

porter of the hon. gentlemen opposite disappears in the early part of March as soon as information is obtained from the Department of Justice that there must be due advertisement for tenders. Not only is this company deceived, but the hon. Speaker of this House, representing the constituency in which I suppose this company carries on business, is also misled by the Department of the Interior. Why was he not acquainted of the facts when he had taken the trouble to go to the Department of the Interior and afterwards, as his letter shows, to send his secretary to the Department of the Interior? Why is he placed by the Department of the Interior in the position of giving incorrect information to one of his constituents? It seems that the circumstances are absolutely unusual and peculiar and we cannot get rid of the impression that in some way the Department of the Interior intended to carry out its proposal in this matter in such a way that there would be no public advertisement and tender after all, and that the matter would be dealt with so that the interests of supporters of hon. gentlemen opposite would be regarded in the letting of this contract rather than the interests of the people of this country.

Mr. A. E. CLARKE. I wish to say a few words in this matter. I had not the pleasure of being in the House yesterday, and was very much surprised this morning when I found certain statements reported in 'Hansard.' The first is contained in a letter of April 18, 1905, addressed by the Page Wire Fence Company to the Hon. H. S. Clements, one of the members of this House. This letter says:

We take the liberty of writing you regarding this matter, as our two members from the Essex riding are friends of the McGregor, Banwell people and we have reason to believe they were instrumental in putting the deal through.

I wish to say in answer to that, as I am one of the members for Essex, that I never heard of the deal until I saw a report in the newspapers this morning. I did not know whether application had been made by the wire company or had been granted and this is the first I heard of it. The entire statement is groundless. I was more surprised, however, to see a statement of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) which I would ask him to explain. It is to be found at page 5789 of 'Hansard.' He says:

Politicians in that part of the country seem directly interested in the concern that is furnishing the wire.

I would like to know what the hon. member means?

Mr. SPROULE. I do not think I made the statement that way. If I did I certainly did not intend to, but I do not think I made it. I was referring to the connection of

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

the ex-member for the riding. Mr. McGregor and his family with this fence company, as I know they are connected, and with other attempts to operate in the west in connection with the late Minister of the Interior.

Mr. CLARKE. I am satisfied with that. I wish to say that I am not interested in any way.

Mr. SPROULE. I had no intention of insinuating that the hon. member was connected.

Mr. CLARKE. Nor I think is any other member of this House.

Mr. SPROULE. No.

Mr. CLARKE. I wish to say in regard to these people that they are a most reputable firm. They are friends politically, but the Page Wire Fence Company is also a reputable company and its Canadian officers with whom I am acquainted are also friends of this government, the majority of them, I believe being Americans.

Mr. H. S. CLEMENTS. As far as I am concerned personally, I am very glad to hear the explanation of the hon. member for South Essex. With regard to the correspondence, I must explain that it was placed in my hands, and as a member of this House I was in duty bound to bring it before the House, and I am very glad I did bring it up. I am free to say for the information of the government that we had men in the House yesterday who were familiar with the building of fences and they stated that a wire fence could be built for \$125 to \$150 a mile, and I was surprised to hear a statement from the minister that this contract is costing \$550 per mile.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. There is no contract.

Mr. CLEMENTS. I think it is something well worth looking into.

Mr. EMMERSON. There was no contract given.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Is there a price given?

Mr. EMMERSON. The hon. member says he was surprised to hear from the First Minister that the contract given was to cost \$550 per mile. I do not think it is right to have a statement of that kind go without explanation.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance). There are fences and fences, and it is not the case, I imagine, that all fences are of equal value. I am not so familiar with fences as some of my hon. friends opposite. I am not in the habit of sitting on fences.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Oh, William.

Mr. FIELDING. I am not so well informed. But seriously what I wish to point