public tender. 3. The price paid the contractor was at the usual rate paid by the department for work of that kind, namely, $8 per hour actual working time. The contractor worked from the 29th June to the 26th November, dredging 37,214 cubic yards, the cost per cubic yard being 14½ cents. 4. W. E. Phin, Brantford, Ont.

Why does not the Minister tell us the reason that these dredges only got out slightly over 500 yards per day, when he says they should have got out 700 or 800. It was only a supposition that they should do that much work, because, as a matter of fact, Mr. Phin got $8 an hour of ten hours a day for putting out slightly over 500 yards. If the Minister (Mr. Tarte) cannot set up any better defence than that made by the hon. member for Yarmouth (Mr. Flint) he will have some difficulty getting his estimates through this House.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS. How does the hon. gentleman (Mr. Clancy) figure that out?

Mr. CLANCY. Mr. Phin was paid $8 an hour for ten hours a day, and the work done according to the statement of the Minister amounts to 14½ cents per yard. The number of yards taken out was 37,214 and the sum paid $5,310.26, which is over 14 cents a yard.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. What I said and what I meant to say was that the dredge had a capacity of between 700 or 800 yards, but any man who has experience knows that a dredge does not do the same work every day. One day a dredge would do a great deal of work, but the next day when it got to more difficult material it would do less. I think my hon. friend will agree with me that 14 cents a yard is not a very high price. He will remember that the Connolly contract in Quebec was 35 cents a yard, and 14 cents is very cheap.

Mr. CLANCY. What did Murray & Cleveland get?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. They got 12 cents a yard.

Mr. HAGGART. And it was a very good price for that sand dredging. It does not cost more than 10 cents. Does the hon. gentleman say that the late Government built the St. John's custom house by day's labour?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Yes.

Mr. HAGGART. The Minister is mistaken.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I am not mistaken.

Mr. HAGGART. The St. John Custom House was burned and the Minister brought down an estimate to the House of the amount that would be required to repair it. The chief engineer of the department furnished an opinion to the Minister which he read in the House, to the effect that is was impossible to know exactly what work would be required and to draw out specifications of the work to be done. When he got his vote, he said that he intended to repair the walls and put a roof upon the building by day's labour.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentleman's Government spent $74,983 in 1889-93 by day labour in St. John.

Mr. HAGGART. He got the authority from Parliament.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. But he did it by day labour.

Mr. McDOUGALL. But not until he got the authority of Parliament.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. In 1893-94 the late Government spent $113,000 by day labour again on the same building, and I have here a complete list of all the work done in the past by day labour. Hon. gentlemen opposite carried out works by day labour to a much greater extent than I am doing.

Mr. McDOUGALL. The hon. gentleman must remember that this precedent does not apply. In the case of Toronto Harbour, he was bound by statute to let that work by tender; whereas in the case of St. John's, before a dollar was spent on day labour, special authority was got from Parliament, and that authority was given because it was found impossible to make an approximate estimate of what it would cost.

Mr. SPROULE. The defence of the hon. Minister is that he has followed the precedents set by the late Government, and does not defend the principle. But when in Opposition he condemned that practice, although now in power he follows it. Two wrongs cannot make a right. If the practice was a bad one under the previous Government, it is equally a bad one now.

Mr. CAMPBELL. What about those who justified it in the past?

Mr. SPROULE. We are now dealing with the present, and if the practice was wrong in the past it cannot be justified now. With reference to what was said by the member for Yarmouth, it is evident that a man which is not possessed of the knowledge requisite to do certain work successfully, is not likely to be the best man to do it. The hon. Minister says that he did not know whether Mr. Phin had the dredging plant or not, but we have heard it over and over again given as a reason why lower tenderers were passed over and the contract given to higher tenderers, that the parties who put in the lower tender had not the plant or experience to warrant the belief that they could do the work successfully and the Government were afraid that they would be obliged to take the work off