

aware that he owned a dredge. Therefore, I said that the work must have been farmed out. I also drew attention to the fact that a man who is taking a contract should be at least expected to own some plant suitable for doing work of that kind.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Provided he could get a dredge. What do I care who owns it.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman means to be extremely lavish with the country's money, perhaps more so than if it was his own. But I say that on business principles, if he wanted to save public money he should have called for tenders and let this work out by contract. I say nothing about the integrity of this gentleman, but my information is to the effect that he was not in the habit of doing this kind of work, that he did not own any plant for that kind of work, and we now learn that the work was done, not by contract, but by day's work. Therefore, we have to assume that the work was farmed out, and there was not as good value given for it as might have been obtained if it had been let by tender.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. My hon. friend has been supporting for 20 years, under a previous Government, the very system I am now following, and he never said a word against it.

Mr. SPROULE. If the hon. gentleman will take the trouble to inform himself, he will find that several times I objected to the principle I am now condemning.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentleman should have made a motion denouncing his friends for doing what he is now denouncing. He is now indignant because some Liberals have got a contract. My hon. friend must try and realize the fact that the Government has changed; Tories are no longer in power to give contracts to Tory partisans exclusively. In the past Liberal contractors could not get any contract. It is only the chances of war.

Mr. CLANCY. Hon. gentlemen opposite are not going to cover this up so easily. We have heard from the lips of the Minister of Public Works this afternoon that a considerable work has been let by the hour without giving a shadow of reason why the rule heretofore followed has been departed from in the case of the Toronto harbour. Before the committee passes this item, the hon. gentleman should give a reason why he has departed from the rule heretofore followed of letting similar work by tender. This dredging work there involves an expenditure of several thousand dollars, and the hon. gentleman has let that under pretext that dredges have been employed elsewhere by the hour, and that is all the excuse he is able to offer. I would

Mr. SPROULE.

like to ask the hon. gentleman if it is the custom of the department to let a contract without inquiring whether the contractor owned the plant necessary to do the work. I care not whether the man be a tailor or a painter—and here let me say that it is no reflection upon a man to be a tailor or a painter. Either occupation is wholly respectable. But our contention has been that this work was farmed out to a man who had no personal experience and had no plant. What were the results? We had from the hon. gentleman this afternoon that the dredges were placed where they were supposed to take out from 700 to 800 yards a day. We find that this man only took out 571 yards a day, costing something over 14½ cents a yard. Now the hon. gentleman is confronted with three things, to which I wish to draw the attention of the committee. One is that he either closed his eyes deliberately, or he forgot what his duties were when he was letting a contract, if he did not ascertain whether the contractor had a dredge or not. The next is that he has given no excuse for departing from the rule of letting work by contract rather than by hour's work. The next thing is that the work, instead of costing 10 or 10½ cents a yard, has cost something over 14 cents. Neither the hon. gentleman nor his friends can side track this matter by saying that we on this side of the House desire to reflect unfavourably upon any man in this country because of his calling in life. That was not the intention, as the hon. gentleman knows very well. Let me say to the Minister of Customs that a man may be silently a member of a contracting firm, he may have his money in it, he may be a painter or a tailor, and have nothing to do with the work.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. He was one of the most active members.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS. He had possession of a dredge there.

Mr. CLANCY. He went and employed a dredge belonging to another party, but he owned none himself.

Mr. MAXWELL. Referring to the utterances of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Clancy), his contentions seem to be two: First, that the Department of Public Works had made a mistake in giving this contract to a man who was not supposed to own a dredge. I don't think there is anything particularly wrong in that.

Mr. CLANCY. That was not it at all.

Mr. MAXWELL. The hon. gentleman complains that the department did not make an investigation when they gave the contract, to find out whether this man had a dredge or not. I say the department has no business to inquire into that matter at all. If a man gets a contract for dredging he can easily get a dredge to do the work with. I know from experience that during