

the reign of hon. gentlemen opposite it was very difficult for certain men to get a contract at all, hence there was no inducement for them to provide themselves with a plant because there was no possibility of getting employment. With respect to day's labour, I am very anxious to get hon. gentlemen opposite placed on record in regard to this particular point. I fail to see why it should be a crime for the Minister of Public Works to give employment in this particular way. I have no sympathy with contracts, nor with putting up a contract for tender, for I consider that course both detrimental to the department and to those who tender. I stand here thoroughly in sympathy with day's labour, and I believe it is desirable in view of all the facts of the case. So far as the working classes are concerned, they are practically a unit in asking the Government to have work done by day's labour instead of by contract.

Mr. CLANCY. I am sure the hon. Minister must be gratified to find shelter under the wing of the hon. gentleman who has just spoken. The hon. gentleman may play a Chinese role in British Columbia and another role here; but I tell him that we have just as much light now as we had before he addressed the committee. What experience has he had in public works to be in a position to rise here and lecture hon. members as to what should be done? He says that, according to his sweet will and pleasure, a certain course should be followed. That may be, but the hon. gentleman will not influence the committee much by that. I have not complained because the contractor did not own a dredge, but when in such circumstances a man is without a dredge and tenders for work, what does it suggest? It suggests that the man is not acquainted with the character of the work to be done. He may farm it out. The case is one that requires explanation from the Minister rather than from the hon. member who has become his champion.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentlemen opposite are marking time. I do not complain, and I take it good-humouredly. I know what it was in the past and what it is now. I have not much to add to my former statement. Hon. gentlemen have referred to the contract held by Mr. Cleveland, but that is not parallel with the present case. Mr. Cleveland had a contract for certain improvements, and there was some dredging connected with the work. The fact as to whether a contractor owns or does not own a dredge is to me a matter of no importance. I consider the question one of the dredge, not of the man, and I would have been prepared to have taken another man who had the same dredge. Mr. Phin is a good man and has a good dredge. As to the method followed, I say it has been followed in past years. I have given the committee the

names of several dredges that have been hired year after year on the same conditions, and in such work I am going to follow the same system.

Mr. HAGGART. Speaking of the job, to use the term of the Minister of Customs, I think it is a suitable one, the Minister of Public Works has said he is going to do the same thing again.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Why did you do it?

Mr. HAGGART. The law is directory as to what course shall be pursued. The hon. gentleman says that this course has been pursued, and that is sufficient justification. I deny that we ever came down to a bald proposition of this kind when the work was known to amount to \$24,000, and it would appear as if there were some other circumstances involved. Under the late regime the work in this particular harbour was let by contract, and the hon. Minister knows it. He says, however, there is a distinction between the work now being done and that which was formerly executed. I deny it. The hon. gentleman stated that this dredging was of a particular character, and was really special work, and was connected with dredging foundations for some crib-work. What difference is there between that work and the work done by Jones, Cleveland & Murray in connection with the harbour work? The hon. gentleman said they could not find out the exact quantities of the work, because the bottom of the harbour was shifting. Was it not shifting in the other case? The hon. gentleman must remember that it is not justification to plead the action of a previous Government. The excuse he gave was that the dredges required to be moved from place to place, that there was a small quantity of work to be done at one place and perhaps a larger quantity at the other. But the hon. gentleman does not venture on an excuse of that kind, but he states boldly that the late Government did it in the past and he intends to continue the system. That is no answer, however, to make to this committee. There must be some excuse shown for hiring dredges from day to day to carry on the work in the harbour, and no excuse has been offered in this case. This is a direct and palpable violation of the law. How the Minister of Public Works secured the passage of these expenditures by the Auditor General, I cannot understand. There is one way in which he can secure it. He proposes to make a report to Council and get the authority of Council to override the Auditor General. It will be time enough to talk in this way when he gets the authority of the Governor in Council, but he should remember that he is not supreme. The hon. gentleman takes under his patronage the Conservatives. He says he has not dismissed any Conservative from