

WAGES ON PUBLIC WORKS UNDER CONTRACT.

Mr. TAYLOR (for Mr. Coatsworth) moved :

That it is expedient to insert in every contract for any public work made and entered into hereafter, a clause requiring the contractor to pay the workmen engaged upon such work a rate of wages at least equal to the current rate of wages paid in the locality where such work is being done, at and during the time such contract is being carried on.

He said : I would like to add this addition to the motion :

Unless the Minister with whose department the contract has been made shall for special reason relieve the contractor from the observance of this clause.

Mr. Coatsworth wrote to ask me, if those motions came up before 6 o'clock, to move it with this amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER. I desire to point out to the House, that, as this is a motion that is likely to elicit discussion or to be opposed, of course it cannot be moved by any other than the hon. gentleman in whose name it stands.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. It had better be dropped for the present.

Motion dropped.

TARIFF COMMISSION.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell) moved for :

Copy of the evidence taken by Mr. Payne as secretary to one or more of the Ministers acting as a Tariff Commission.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I hope the hon. member will not ask the House to adopt a motion ordering a Minister's private secretary to send in a copy of his evidence, or a Minister to produce a copy of any document taken by his private secretary which is not for public use. There are two or three objections to the motion which I will state, and I hope the hon. gentleman will then see the propriety of withdrawing it. The first is that Mr. Payne took no evidence.

Mr. LAURIER. That reason may dispense with all the others.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. But there are still stronger reasons. The second is that there was no Tariff Commission; the third is that the notes taken by Mr. Payne for the information of the Minister, have been stolen; they are not accessible even to the Minister himself.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). When I used the words, "Tariff Commission," I think I used a phrase that was used by the Ministers themselves, if I remember rightly by the

Mr. HAGGART.

Minister of Finance. Perhaps it was a clerical error.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. It was borrowed from this resolution.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). No, it was not borrowed from the resolution, because it preceded the resolution, and, being prior in point of time, it could not be a consequence of that resolution. Now, the Ministers told us that they proposed making an inquiry, they purposed taking evidence, and after the inquiry was made and the evidence was collected, they purposed submitting to the House the result of those inquiries. After submitting to the House the result of those inquiries early in the session, they have seen proper since, for some reason or other—in consequence of new light, it may be, that hon. gentlemen have had—to depart very widely from what was proposed as a consequence of those inquiries; and so the House have had, up to this time, no opportunity of judging, either as to the propriety of the conclusions at which the Ministers first arrived, or at the propriety of the important modifications which have since taken place; and the right hon. First Minister will see that my motion was, under these circumstances, a very proper one. The right hon. gentleman says that there was no commission. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to stand on words and phrases; there was an inquiry, and so I am quite ready, if the Minister will consent, to alter the motion in that particular. The right hon. gentleman, however, has made a further statement, and that is that the information so collected is no longer in possession of any Minister of the Crown, that some ardent friend of the Administration has got possession of it, and has forgotten to return it again. Well, under these circumstances, of course, I could not think of pressing my motion. I do not look for impossibilities from the Government; I made what I think was a reasonable request, that the House were entitled to have the information that was collected in order to enable it to arrive at a conclusion, which might not, perhaps, be the same conclusion at which the Government have arrived, or if they did come to that conclusion, they might not be disposed to follow the Government in the very wide departure that has since taken place. However, after the Minister's declaration, and the assignment of his reasons for thinking that my motion ought not to pass, I have no disposition to press it further. The three reasons assigned by the hon. gentleman remind me very much of an ancient specimen of pleading, where the article was never in the possession of the party, where it was returned, and where it was damaged when it was received, and whole when it was returned. I sympathize with the Government in the misfortunes that have overtaken them.

Motion withdrawn.