

ment of which he was a member, any evidence showing that to be the case. He will not find that that Government was any more successful than the present one in securing the construction of public works at private expense. I believe it is simply impracticable to do it, and yet our system of letting contracts is such that if parties come forward, however unable to do the work, however little confidence we may have in them, the hon. gentleman knows the difficulty of refusing the lowest tender, provided the party is prepared to make the deposit.

Mr. BLAKE. If his cheque is properly marked.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. If it is not properly marked I do not think we would make a great deal of public money by letting the contract to parties whose prices would not enable them to do the work. These parties took the contract; they were not skilled contractors; they carried it on for a time, but their prices were not high enough, in the judgment of the chief engineer, to enable them to perform it at all and the simple fact was that the work was being impeded, the time was being exceeded, and there was no chance of their completing the contract. They stated that the price of labor and material had risen so greatly after the time of taking the contract as to make it utterly impossible for them to go on—and it was quite true that they had advanced—and under these circumstances they surrendered the contract. The chief engineer made an estimate of the work, but they were dissatisfied and they applied to the Government. They made a claim for \$20,382, and it was agreed that the claim should be referred to Mr. Page as sole arbitrator, and he arrived at the conclusion that it would be right to pay them \$17,370.

Mr. BLAKE. I shall not enter into a discussion of the question of whether it is possible to obtain money from sureties under public contracts. The reason I made the remark I did make, but which the hon. Minister seems to have misapprehended, was, that in the earlier part of the evening he laid great stress on the fact that the Government had a security with respect to the Whitehead contract, which would have been available had the work cost more than the contract price. Now he says the work cannot be constructed at the expense of private individuals.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I said, and I repeat, and I will sustain it by evidence which the hon. gentleman cannot confute, that the Government of which he was a member settled a score of large contracts in which they took the work out of the hands of the parties and paid a large sum of public money over and above the amount of the contract, and yet they were not able to obtain a single dollar of the securities. If that is the case, why should the hon. gentleman raise this question as a question of impropriety on the part of the Government; why should he wish to intimate that there has been an injustice to the public, if we have only followed the policy of his Government, though I believe they acted from a sincere desire to promote the public interests, and conserve the public money. But no fault was found with them, either on account of their contracts on the canals or their contracts on the Intercolonial Railway; and I think the hon. gentleman will not find one dollar in the Treasury of Canada placed there by taking the security which parties had given when it was found that the prices were inadequate. That would simply have been taking the money of private individuals.

Mr. BLAKE. If that is the invariable rule, why was it said this afternoon, that if the Whitehead contract had cost more than the contract price, the Government could have recovered it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I said they could do so.

Mr. BLAKE. And would. I do not suppose that the hon. gentleman would say that they could do a wrong thing if it would not be done.

261. Williamsburg Canal—To pay to the owners of the titles of certain lands taken for the construction of the Rapide Plat Canal \$1,434.59

Mr. BLAKE. Will the hon. gentleman explain this?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. This is to pay for the titles of certain lands for the lock of the Rapide Plat Canal taken in 1844, and not yet paid for.

Mr. BLAKE. It is hardly time to vote that money yet. Will the hon. gentleman not want half a century more?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I think, after these people have had to wait so long, it would be very unreasonable to ask them to wait any longer.

Mr. BLAKE. Will the hon. gentleman explain how it comes that this very ancient claim was not pressed, and if it was, why it was not satisfied, and how he has ascertained the value of these lands as they stood thirty-nine years ago?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I had better, perhaps, read the Order in Council, which contains the information, and as it was sufficient to satisfy the Government of the justice of the claim, I have no doubt it will satisfy my hon. friend. The Order in Council is dated October 28th, 1882, and states:

"On a memorandum, dated 24th October, 1882, from the Acting Minister of Railways and Canals, representing that, in the year 1844, certain lands were taken for the construction of the Rapide Plat Canal, being parts of lots Nos. 4 and 5 in the first range of the Township of Matilda, also lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the sixth range of the Village of Mariatown.

"That, owing to the fact that rival claims have been set up by Mrs. Isabella Findlay Farlinger, and Mr. Samuel Nash, for the ownership of title to these lands; and that, up to the present time, neither claimant has been able to show satisfactory evidence of title, no settlement has been arrived at.

"The Minister states that, recently, upon renewed application from the parties interested, a further submission of the case was made to the Minister of Justice, who advised, under date the 18th instant, that authority should be obtained for the payment to Mrs. Farlinger, or to such other person as may be found entitled thereto, for the parts of the lots 4 and 5 in the first range of Matilda, and for lots 1 and 2 in the sixth range of Mariatown; and that payment should be made to Mr. Nash, or to such other person as may be found entitled thereto, for the lots 3 and 4 in the sixth range of Mariatown."

Mr. BLAKE. I should think that this, if it be a debt, is due by the late Province of Canada, and ought to be charged to it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman.

262. Culbute Canal—To complete \$23,100.00

Mr. BLAKE. Is this under contract?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Yes. The delay was caused by the failure of the contractors to complete one of the dams in the time specified in the contract, which rendered necessary the maintenance of an engineering staff. A portion of this vote is to be applied to making good the materials carried away by the breaking of a crib.

Mr. BLAKE. Is this expected to cover the whole cost?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Yes. This vote also embraces the damage done by the flooding of lands, which is estimated at \$8,000. The other items are engineering and other expenses, \$3,000, and the amount by special warrant required to complete the work, \$12,100, making \$23,100 in all.

Mr. BLAKE. What would be the total cost of the canal, including this vote? The hon. gentleman stated that \$12,100 was by special warrant. If the money has been paid, I do not think it should be included in this vote, because we understand that every shilling that is voted is yet in the public treasury.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The total cost of the canal is \$312,577.

263. Cornwall Canal—Enlargement \$15,000.00

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. This is for the purpose of paying the percentage to the contractors on Section No. 1, also