

Mr. COCHRANE. They probably saw it when the snow was on it.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Possibly they did. I did not think of that, but I am a little dense to-day. The minister, I am sure, drew on his imagination, for it was altogether too transparent a statement to say that the people spontaneously petitioned for it. I dare say that some one in the interests of this bitulithic pavement concern said: We want to get this government, which is going to make this city the Washington of the north, put this pavement on Wellington street, are you in favour of it? It will not cost you a cent. Those who will have to pay for it are the hayseeds from Victoria and the other rural districts. Who would not sign a petition of that kind? Who would not be willing to get something for nothing? The Minister of Justice got something for nothing the other day, and these gentlemen were quite willing to be in the same position. The petition argument of the acting minister was so very weak, that it will not hold. I shall not enter into a comparison of the different pavements. All I have to say is this, that the pavement in question consists of an ordinary piece of grading with a little coal-tar spread over it, a little stone put on top and a little of this—I forget these high faluting names—at all events this Warren composition laid over it. The result is that the dust is flying up from it every day, and the government have two or three good henchmen sprinkling water over it to enable us to get into the building. Yet they tell us that it costs as much as solid 6 inch asphalt pavement. The thing is preposterous. I shall not make a comparison of it with the asphalt for wheel purposes: but we are told that it is used for such purposes where there is not a great deal of traffic; and that, though it may be a little soft, it makes an excellent pavement. We are told further that the great advantage of this pavement is that in hot weather the horses do not slip on it, because when the tar melts, if the horses stand a little while, their hoofs sink into it and there they are. That is the advantage, we are told, of this pavement over asphalt pavement. Against our good friend Mr. Robinette I have not a word to say. He is a most worthy and enterprising gentleman, but I was a little surprised he had not nerve enough to face the music. I am surprised at his lack of tact and judgment, but I am told by my hon. friend beside me that it cannot be the Robinette I mean. The Robinette I refer to is a lawyer in Toronto, and my legal friend says that no lawyer can enter into any such contracts because that is contrary to the statute law of Ontario. Therefore it must be some other man than T. C. Robinette with whom we are all familiar, but I have no personal information regarding that fact at all. This may be similar to the fence around Major Hill park, which the late Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte) told us, in reply to a

question put by the leader of the opposition, was done in parts. We had the former Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte) actually telling us on one occasion that he had evaded the statute by allowing the fence to be put in sections costing \$3,000 each and the total cost of which rolled up to \$14,000. It may be that the present contract is a similar way of evading the statute. I trust that the First Minister, now that he finds that the country is asked to pay and that his ministers have not been all wool a yard wide in the contract business, will see that it is necessary, in the interest of public decency and morality, that this business of letting out contracts by instalments is put a stop to for the future.

The only other point is with regard to the notice. I do not suppose the Prime Minister intended to reflect upon me. If I had let him proceed, I am sure, he would have done me justice. I endeavoured to see the acting Minister of Public Works in his office about two weeks ago in regard to this matter. I may say that I have never brought up any subject in the House of Commons, so far as I remember, without first giving the minister or the member on the other side who was concerned due and ample notice—not only notice in a general way that I intended to bring the matter up, but notice of the points I intended to deal with in discussing the matter. I wish to treat these gentlemen with all fairness. I spoke to the Prime Minister and wrote out in detail the points I intended to make and sent them across the floor. And the acting Minister of Public Works must have received from me in London, about a week ago a letter—

Mr. HYMAN. No, not a week ago. There is no reason for concealment in the matter—the letter was dated the 8th of this month.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Well, some days ago. In addition I wrote to the acting Minister a letter which he got last night—

Mr. HYMAN. No, I have not seen it, as a matter of fact.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Well, I sent it yesterday. That letter stated in detail the points I was going to bring up. So, I have done my duty. The Prime Minister has promised us that this thing shall not occur again. I am glad of that. But I am reminded to ask the Prime Minister whether, on some future occasion he will be good enough to tell us why he has found it necessary to put this curbing hand upon not only the acting Minister of Public Works, but all his ministers, in regard to contracts. Let the right hon. gentleman take us into his confidence in this matter. Has he found it necessary to do something because of scandals so great and so frequent all over the country? Is that the reason?

Motion (Mr. Sam. Hughes) to adjourn, negatived.