

who was so ignorant. He was the only man in Canada, I say, because it was a fact of public notoriety that the subscribers to that testimonial were the contractors of the Public Works Department. The fact was known in the press at that time, and it was made known, not in the press of the Opposition, but made known in the press of the Government. It was made known in the public press of Montreal, and some few years ago a series of articles were published in the organ of the Government, *La Presse* of Montreal, which afterwards were collected in pamphlet form, and I have the pamphlet in my hands, and this is what I read in it:

"By the aid of this ingenious system which is called 'public subscription' in the case of a Minister, and 'blackmail' in the case of a poor devil, Sir Hector was able to add \$25,000 to his economies, and the public works of the country cost to the country \$500,000 more than it would have paid if the contractors had not been friends."

Sir, after this, could the Minister ignore who were the subscribers to his fund, and is it possible to say at this day, after this statement was made and published, not in the press of the Opposition, but in the press of the Government, that the member for Three Rivers (Sir Hector Langevin) the then Minister of Public Works, did not know who were those who were tendering him the money for this testimonial? I repeat, Sir, that if the then Minister of Public Works did not know who were those who gave him that testimonial, it was because he chose to remain blind, for what he did not know, every man not only in the House but in the country at large, was aware of. Then the pamphlet goes on furthermore to say:

"The name is kept in the Public Works Department of a well-known contractor who had been soliciting for two years an indemnity for public works in the city of Quebec, and who had been most anxious while petitioning to subscribe \$1,000 in favour of the chief. That contractor knew very well how men are taken, and when he was asked for the amount of his subscription he declared categorically, that he would not pay one cent unless his claim against the Government was settled. Lucky man: his claim was settled within three days."

And, Sir, I repeat, that is not in the press of the Opposition, but in the press of the Government.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. I beg my hon. friend's pardon. It is too often this statement has been made. At that time *La Presse* was the bitterest enemy of the Government, and the pamphlet which my hon. friend is quoting from, and which is called "*Le Métier de Ministre*," is the strongest and the most bitter charge ever made against the Government. *La Presse* was then a paper which was the bitterest enemy of the Government.

Mr. LAURIER. Those are very big words, Sir, but I know what is in them; they are perfectly hollow. That newspaper, *La Presse*, at that time was against the Government on the Riel question, and upon no other question. That paper, *La Presse*, had done like ministerial members whom I see here, protested against the execution of Louis Riel but came down underneath at the proper time. That paper, *La Presse*, was the subsidized organ of the Government at all times, and when the hon. gentleman says it was the bitterest opponent of the Government let him tell me one question, except the Riel question, on which it was against the Government. I will ask the hon. gentlemen furthermore, if it is not true that a few months afterwards, when we were in the thick of the election, *La Presse*, was in the forefront supporting the Government

as usual? If these statements, as I said a moment ago, had been said in the press of the Opposition, I could well understand that no value could be attached to them on the other side of the House, because I am sorry to say the press has become so partizan on both sides of politics, that, for my part, I would not be bound by anything said by a journal opposed to my views. But, Sir, this is not one of the Opposition papers which were fighting them. It was from one of the papers which were supporting the Government that the charge first came, and again I say, Sir, that in the face of that, it is preposterous to tell us that the Minister of Public Works did not know who were the contributors to his fund. Now, Sir, upon this question I will say no more for the present time. There are other questions to which my hon. friend has alluded simply to say that they were a reproach to the name of Canada, and I will not discuss these questions to-day. The only thing I would say in reference to this is that I am sorry to see that the Minister of Justice has already, perhaps, anticipated what will be the judgment of the House in a few days. I shall not do anything of the kind. I shall keep my judgment perfectly unbiassed even to that time; but if only one-tenth of the charges made by the hon. member for Montmorency are proved, and more than one-tenth are proved already, they will cause the name of Canada to be a by-word and a reproach.

Mr. COSTIGAN. I listened with attention to the remarks made by the hon. mover of the resolution in amendment to going into Supply, now before the House, and I must say that I have no reason to complain of that hon. gentleman's speech. I have perhaps reason to feel somewhat gratified that he made no personal allusion to me; but, on reading the resolution, I find that I am indicated as one of the parties who received a testimonial. The resolution refers not only to Ministers who have received testimonials from contractors, but it includes members of the Government who receive contributions from contractors or other persons having pecuniary relations with the Government, as well as officials. Now, I may state briefly the circumstances under which I became the recipient of a testimonial in the shape of a house. Hon. gentlemen may not be aware, or, the fact may be of little interest to them, that I at that time had served as the representative of my constituency for about twenty-four years. I had served that constituency as a poor man. My coming here in the first place was not the result of any personal ambition on my part to enter public life; but I was induced to do so by my constituents for their interests rather than my own. I accepted the position, however, and I have held the confidence of that constituency for upwards of thirty years; and during that time I have endeavoured to discharge my duty faithfully. While not posing as a man of perfection, while professing to be human, and liable to err like all men, I do not plead guilty to any dishonest or dishonourable conduct; I do not plead guilty to any improper motives, or even to the possibility of being improperly influenced in the discharge of any public duty. I could not be guilty of that, because whatever other faults I have, I thank God that I have strength enough to prevent me from disgracing myself in that way, as well as disgracing the men who have