

Mr. LISTER. I do not think it can be repeated too often. It ought to be pounded into the Government day and night in order that the country may understand it. We do not expect to have any effect at all upon the Government. We think, to use a common expression, it is like pouring water on a duck's back to talk to the Government about economy.

Mr. OUMET. It will have some effect on the public at large.

Mr. LISTER. We had to-day an instance of it. Notwithstanding the fact that you sent your Secretary of State up there to handle the boodle, we carried the constituency of North Perth. We know when the Secretary of State goes, what influence he carries with him, and he did not go up there this time without the necessary influence, but in spite of all that influence we have carried North Perth: we carried it by an increased majority notwithstanding all the efforts put forth, notwithstanding the little subscriptions you got from certain senators in the other Chamber to take into North Perth. I suppose it is understood that these things are all secret, that the outside public know nothing about it. But there is a little bird that whispers the secret, and notwithstanding all the efforts you put forth, an honest man has been elected there to-day.

Mr. OUMET. And a dishonest man has been defeated, I suppose.

Mr. LISTER. I am not saying anything about the other gentleman. I do not know him: but I say that dishonest means were resorted to to elect him.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. Keep to the question.

Mr. LISTER. The hon. Minister says that this word scandalous is used too often. I say it is a scandalous prostitution of the power of this Government, putting up these buildings in small places where the revenue does not warrant it. He is putting them in small places where ample accommodation could be obtained at a comparatively small expense that would answer all public purposes. But it is not the object to meet the public necessities in making these public expenditures. The object is obvious, and that is to have patronage in order that support may be gathered about the Government. This building, the Minister says, has been commenced. Having been commenced I suppose it must be carried on; but let the hon. gentleman understand that if any more such undertakings as have been submitted by his predecessor and himself in the way of public buildings, are brought forward, they will be vigorously opposed, opposed as strongly as it is possible to oppose them by this side of the House. I believe that in making this statement, I echo the sentiment of every member on this side of the House, that this system of petty bribery throughout the constituencies must be stopped. If you want to buy up constituencies, put your hands down in your pockets like men and buy them, but you shall not purchase them at the expense of the country at large.

Mr. MULOCK. I am sorry the Minister of Public Works has spoken as he has of the hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Lister), who I think was quite within both his rights and the amenities of the debate when he addressed the committee as he did.

Mr. LISTER.

I understand the Minister has now placed himself superior to Parliament, and has declared that the resolution of two years ago has no bearing on him. I was not in the Chamber at the time he gave expression to that new doctrine.

Mr. OUMET. How can you say I did so?

Mr. MULOCK. I have been told that the Minister said he does not consider that resolution binding on him.

Mr. OUMET. Hearsay evidence is not good.

Mr. MULOCK. What is the Minister's opinion on that resolution? We are engaged on the important work of administering as economical as possible, public money, and here we have evidence repeated, item after item, that public money is being wasted, poured into the province of the Minister for what he calls public benefit, but which he will not pledge himself before the public to say is going to attain that end. When real honest demands are made on the public exchequer for consideration, the applicants are told there is no money. A short time ago a requisition was made on the Postmaster General by the letter carriers. What was the answer? The Government have got no money. They did not say: We are spending so much money for corrupt purposes in erecting post offices and other buildings which are not wanted, that we cannot afford to pay an honest day of work with an honest day's pay. The Government are paying the letter carriers of Toronto \$360 a year, a pair of boots and a suit of clothes, and they think this is enough to live on. To men whose work is most onerous, the excuse for denying their honest claim was practically that the Government required so much of the public money for boodle. We have had several illustrations. This policy is being pursued in the Maritime Provinces. We were told that it is necessary to reduce the staff on the Intercolonial Railway by a great many hundreds, because the resources of the country cannot afford the present outlay. At the same time we discover that the Government have acquired a large property in the city of St. John at a fabulous price, involving a questionable transaction. Here again, to-night, we are furnished with another reason for denying Government employes honest pay for labour rendered. Could there be anything more unfair and more discreditable? The hon. member thinks these men in the service are bound hand and foot to support the Government, are slaves, in fact, bondmen, and, therefore, must support him at any cost; it is not necessary even to do justice to them, because at a moment's notice they might be discharged. Lack of funds is given as the excuse for not paying these men properly for the services they have rendered, and at the same time money is being thrown away, money collected from these very public servants by taxation, and expended for illegal purposes in order to erect public buildings and thus secure political support. I cannot conceive of any greater abuse of power than that illustrated by these very transactions that this committee have been compelled to consider to-night. A Government treating the taxes of the people which have been collected from the people for the people's good as their own money, as a means of fortifying themselves in office, forgetting they are trustees simply of those funds for the public—if we properly framed the criminal code we would make it applicable to those guilty