I have asked the minister for information on certain points. Why does he not proceed to tell the committee on what basis these goods were bought and on what basis they were sold, and whether they were sold at a figure to cover the cost of purchase, cleaning and a profit besides?

Mr. BURRELL: They were sold at the cost of purchase, re-cleaning, bagging and shipping. No profit, of course, was made.

Mr. KNOWLES: Evidently the minister does not agree to let the item stand. I think it is an unfortunate position to put us in. I do not think we should have to ask that the item stand. It is only reasonable that the Government should be willing to give an explanation of these matters, even without it being asked for. The fact of the minister not agreeing to my suggestion that we should have fuller information before passing this vote is not at all to his credit. He says there is nothing to suppress. I do not say there is, but let us have all this information. The session will not be over for some days, possibly weeks, and there is no reason in the world why we should not be given this information.

Mr. BURRELL: I think my hon. friend has misstated me entirely. I have not the slightest objection to allowing the item to stand.

Mr. KNOWLES: Do you not think it is a reasonable request?

Mr. BURRELL: I am not disputing it. I have tried to give, and I think I have given, a fairly good explanation of the whole subject. As to giving all the details of the purchase and sale of this wheat, my hon. friend could not expect that information this afternoon, because I did not know this matter was coming up. I did not come here prepared with a lot of details, and my officers cannot be got. This subject could have been discussed pretty fully on my own Estimates when the seed vote was put through. I had a lot of information at that time, but I have not got it now, and I regret I am unable to get it. I have no objection to allowing the item to stand. I am always ready to give the fullest information on this or any other subject connected with my department. I do not care how much publicity we get; the more the better, as far as I am concerned.

Item stands.