

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I accept the hon. gentleman's statement without the slightest qualification except to say that we ought to have precise information on that point. If there was an Order in Council, as I suppose there must have been, we ought to have that Order in Council. I would like also to ask the Minister of Public Works—if he is able to give the information now, well and good, if not let him give it at a later date—what would be the estimated cost of laying that 4,250 yards with granolithic pavement, and what would be the estimated cost of laying it with asphalt pavement. It would be interesting to know this for the purpose of comparison.

Mr. HYMAN. Speaking from memory, I think the lowest tender for the ordinary asphalt pavement was in the neighbourhood of \$2.75 per yard, or 50 cents higher.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. And granolithic?

Mr. HYMAN. I do not know about the granolithic.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I suppose the hon. gentleman has that information in his department and it can be furnished to the House. There are altogether too many of these instances coming up. We have had three of them within the last ten days, and I trust that this subject will be taken up by the government, and that they will conclude to carry on the construction of public works in this country in accordance with the public interest and in accordance with the terms of the plain statute which ought to be respected.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The question which has been brought up by my hon. friend (Mr. Sam. Hughes) really involves two subjects; the past contract and the contract to be let. With regard to the contract which was given last year for the pavement in front of these buildings, it appears that this contract was let by my lamented colleague, Mr. Sutherland. I would be slow to believe that Mr. Sutherland who was a very careful man did anything which was not in accordance with the law. Not having the particulars I cannot say for my part that anything wrong has been done, although it may appear that something which has been done was not quite according to law. The law provides to-day that all work which involves an expenditure of more than \$5,000 should be given by public tender and contract. My hon. friend says it is time we should take up this matter, but he must know that we have already taken it up. We wanted to be doubly sure, and so the law enacted this session provides that not only tenders should be invited but that individual ministers should not have the power to give contracts except within the small margin of \$5,000. For all contracts above \$5,000 tenders will have to be invited. That is the law to-day, but we have also provided

Mr. HYMAN.

in the new law that the ministers individually, even after they have asked for tenders, should not have the power to give contracts, but that the matter should be brought before the Governor in Council and that the Governor in Council alone should give the contract. This very session we have amended the statute in that regard, and after this statute has been ratified, which will be some time next week probably, no individual minister shall have power to give contracts, except for the small sum of \$5,000, and all other contracts shall have to be given upon the authority of the Governor in Council. That disposes of this point, and I think when the facts are brought down it will be seen that nothing wrong was done in this matter, although a contract was apparently given for an initial work which eventually amounted to about \$10,000. I would be slow to believe that Mr. Sutherland in his lifetime gave a contract for more than \$5,000, but probably after the contract was given, it was found that a small additional piece of work had to be done. That point we can discuss later when we have the facts.

Mr. FOSTER. It was nearly double.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Perhaps so, but if it was within the margin of \$5,000 at first I do not think much wrong was done. It is not fair to the government, it is not fair to the House to attempt to pass judgment on this matter in advance of our being in possession of all the facts. I deprecate any tendency to find fault immediately, and to suspect at once that everything is wrong—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Might I suggest to the right hon. gentleman that I understood notice of this was given more than two days ago.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Two weeks ago.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Surely we might have had all the facts brought down to-day.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I never heard of this until this moment.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Will the Prime Minister excuse me? I placed in his hands more than one week ago a letter containing all the data I wanted which I requested him to give to the Acting Minister of Public Works, and the Prime Minister sent that letter to the Acting Minister of Public Works in London and the Acting Minister told me. I acted perfectly fairly.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not say that my hon. friend was not fair. I tell him that I did not know of this matter until a moment ago. It is quite true that my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) the other day referred to some information he wanted from the Minister of Public Works in relation to the pavement, but I did not even read the letter