

granolithic sidewalk, which is a very much more expensive pavement to construct than the work done in front of this building. I am informed that contracts for these walks are taken at from nine to eleven cents per square foot. I think that is the price paid in Brockville, Prescott and Guelph. That would be from 81 to 89 cents per square yard, as against \$2.25 per square yard for the work of taking up the walks in front of this building and putting on a little top dressing of some kind of a mixture. I do not know what it is composed of, but it is something that apparently has to be watered every morning to keep the dust down, which was not required with the old pavement.

Mr. HYMAN. I cannot say that I am aware of the current prices for sidewalks; but my hon. friend understands that a sidewalk and a permanent pavement are entirely different matters as to depth and weight of material, so that the price of one has nothing to do with the price of the other.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Mr. Speaker, I may say that my object has been accomplished if we have nothing more than the assurance of the Prime Minister that these contracts are going to be let by public tender and to the most favourable bidder for the country. That alone more than justifies me in bringing the matter up. The Acting Minister of Public Works endeavoured to make a point against the gentlemen who furnished me with the data on this matter, gentlemen of the very highest repute in the Dominion of Canada, by stating that they had put the price paid for this work at from \$2.50 to \$3 per square yard. I may say that I tried in the Auditor General's Department, and in the Department of Public Works to ascertain what had been paid for the work, either the gross amount for the whole or the net amount paid per square yard, and I failed to get the slightest information. No papers were available in the Auditor General's Department, they were somewhere else. In the Public Works Department they had been sent for by the chief engineer or the deputy minister, and I could not get them. How then are these gentlemen to be blamed for not knowing the actual cost? They went by the figures given them by gentlemen connected with the concern, and we have yet to measure in order to see how many square yards there are in the whole business. I was more than surprised to hear the Acting Minister of Public Works (Mr. Hyman) refer to the late Minister of Public Works (Mr. Sutherland) as he did. I yield to no man in this House—not even to the Prime Minister—in the esteem in which I hold the late Minister of Public Works; and I venture the assertion that this contract was not let during his personal administration, and that when the facts are brought out, it will be found that he never was a party to the letting of it. It may have been

Mr. TAYLOR.

let as the Cornwall canal lighting contract was. The last time I saw the late Minister of Public Works—and I was as intimate with him as almost any member of this House except the Prime Minister and the Acting Minister of Public Works—he assured me that the Cornwall canal lighting contract was laid in front of him; and on the assurance that it had come from the Justice Department and was perfectly regular he signed it without looking into it. Possibly this contract may have borne his signature, but I venture to say that his name was never put to it unless everything was fair and square and regular. I was glad however to see the acting minister change his assertion to one that he himself was not responsible. But if so who was responsible? Possibly it was one of the officers of the department who are so busy letting contracts. I was roaming across the Northwest a few days ago and came across a notice on a board, regularly printed, forbidding homesteads in certain areas until sixty or a certain number of days after the plans and all this other business had been registered in the Surveyor General's office at Ottawa. The atmosphere was clear up there and I smelt, to use the expression somebody here used yesterday, a huge sized rat. I asked the late Deputy Minister of the Interior on my return, and he stated that no such order had ever been issued. I then spoke to the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), then Minister of the Interior, and he denied having heard of it. He sent for one of his officers, who has the honour to occupy a seat in this House, and was informed that that gentleman, on his own responsibility, had issued that order. Possibly similar work has since been going on in the Public Works Department, and I would draw the attention of the First Minister to this. The argument is advanced that the city of Ottawa is using this contract. Well, I venture to say that if the electors of this city understand the matter, they will get rid of their city engineer and their council. Any engineer of any corporation, who will advise paying \$2.25 for that pavement in front of the building when they can get the regular asphalt pavement for \$2.50 per cubic yard, is not fit for his business and should not be kept in his position. I wonder if the influence of parliament hill were called in in order to impress upon the chief engineer of the city of Ottawa and the council possibly of that city that they should accept this new pavement. This question is worth looking into just as well as that wonderful petition of all the residents along the road. Who are these petitioners? Bank clerks, gentlemen of the Rideau club, saloon keepers and the United States Consul's office. All these gentlemen, we are told, came and viewed the pavement and spontaneously signed a petition, it looked so handsome. When did they see it? It is only a few weeks since the snow was clear from it.