

adopted by the country is that every man has a right to tender for a large quantity of work like that in question, and if a particular individual can do it more cheaply than others, he has a right to obtain the contract. The principle is embodied in the Order in Council and in the statute, the latter of which makes it declaratory as regards works exceeding a certain amount. Certainly the Order in Council applies to work involving an expenditure of \$20,000, and I suppose the work altogether will reach from \$75,000 to \$100,000, and there the principle is laid down that if the work exceeds a certain amount, tenders must be asked for and the contract given to the lowest tenderer.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. My hon. friend is altogether wrong when he says that some of the dredging work in Toronto harbour in past days was carried out by contract. Murray & Keefer had a large contract, not for dredging alone, but for building two large dredges. The work was given out by contract. But if the hon. gentleman will go back to past days he will find that under the late Administration a great deal of dredging was carried out in the same way as I am now carrying it out. We simply dredged the channel in Toronto harbour, and that could not be done by contract. The channel is filling, and Mr. Temple, an experienced officer, has charge of the work. I take issue with the hon. gentleman as to the question of principle. I say that public works are often better executed when carried out by day's labour than by contract, especially when there is an able engineer to superintend the work. That is obvious, for the engineer has no interest in making money out of a contract, but seeks to gain a reputation for himself. The labouring classes have approached me on several occasions already and asked me not to give out work by contract when it can be done by day's labour, and the labouring classes have to be taken into consideration. Starting from that standpoint, I say that whenever I find a work can be better carried out by day's labour than by tender and contract, I will adopt the former method.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). Does the hon. Minister lay down that as a principle for his future guidance?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. No.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). Will the hon. gentleman do so when he finds it better, in his own judgment, that it should be done by day's labour?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I would not say that by my judgment alone. The hon. gentleman is aware that an Order in Council was passed in 1880, which compelled the Minister to go to Council when he wants to do work by day's labour.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. Minister says he is doing this work by day's labour. Is he doing it by day's labour?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. No.

Mr. FOSTER. That was the argument, however, the hon. gentleman used. The hon. gentleman now has spread himself on the broad bosom of the labouring class, as if he were conferring some great favour on that class. They have nothing to do with this work. What are the facts? The hon. gentleman had \$20,000 for dredging.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Not for dredging alone.

Mr. FOSTER. How much for dredging?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I observe from my notes that the whole dredging was to cost about \$24,000 on the several works.

Mr. FOSTER. Then, the whole dredging work was to cost \$24,000. What would seem to be the plain duty of the Minister under the circumstances? It was not an expenditure of \$5,000, but a work involving an expenditure of \$24,000. If any work was contemplated to be covered by the Order in Council, it was such work as this. The hon. gentleman did not call for tenders, but he hunted up some of his friends. Did the hon. gentleman give several of his friends the option of doing this work and ask them for their figures at so much per hour?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentleman has lost sight of the fact that in Toronto harbour we have not a straight contract for dredging to give out. We had certain dredging requiring to be done, work running over a whole season. The channel is filling up, and there is a certain amount of dredging to do to keep it clear. This could not be given out by contract; it belongs to a different class of work. When I spoke of \$24,000, I referred to the whole cost of the work.

Mr. FOSTER. We agree, at all events, that this is not a straight contract. The hon. Minister says he is doing it by day's work rather than by contract.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I am doing it by contract.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. Minister states in one moment that he is not doing it by contract, and another moment that he is doing it by contract. The hon. gentleman has, however, entered into a contract with one man, and he did not call for tenders. The hon. gentleman has violated the spirit in which public works have been administered in this country for many years in not asking for tenders and not carrying the work out by contract. When the work reaches \$5,000 the Minister has to go to