

Dredge Company been prepared to do this work the contract would have been given to them as the lowest tenderers.

Mr. BENNETT. What a childlike explanation from the Minister of Public Works. Did Mr. Aylesworth believe that the Grant Company was tendering honestly when they tendered prior to the 6th of May and their tender was 53 cents? That is why he called for new tenders.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Does not my hon. friend know there was a lower tender than that, namely for 30 cents, and that the Dominion Dredging Company having declined to do the work at that price, that it was the exercise of the best judgment on the part of the acting minister that he should make a second call for tenders?

Mr. BENNETT. I am quite willing to give credit to Mr. Aylesworth for dealing honestly with the matter and I believe he acted honestly. I believe that when he looked at these documents he saw fraud on the face of them and said: Although you are the next lowest tenderer at 53 cents I will not award it to you. And so he called for new tenders and Mackay instead of tendering at 53 cents tendered at 26 cents. What has the Minister of Public Works got to say to that, along the line of common honesty?

Mr. PUGSLEY. As I understand it, Mr. Mackay never tendered at 53 cents.

Mr. BENNETT. Why, I have read the letters of Mackay and Grant in which they say they are associated together in the work. Is the minister going to have the temerity to say that Mackay had nothing to do with that contract at all?

Mr. PUGSLEY. Was it not in 1907 that he says they were associated?

Mr. BENNETT. The tenders were invited in 1907.

Mr. PUGSLEY. And after the work had been undertaken they might easily make arrangement for the use of each other's plant.

Mr. BENNETT. Can the minister give any sensible explanation of why with two dredges lying in the harbour and Mackay having the contract for several years before he did not tender?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I have not all the facts in my memory now, but my impression is that the tender with which Mr. Mackay was connected was for the work at Victoria harbour, and it was then understood that the work was going to be a very important work and might very properly require the services of the dredging plant which his company was possessed of.

Mr. BENNETT. Now, we will take that part of it.

Mr PUGSLEY.

Mr. PUGSLEY. The hon. gentleman will be able to say whether that is correct or not.

Mr. BENNETT. It is not correct. The only tender for the work at Midland—

Mr. PUGSLEY. Take Victoria harbour.

Mr. BENNETT. There were no tenders invited for Victoria harbour until some time after Mackay, for some reason or other, was awarded the contract at this part of Midland harbour called Tiffin. Why didn't Mackay tender? The reason Mackay did not tender was this: That the year before Mackay had sent his manager down here to tender on a prior work and the result was that, as appeared by these tenders, there was collusion and fraud between this Mackay Company, represented by his agent Wilkinson, and the Penetanguishene Company. The tenders of the Penetanguishene Company are in Mackay's own private envelopes. Mackay was attempting to obtain some prominence in the province of Ontario and he did not want to come down here to Ottawa and be engaged in these games. He knew, as any sensible man must have known, that probably this thing would leak out, and for that reason Mackay did not come near the scene of the operations at all, but instead of that in the first place Wilkinson, his foreman, came down, and Wilkinson according to the evidence in the tenders was in palpable collusion and fraud with Spohn of the Penetanguishene Company. It went so far that the envelopes containing Spohn's tenders were in Mackay's own office envelopes.

Mr. PARDEE. That was fully explained in the committee.

Mr. BENNETT. Certainly it was explained when this fellow Spohn stood up and swore on his solemn oath that he did not know where he got the envelopes and Wilkinson did the same thing, and I think people who know them both in their own localities will have their opinion of the oath of either one of them.

Mr. CARVELL. Will the hon. gentleman say whether these were the lowest tenderers and whether either of them got the contract?

Mr. BENNETT. The hon. member (Mr. Carvell) is always ready where there is anything nasty or dishonest to defend it; all he wants to do is to rely on quibbles.

Mr. CARVELL. If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett) will not answer I cannot make him, but it is only fair he should answer the question.

Mr. BENNETT. Let me tell the hon. member who acts as an understudy for the Minister of Public Works, so that when the avalanche overtakes the present minister which he is hoping for, he will be ready to take his place.