

comes down to a question of spending \$10,000 of public money, then tenders are not called for in a proper manner. The minister admits frankly that last year the department, wishing to have this work performed in front of the buildings, knowing what the estimated cost would be—because some official must have had some idea of that—instead of going out publicly in the market and asking for tenders handed over the work to a company in which a prominent Liberal politician of Toronto figures as a stockholder and director, Mr. T. C. Robinette, who was about the same time the Liberal candidate in Centre Toronto. They hand over this contract to this company at \$10,000. I do not think any one will challenge the statement that if this work in the area in front of this building is to be called a complete work, it is a very poor class of work and if you go to Sparks street or to Toronto or to any other city where pavements are laid you will find no pavement like this which has such an irregular surface that you are almost blinded by the dust from it. We have seen men employed in this class of work and we know what is done; it is either hand trowelled or trowelled by machinery, and yet this imperfect work is paid for at the rate of \$2.25 per yard. I have it on good information that asphalt pavements are laid in towns and cities in his province and in Quebec at from \$2.25 to \$2.50 per square yard, and yet here we are paying for a miserable work no less than \$2.25. Here is the complaint and it is a well-founded complaint, that the department had no right or business to give this contract at \$2.25 or any other price without asking for tenders. The department cannot shelter itself with the statement that they had no knowledge of what it would cost. Surely the department is well equipped with officials, and surely these officials could estimate what the area and cost of the work would be, and yet in the face of that fact the department hands over this contract, between \$9,000 and \$10,000, to a company which is certainly not unfriendly to the government, having at its head one of the Liberal candidates, Mr. Robinette. I suppose that tomorrow the Toronto 'Globe' will come to the rescue of Mr. Robinette and it will be the old story, that this company was being formed and to make up the company his name was used. That was the excuse in the case of the Owen Sound Dredging Company. There you find that the plant owned by the member for Rainy River and his son-in-law and partner, Mr. Bowman, is put in the hands of a joint-stock company and yet any one looking at the returns furnished to the department at Toronto will find that Mr. Rowell is in it; and his partner and his bookkeeper and an accountant in an adjoining office, who it is known has no stock in the concern, are the gentlemen who were placed in as directors. Why were

they placed in as directors in the return? Simply as a blind to make people believe they are the actual owners, when it is a party of grafter politicians that are in it and no persons else, and more, you will find that there is a fraud in it that it is not a bona fide company in the fact that this company has not made returns for two or three years to the department. Any legitimate concern having bona fide shareholders and stockholders has its annual returns made and yet this company, headed by Mr. Rowell and doing dredging for this government at their own prices, does not give its returns to the department at all. There is a power behind the throne in this case and the power in this case was Mr. Robinette the candidate of the Liberal party in Centre Toronto, and the public will have to judge. What does happen and what will happen when such contingencies arise? When a contract is being given about the time of an election, a political leverage can be exercised and used by a party follower and a contract for \$10,000 from the government can be had at their own price when the government are afraid to go into any country district and give an ordinary mail contract for fear of aggravating some of their friends without putting it up to public tender. We will have to wait to see as to the nature of the work that is performed on Wellington street, but in the meantime any person who has ever seen these pavements laid in cities or towns in the province of Ontario must arrive at the conclusion that the work in front of the building is of the most inferior nature. I do not believe it would be possible to find a piece of work that has been performed worse than that, and the department, fearing that it might not pass into the hands of a party man, saw fit to do what they did on the present occasion.

Mr. SPROULE. There are two or three things about this transaction that attract one's attention. The excuse to-day is not the chapter of accidents we had yesterday, and it was wonderful how they worked in all these accidents to the advantage of one side, of course, as an evidence of the business acumen and ability they have displayed. In this case the first thing that attracts my attention is the excuse given by the hon. acting Minister of Public Works (Mr. Hyman) why they were prepared to lay down a certain kind of pavement on Wellington street. Every resident on Wellington street asked for it. All the residents on the street joined in the representation that that was the kind of pavement that was required. Would it not be apparent to any one having to do with it that some one must have gone around and invited their signatures to a petition for that purpose? What could the people resident on the street know about the quality of this pavement? Are they experts in this kind of pavement?