

which existed in the case of Sir John A. Macdonald. No man could look at the public record of the parties who subscribed to the testimonial to the Minister of Public Works without seeing that for the most part they were most undoubtedly men coming well within the lines of this resolution. They were public contractors, or public officials, or parties having pecuniary relations with the Government; and I say, Sir, that the bad precedent which existed in the first case was doubled and trebled in its injury to the public service and to the country at large by the case of the hon. Minister of Public Works. I have observed, Sir, that some of that hon. gentleman's apologists have undertaken to mitigate the error, or the crime, call it which you will, which was committed by the reception of that testimonial under the circumstances, by the plea, which I think was also advanced in the other case, that the hon. gentleman did not know who had subscribed to his testimonial. Such a plea, in my judgment, is a direct aggravation of the offence. A public Minister has no right whatever to allow any gift to be made to him unless it is done publicly, and unless he knows from what sources it proceeds; and, Sir, I would say this, that if a Minister of the Crown tells me that he has accepted a gift, not knowing and not choosing to know from whom it proceeded, so far from regarding such a plea as a mitigation, I say that such a plea raises a presumption of guilt. It was his duty to know it; it was his duty to find out; it was his duty to see that not one penny went into his pockets or into his coffers unless it came from such sources that he could honourably and fairly receive it. Now, Sir, I need not tell this House or the people of this country what followed on these precedents. The country has been for weeks and months a spectator of investigations which go to show that the natural results of these acts have followed—that a great spending department of the public service has become very little better than one mass of corruption; that the name of Canada, more important by far than the name of any individual man, is fast becoming a disgrace and a by-word from one end of the world to the other; that Canada and the reputation of Canadian statesmen, unless steps and very determined steps be very shortly taken to purge ourselves of these scandals, will sink below the level of a wretched South American Republic; that our credit as well as our character will suffer, and cannot fail to suffer if these things are known to have existed, and yet it be found that the Parliament of Canada will not even declare that it is improper that such things can be. Sir, again I say that rather than use my own words, I will read the language used by the gentleman for whom hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House profess such respect. Here is what Mr. Edward Blake had to say with respect to the Minister of Public Works:

"The thing was approved or condoned, and two or three years ago the Minister of Public Works (Sir Hector Langevin) got his testimonial too. Why not? What is right for the chief is right for the second in command. He, it is true, has to do with the great bulk of the contracts for public works. He largely decides upon the conditions for tendering, advertises for the tenders, determines which tender shall be accepted, determines whether the contractor has performed the work. He it is who gives the instructions for changes, who settles the bills for extras, which allow the greatest latitude for favourable or unfavourable settlement. He, I say, even above the others, ought to avoid, as a matter utterly abominable, any relations, except the direct business and

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official relations, with the contractors who have or may have business with his department. The testimonial he received was about \$20,000. And it was largely subscribed by public contractors who had claims against the Government, or hopes or expectations, the realization of which depended almost wholly on its favourable decision. Many of those claims have since been settled. What has happened? This has happened, that many people suspect the Minister of Public Works of having been influenced in his decisions by the relation he allowed to exist between these contractors and himself, as givers and recipient of a large and valuable present. It may or it may not have been so. No man can tell. We cannot judge. God knoweth. But the position is wholly indefensible. To no public man ought it be possible to say: With one hand you took from this man a testimonial; and with the other you settled his claim."

Now, these are the statements of a gentleman whom, now that he is out of the political arena, hon. gentlemen on the other side profess to hold in the highest possible esteem, whose words they are never tired of quoting, when it suits their purpose. I trust they will pay equal respect to them when quoted from this side. Sir, up to the present time, I think but one attempt has been made, to the best of my recollection, to challenge the judgment of Parliament on this most improper and immoral practice. Numerous attempts have been made, it is true, to grapple with the kindred and closely allied one—the cousin german, to say the least of it,—of exacting heavy toll, heavy subscriptions, from contractors for the purpose of carrying elections and for political ends. Over and over again have attempts been made from this side of the House to check that evil. In 1881 a Bill was introduced forbidding contractors, while engaged in public contracts, to subscribe to political funds for either party. As might have been expected, that was voted down. In 1882 a similar Bill was brought up. This they thought it inexpedient to vote down as they had done before, and they referred it to a select committee; and no more was heard of it for that session. In 1883 a similar measure was proposed, and the Bill this time was passed with the vital clause left out. In 1884 we again attempted to introduce the wholesome provision that no contractor should be allowed, under severe penalties, to subscribe to elections while his contract was going on. That was killed judiciously in the Committee of the Whole, I believe, and unless my memory wholly deceives me, my hon. friend behind me brought it up again in a substantial shape, and it was for the fourth time defeated by a former Parliament. Now, in these cases former Parliaments were most directly to blame for many of the results which we have seen occurring through the neglect to take that very proper precaution; and I would call your attention, Sir, to this fact, that when the Parliament of Canada, having been challenged four consecutive times in four separate years, and refused each time to declare that it is improper for public contractors to subscribe to election funds for political purposes how can any man venture to say that contractors who had subscribed to political funds, cannot contend that they have the sanction of Parliament in the clearest possible manner for the course they pursued? Sir, every hon. member knows, every man of common sense in the country knows, that when a contractor subscribes out of his own pocket to a political fund, that contractor means to receive, and almost invariably does receive, three-fold, four-fold, five-fold and ten-fold the amount of his subscriptions from a generous Minister. I have quoted what my hon. friend, Mr. Blake, was pleased to say