

pointed out that it was his purpose and intention that the cost of the work should be refunded. I state that immediately in justice to the hon. member. I assume that for the purpose of the argument, but to any man who reads the evidence, as I think the house will perceive as I proceed, the undertaking to refund was not made sufficiently clear. It is not sufficiently apparent, and it is impossible for any man of the world to read that evidence throughout, and not come to the conclusion that this gentleman, like all others in that locality, intended to avail himself of the custom prevailing to get work done by government employees without any refund. There is the evidence of Mr. Pagé that the sitting member declared that he would refund; ten times, says Mr. Pagé, during the summer, he offered to give me money and I refused, because I told him that the workmen might suppose that I intended to keep the money myself, and that it was better to wait till the end. When you have read the evidence through you cannot come to any other conclusion than that the sitting member, not realizing the exceptional position in which he was, intended to avail himself of a general popular privilege in the town of Sorel, a notorious privilege which is known to exist because it is a matter of public notoriety that a man who can exert sufficient influence may obtain materials and get work done without reimbursing anybody for them. But, I assume for the purpose of my argument that this refund was to be made. It is vouched for by the sitting member himself and by Mr. Pagé. I may say at once with regard to this man Pagé, and this observation is provoked by the question put a moment ago by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax) who did not follow this inquiry, that his testimony is not worthy of confidence because at the beginning he started in to perpetrate an odious fraud upon the government.

I shall not follow my hon. friend (Mr. German) in his argument regarding the impossibility of having this work executed otherwise than by government employees. As a matter of fact there was only one witness produced, as my hon. friend says, a painter, a man of repute in the town of Sorel, who stated that he asked for the work, and that he was capable of executing it. It was not necessary to go further. Every man who has some experience knows that in the province of Quebec there is not a village where you cannot get painting done, and if the painting is of such a quality that it requires men of greater skill you can get them in any large centre, in Sorel, or in Montreal which is only a few miles from Sorel. But, why insist upon this point? If the work was done illegally and irregularly, if the sitting member en-

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tered into a contract that he had no right to enter into, it is no argument to say that he could not get workmen elsewhere. If he could not get the work done legally and legitimately he had to give it up; there was no other recourse for him. The circumstances do not authorize any illegality.

I repeat that I regret that we could not agree upon a report, but we have to deal with the facts as we find them without fear or favour since the question is before parliament to-day. The member seemed to think that he was in the same position as other people in the town of Sorel. I repeat that it is a matter of public notoriety in Quebec that these things are done daily in Sorel. You get material if you have sufficient pull, and you do not require much; you get cement, you get boards, paint, nails. Men have started stores from what they have obtained from the government workshops. The sitting member is supposed to know the law; he knows the disabilities that attach to a member of parliament. However, I will come to that in a moment. He occupies an exceptional position in the electoral division. He disposes of the patronage of the division. Unfortunately, under the baneful system which prevails in this country as to the exterior service, he disposes of the patronage, and we know that this regrettable system costs the country millions and millions of dollars a year in waste. That is the result in our province at any rate. He knows that that is his position in the county and he should have thought of that when he undertook to deal with men who owed their nomination and maintenance to him in order to get this work executed. Could he possibly ignore the system which prevails in connection with public works at the government workshops in Sorel? My hon. friend (Mr. German) says that the sitting member did not know what Mr. Pagé and Mr. Champagne were doing in order to have this work executed. He could not ignore it, Sir, because it is not possible to believe that the sitting member did not know the system prevailing with regard to the distribution of work and material at the shipyards at Sorel. At the very outset the sitting member was informed by Pagé, the foreman to whom he went to get this work executed, that he would be glad to get the work done if the director of the works authorized him to do so. There, knowledge was given to him, if that knowledge was necessary, that nothing of that kind could possibly be done without the approval of Mr. Papineau. Starting with these data what were the methods resorted to in order to have this work executed? Let me point out in two words what the system prevailing at Sorel is. There is an army of employees of the