

Whenever, in the case of any work, tenders are required to be, or are, invited, the minister shall submit all tenders received therefor to the Governor in Council and the contract for the work shall be awarded under the direction of the Governor in Council.

Now I take it that if the Department of the Interior wanted to call for tenders for this fencing, they would have to recognize that section of the Act passed during the present session of parliament. But what do we find them doing? Writing to a firm asking them for their figures regarding the building of this fence. The First Minister has not stated in his correspondence on whose recommendation it was that the Department of the Interior wrote this firm of McGregor-Banwell. That does not appear in the correspondence brought down. Mr. Speaker, in the correspondence he has given to the department, says he had nothing to do with it, the member for South Essex says he had nothing to do with it, either by recommendation or otherwise; but the First Minister has not given us the information. Now it would appear that the department wrote to the McGregor-Banwell Company to come to Ottawa, they come on the 18th, on the 19th they submit their figures; and could any one pretend to say that the Department of the Interior, after writing to this firm to come to Ottawa and submit their figures for the construction of this fence, and then afterwards advertising for tenders, did not intend to give these people some advantage after putting them to all the trouble of coming to Ottawa? Would it not occur to any reasonable mind that the object was to defeat this very section 2 of this Bill, because after getting this firm to come to Ottawa and getting their figures, they could give them this work to do, and by that means they would not have to submit this tender to the Governor in Council at all. So, coupling that with all these other mishaps that have occurred from the commencement, we are driven to the conclusion that the Department of the Interior intended to do something crooked in the transaction. I think there can be no doubt about it, because Mr. Speaker has been misled, the figures in the estimates contained a mistake, and we are confronted with mistakes on every hand. In fact, there are more mistakes in connection with this transaction than in any other transaction I have heard of in this House for many years.

An hon. MEMBER. And a mistake in the 'Hansard.'

Mr. INGRAM. Yes, the 'Hansard' mutilated, I must include that too. Taking all these things into account I am sure the First Minister will not condemn the members of this House when we say that this transaction is a very crooked transaction, it does not show very well up to this moment.

Mr. INGRAM.

Now, when these Bills were before this House, I took occasion to ask if the amendment introduced by the Minister of Justice was intended to interfere with work done in different counties of the Dominion, on harbours, for instance, where they are not going work under contract, where they are not recognizing the Order in Council requiring that contracts over \$5,000 shall be given by contract, because there are hundreds of thousands of dollars expended to-day throughout the country on works not given by contract, done by day work and otherwise; and I think we have a right to assume that the Department of the Interior fully intended to get around this section 2 by simply communicating to this firm in Walkerville and having them come here and give their figures, and then having this money voted through parliament, after which these parties would receive the work of constructing this fence at these enormous prices. If they intended otherwise, what would they have done? When, on the 4th of January, 1905, the Minister of the Interior intended to have this work done, he would naturally have called for tenders, he would have advertised or have instructed his department to advertise, so that tenders could be offered by different parties manufacturing wire fencing, and then he could have got his figures in, he could have submitted them to the Governor in Council as the Act requires, and the transaction would have been perfectly straight. But he has not done that; and I repeat that coupling together all these mishaps that have occurred, the whole thing seems to me to be a very crooked transaction indeed.

Mr. COCKSHUTT. This subject appears to be a very unfortunate one in respect to blunders. Now I wish to press further the question I raised yesterday, and which has been touched upon to-day by the member for South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) and the member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), that is with regard to this being a boundary fence between the United States and Canada. I have not been able to hear the Prime Minister very well to-day, but from what I understood him to say in reply to the member for South York, no correspondence had been held with the government of the United States in regard to this boundary line fence. If that is the case, I think it is a very unfortunate circumstance. We all know what boundaries mean, we all know they are more fruitful of discord among friends, discord among neighbouring farmers, and discord among those who own territory alongside each other, than any other thing that can be mentioned. Now it appears no ordinary precaution has been taken.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. This fence, I may tell my hon. friend, is not intended to be a boundary fence, it is not to be placed upon the boundary line, but is to be erected 100 feet from the boundary line.