

to Ottawa and the purchasing agent asks for bids from dealers in that locality.

Mr. MEIGHEN: From a list?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): The thing may be advertised or the names may be taken from a list depending upon the extent of the work.

Mr. SHAW: Who is the purchasing agent to whom the minister refers?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): The purchasing agent of the department.

Mr. SHAW: Does the Public Works department have a separate purchasing subdivision or does it come under the committee of the cabinet that has to do with purchasing?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Under the committee of the cabinet, but we have an organization within the department.

Mr. SHAW: I understand from the minister that they call for tenders for the material, and then have the balance of the work done by day labour?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Yes.

Mr. SHAW: In my opinion, as far as possible tenders should be called for covering the entire work, because it is not susceptible to any improper action in that event.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I agree with my hon. friend that for new work that is quite proper.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister thoroughly agrees with the principle so long as he never puts it into practice.

Mr. SHAW: I want it put into practice.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The glories of the day labour system came out in the minister's last reply. The system he follows is this: Here is \$10,400 worth of work to be done; our engineer is sent down there; he is in charge of engaging the men; his instructions we can take for granted as to whom he employs, whose advice he takes as to whom he employs and who are his superintendents. Then tenders or rather competitive bids are asked for to supply the lumber. The patronage list in the department is used to see where the competitive bids are to come from.

Mr. GRAHAM: Do you expect us to use the one that was there?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister would have a hard job to find it. Then the work proceeds. If a by-election comes along, as at Portage la Prairie at the time that notorious work was done that cost \$65,000 or \$70,000 to repair the damage—

Mr. HUGHES: The right hon. member is thinking of the dry dock at Victoria.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The superintendent keeps the men well corralled, bringing them up in closed caravans to vote and so forth. These are all the fruits of the day labour system, and the penalty, of course, the taxpayer ultimately pays. There is all the difference in the world between it and the tender system, and the minister knows it. You can apply the tender system to almost anything; and of course, on the other hand, you can find an excuse for not applying it, and usually as well the excuser. But the strong minister applies the tender system and he does not find it necessary to offer very many excuses.

Item agreed to.

New Brunswick—Bay du Vin—Wharf repairs, \$1,600.

Mr. MEIGHEN: This is a new repair; is it due to the October storm?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): No; it is to rebuild decayed stringers, flooring and caps for that part of the wharf between the earth-filled approach and the pier head itself. It consists of 4 blocks of spans of a total length of 194 feet.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What county?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Northumberland.

Mr. MEIGHEN: How many wharves are there in Northumberland?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I do not know.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The deputy can tell.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I do not think so.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Has the minister no adding machines? From whom did the representations come that the wharf needed repairs?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): From the district engineer.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Who is he?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Mr. Stead.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Where is he stationed?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): St. John, New Brunswick.

Mr. MEIGHEN: How would he know about the wharf at this particular place?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): That is his business.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He travels around?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is his business to travel around inspecting wharves?