

mended even by the friends of the then Minister of Public Works, does not get the contract, but that it is given to the person who changed his politics in the election—the expectant contractor who has contributed time at any rate, and possibly money to the election of a prominent gentleman, and whose influence probably resulted in that gentleman being elected to Parliament—for his majority was only seven—gets the contract at a sum very considerably larger than the other contractor had offered to do the work for. What are you going to do with cases of that kind? It seems to me that if you are going to purify the political atmosphere you must deal with the expectant as well as the actual contractor. There is another method in which such a contractor may exert his political influence in favor of his political friend. He may go on for three or four years contributing to the churches of his neighborhood—a very proper thing to do; but we have seen extraordinary sums, so far as the evidence of the courts disclose, given to churches by gentlemen, and we have seen as the result of those contributions that many of the people connected with those churches are found voting with the gentlemen who had contributed so liberally to their funds. Now, that is not a contribution for election purposes—I should be sorry to believe that generous contributions of that kind had anything to do with the elections; but curiously enough we have seen by the experience of hon. gentlemen in running election contests, that contributions of that kind do have their influence. Now, is a contractor to be deprived of the privilege of using his influence in that way, because it is found that his successive contributions to a number of important objects in the constituency have acquired for him an influence which enables him to give important aid to the candidate of his party? How are we to deal with cases of that kind? It seems to me that we cannot deal with them in any reasonable way, and that there will always be many means by which persons disposed to act corruptly may act corruptly. The hon. gentleman who is the author of this Bill, and who, though not the mover of the amendment, has advocated its introduction, admits that it would be difficult to bring home cases of this kind to any contractor. If such cases are brought home, the law, as it now stands, makes ample provision for dealing with them. If it is found on trial of an Election Petition that a contractor has contributed improperly or corruptly to the elections, that fact can be brought out under the Election Law just as well as it can be under any other process. You can put a contractor in the witness box, at an election trial, and get out of himself how much he contributed. If the hon. gentleman intends to make him chargeable with a misdemeanor of this kind, I hope he does not propose to make him go into the box and give evidence in connection with the charge against himself. If an election case reveals the fact that a contractor has contributed largely to the election of a candidate, the public are warned of that fact, and the relations of the Government to that contractor become matters of such public interest and public enquiry that there is not the slightest danger of any injury resulting therefrom. The hon. gentleman was good enough to refer us to the law in the United States on this subject. Well, Sir, I do not know anything about these matters, because I have not been at Congress or in the lobby there; but if my information is correct, he should have gone to some other quarter for an authority as to a law that is to prevent the improper use of money by contractors. It is a notorious fact that contractors in the States obtain their contracts, and hold them, by means of contributions to party funds, both in the different States and at Washington. Everybody knows that. It is the common talk of the lobby. In fact, the influences of the lobby were found to be so strong, that Congress had to adopt a rule prohibiting strangers from going within the precincts of the House

except by a direct vote of the House. But that did not prevent the contractors from going into the lobby. They are still there, and it is notorious that they have always, in spite of the law the hon. gentleman refers to, contributed large funds to political purposes. For my part, I cannot see the difference between the hon. leader of the Opposition to-day contributing a large sum of money to the party funds in a General Election when he himself is to be the First Minister if he succeeds, and a contractor giving a sum of money to a party fund whose relations to the Government subsequently are to be a matter of public discussion, of close scrutiny by Parliament, and therefore of such a public character that there is little danger likely to result. I regard the amendment as one that ought not to disgrace our Statute-book, and I do not hesitate to vote against it.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). I am a little surprised at the tone of the remarks of the hon. member for Cardwell. He endeavored to resuscitate what was, in the Elections of 1878, by a certain class of gentlemen who arrogated to themselves a great deal of the political purity of the country, considered to be a gross scandal; and, instead of simply pointing to the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), as being responsible for the letter which he wrote regarding his "friend Moore," and stating his meaning plainly and manfully, he endeavored to indicate the drift of his remarks by innuendo. His conduct surprises me in a gentleman who is so strong a supporter of that party, who were connected with scandals which were ventilated before Committees of this House, and the evidence of which was made public. If we chose to make reprisals on the hon. gentleman, and bring before the House the recollection of old memories, we might ask him if he ever heard of a contractor, or anybody in the place of a contractor, to whom somebody telegraphed in the following terms:—"My dear Abbott,—Send me another ten thousand; it will be the last time of calling; do not fail me; answer to-day." I suppose the hon. gentleman has forgotten all this—not merely a kindly letter, not a word of which could be construed into an improper act, but a plain request for something tangible for the use of an hon. gentleman, and which he stated in evidence was to be applied to certain purposes. That is the kind of argument we got from the hon. gentleman opposite. My hon. friend here proposes a Bill designed to purify the political atmosphere of this country. The hon. gentleman admits that the atmosphere is not pure, and instead of discussing the measure on its merits, what does he do? He apologises for the contractors; he enters upon their defence. They must not be put into the box and be examined, forsooth! They are the men who furnish the oil—shall I say?—for the machine. No; but they furnish the motive power for elections, as many of us know. I know of elections in which the money of contractors was the most powerful factor in influencing the votes of the people. I know of elections held, not only in Ontario, but in Quebec, in which the influence of the contractors was immense. My hon. friend proposes to correct that, and the hon. member for Cardwell and the hon. First Minister get up as apologists of the contractors, knowing that, if they were deprived of the power which these contractors exercise on their behalf, and, perhaps if everything were known, exercised in the Ontario Elections, they would be considerably weakened in popular support. Are these the hon. gentlemen who are sworn to stand up in the defence of the political influence of the community and the purity of elections, and who raise such pleas as these, in order, forsooth, that their friends, and, perhaps, their assistants, for all I know, may be protected? The hon. gentleman refers to the legislation at Washington. We are aware of the revelations in connection with the Star Route frauds, and we know the way the money was applied. Are we going to have the same system introduced into Canada? We have