

because if not, although he may put up a deposit, the Government may expect trouble; therefore, they would not be justified in giving a contract to that man. Now, can it be expected that a tailor or a painter is fit to take charge of a dredging job the same as a man who has been at it for a lifetime, or a judge, as in the Owen Sound case, or a lawyer who has never done anything in that line of business, or a doctor, as in the case of Dr. Horsey, whom I know very well, a very respectable man, but who has no knowledge whatever of contracting? This gentleman would not pretend to do any work of that kind were it not for the fact that his friends were in power, and he seems to have some pull which the Conservatives have not who own that dredging plant. Therefore, the plant passed to him, though at a reduced value, and the others who owned that plant are obliged to part with their property at a reduced value because they could not get the work. I say that is not fair. I do not mind any party favouring their own friends, other things being equal; but when they use the public money for the purpose of helping their own friends, without satisfying themselves that the parties who get the work are able or likely to do it satisfactorily, then the Government are acting on a very unsound principle.

Mr. McCLEARY. Not only can it be truthfully said of the Minister of Public Works that he is a modest man, but he is also a courageous man; because if he happens to do something in the interest of the public he takes credit for it, and when he does something that is questionable, he says he will do it again. This matter of the Toronto dredging is a subject that has created a good deal of interest in Toronto, among both Conservatives and Liberals. I am satisfied that if the Minister of Public Works will refresh his memory, he will find this matter has been before him on more than one occasion. He says he is short of dredges; I say he is a little short of memory this afternoon. From what I can learn of this transaction it stands in this way: Mr. Phin, who was a political friend of hon. gentlemen opposite, looking for some assistance from his party, thought that he ought to get the job of dredging Toronto harbour. Under the late Government that work was always done by contract, Murray & Cleveland having done the work as being the lowest tenderers, for years. Mr. Phin, who knows as much about dredging matters as a pig does about astronomy, as the saying is, gets a job for dredging Toronto harbour and is paid at the rate of \$8 an hour for his dredge. It costs him to hire his dredge \$19 a day, and I am informed that he netted every day last year something over \$30 for himself personally, although he knew nothing about the work. Now, with regard to the Minister's memory again. When he says he has received no communication from

other parties that they would do this work, I think he must have forgotten the fact, and if he would leave this item over he would be able to refresh his memory.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. My officers here say they have not received any communication; I have not received any to my knowledge.

Mr. McCLEARY. Then there must certainly be a misunderstanding somewhere. Of course we have to accept the Minister's statement that he has not received any letters from any party offering to do the work.

Mr. SPROULE. Would the Minister tell us how many cubic yards they took out in Toronto?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Last year they took out between 700 and 800 yards a day; this year the dredge is of larger capacity, and they are taking out between 800 and 1,000 yards.

Mr. SPROULE. There is a little device that dredging men sometimes resort to whenever they want to show a good number of cubic yards taken out. When they get in a soft place they dredge down deeper than is required, and when they get in a hard place they do not go so deep; the consequence is that there is not a uniform depth, some places are high and others are lower. Is the inspector appointed by the Government or by the city?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. In Toronto the work is under the immediate supervision of Mr. Temple, who has been on those works since their inception under Murray & Cleveland. The work is carried on all right.

Mr. HAGGART. There is a more serious objection than all this. When these hon. gentlemen were in Opposition they pledged themselves that if they got into power all these works would be let by contract. Here is an expenditure of \$20,000 asked for during the year; how is it that they do not let it by tender as it had been previously let by the old Government? Mr. Jones at one time had the contract, and Mr. Murray had the contract for dredging the harbour at Toronto for so much per yard. When the hon. gentlemen get into power they farm out the dredging to their friends, to tailors and painters, at so much per hour. The practice is a vicious one. It may be necessary in some cases to let out the work by the day, where the dredge has to be moved from one harbour to another, and where there is only a small portion of work to be done, 500 yards or 1,000 yards. But here is a work going on continuously from year to year, and the only safe course for the Minister to take is to ask for tenders from every one in the country, and find out how cheaply he can get it done. Never mind if it costs money, the principle

Mr. SPROULE.