

office. He must remember that he is only, after all, a servant of the country, and that a poor Conservative has as many rights as any man in the community. The hon. gentleman appears to think that he is in the Cabinet for the purpose of protecting the rights of Conservatives. He is there to carry out the law, and not to do extensive work of this kind by day's labour. The accusation was made against the late Government that works of this kind were used as a means of corruption. We did not do work by day's labour if we could possibly avoid it. When the hon. gentleman has been longer in office, he and his colleagues will find that the proper course to pursue is to carry out public works by contract, and that a system of favouritism is injurious to themselves and to the country. The hon. gentleman, if he expects to get large votes of this kind passed by the House, must promise that when it is possible to carry out the work by contract, it will be done according to law and as the Order in Council directs.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentleman is evidently losing his memory, and I observe that hon. gentlemen opposite seem to be losing their memories daily. At Kingston during the last ten or twelve years the late Government spent between \$6,000 and \$7,000 a year in day's labour on work of the very same kind that we are now carrying on. If I were going to give a list of all the work done by day's labour by the late Administration, it would be a long list. In New Brunswick, right under the eye of the watchman of hon. gentlemen opposite, the ex-Minister of Finance, there have been hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on day's labour without tender and contract. The customs house at St. John cost \$200,000 by day's labour, and yet hon. gentlemen opposite rise in indignation and state that I am doing a wrong act. I am doing just what it is necessary to do. If we had enough dredges I would only be too glad to work them, but not owning dredges I do not find any better mode than the one followed by the late Government.

Mr. FLINT. I charge the hon. gentleman (Mr. Haggart) with evading the great issue which was raised in this debate by the hon. member (Mr. Sproule) and the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy). Why should we get down to the paltry question as to whether this work should be let by contract or day's labour, when these hon. gentlemen raised the great issue as to whether the contractor was a tailor, a tinker, or a painter?

Mr. SPROULE. Not at all.

Mr. FLINT. That is the great issue before us and the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart) should not draw away the attention of the House from that important phase.

Mr. HAGGART.

Another great issue raised by these hon. gentlemen was that the Minister of Public Works, before accepting a tender, should know all about the man who tenders, not only his occupation in life, but as to whether he owns the plant or not. The emphasis with which the hon. member for Bothwell dwelt on that point shows the importance which he attaches to it, and I trust the committee will not be drawn away into side issues by the ex-Minister of Railways. As to whether this work should be done by contract or day's labour, the answer of the Minister (Mr. Tarte) will suit for the present, for if any great reform is to be introduced in the prosecution of public works it should be settled by formal resolution of the House, so that the whole question can be considered in the light of the history of the past and the practice of the present. The Minister has stated that this work has been done according to the practice in vogue when he entered office, and the hon. gentlemen opposite should be the last to make any criticism in that respect considering the large number of bad examples they have given, despising the very noble and exalted principles just announced by the ex-Minister of Railways.

Mr. CLANCY. We are obliged to the hon. member (Mr. Flint) for lecturing us, but I think the House will conclude that he knows as much about this question as he does about Yarmouth bloaters. The fact is that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Flint) has been asleep and he does not know what has been transpiring. The Minister of Public Works has not answered the question raised by us when we charged him with not being able to give any reasons why he departed from the rule of letting this work by tender. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Tarte) laughs, but his laughs and sneers do not answer the question, and they do not go for much in this House. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Tarte) stated this afternoon, as recorded in "Hansard," that these dredges were supposed to do 700 or 800 yards a day for the \$8 an hour. Let us see what answer the Minister previously gave to a question of this kind. On the 14th February last, page 502 of "Hansard," Mr. Clarke asked:

1. What sum was expended by the Government in 1896 and 1897, respectively, for dredging in connection with the works for the protection of Toronto harbour?
2. Was the work of dredging awarded each year by public tender?
3. What was the price paid per yard for dredging in 1896 and in 1897, respectively?
4. Name and address of the person or persons by whom the work of dredging was done in each year?

And the Minister of Public Works answered:

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS (Mr. Tarte). 1. Nothing expended in 1896 for dredging in Toronto harbour. In 1897 the sum of \$5,310.26 was expended. 2. The work was not awarded by