

not his dredge is going to have more employment throughout the season. I am informed that he is here to-day. His dredge has been out of commission for a few days in consequence of the statement I made here the other day, and I suppose that has brought him down in haste to see if he cannot get it going again at \$120 a day. When these matters are brought up in the House no facilities are afforded to have them investigated. We have this Conmee deal on. I asked a question in the House as to what the value of these dredges was, not that I did not know, because I have the information, but I wanted to have the official correspondence brought down to show the value of these dredges. When I asked my hon. friend the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) by way of a question what the imports in a certain direction are, my kind hearted friend brings down the information next day, but when I want to know how many dredges have been brought into the country and the value of these dredges, the hon. Minister of Customs at once smells a rat, he sees that there is going to be an exposure of the value of this job lot of dredges which have been brought in by Conmee, Bowman and other party friends, and the hon. Minister of Customs can tell you the value of everything else brought into the country, but when it comes down to dredges, he thinks it is not in the interest of the department that it should be told. Is not that a wonderful thing? I am afraid that if my hon. friend had slid along in his usual easy official way, that question would have been answered. But I think that somebody intervened and suggested to the hon. minister it would be better to make an answer such as he has made:

It is not usual to disclose the particulars of individual entries made at the custom-house.

I did not want to know that. All I wished to know was the aggregate value of the dredges which were imported into Canada at certain ports. I did not ask whether Mr. Conmee or Mr. Bowman had brought a dredge in or not. Why did the hon. Minister of Customs answer in that way? Because it was going to disclose the whole thing, that while these dredges are earning enormous sums of money, at the rate of \$120 a day—

Mr. PATERSON. Upon what date was that question asked?

Mr. BENNETT. On the 4th May, No. 77 in the unrevised 'Hansard,' while they are earning hundreds of thousands of dollars these old dredges have been brought into the country at a very low valuation and if that is a fair indication of their value it will startle the public to be told that so much money can be made out of such old plant. I am going to protest on behalf of the Department of the Interior that it should

Mr. BENNETT.

be blackballed as being the only rotten department. It may be bad, but it must be very, very bad if it surpasses the department of Public Works, or the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and many others that I might refer to. I must congratulate my hon. friend from Halton (Mr. Henderson) on the delightful bit of sarcasm in which he indulged in blaming the officials. I do not think my hon. friend means that at all. He has been long enough in this House to know that officials do not do things off their own bat, that they have to have the approval of the minister, and if we could only find that contract, I think we would find somebody's official O.K. and somebody's initials alongside of it. The Department of the Interior may be bad, but I am not going to allow one to go as being bad and the rest all right when we know so much about them.

Mr. PATERSON. I do not often reply to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett) but when he makes a deliberate mis-statement as he did with the answer before him, it is something that it is difficult to understand. He said that he did not ask for the names of the parties who imported dredges. Fortunately I have 'Hansard' here myself.

Mr. BENNETT. If the hon. gentleman will allow me to explain—

Mr. PATERSON. The hon. gentleman has spoken, he has made this statement and I will give him his answer.

Mr. BENNETT. Oh, very well. I will have occasion again to explain it. I see that I was incorrect in one clause.

Mr. PATERSON. The hon. gentleman is very ready to impute motives. He said that I smelled a rat when he asked that question.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. FOSTER. It is only a question of fact.

Mr. PATERSON. Some hon. gentlemen opposite endorse and enjoy it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Endorse the rat?

Mr. PATERSON. Proper criticism carries weight with it, but such criticism as we have had now destroys its value wholly. He stated that I thought he was going to unearth something. That statement of his is without foundation. It was none of my business to suspect anything, for the question was a proper one, and, as a member of this House, the hon. gentleman was entitled to a courteous answer. To insinuate that I had any motive or reason for withholding information is a sentiment worthy of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett), but it is not worthy of his friends who sit with him. The question he asked was:

How many dredges, dredging scows and dredging plants were imported into Canada in the years 1902, 1903 and 1904?