

mitted that perhaps trade conditions altered, and work can be done now much cheaper than it could fifteen or twenty-five years ago. The fact remains each one of the contracts made had been much more favorable than the preceding one. (Applause.) The existing contract was 40 per cent. more favorable for composition than that of 1878, and the Government only paid one-quarter what they had paid before for press work.

#### An Unfounded Statement.

Continuing, Mr. Harcourt denied that the Government is bound up in any way to any person, and he assured his hon. friend that the statement was a fiction, containing not a particle of truth. (Cheers.) There are yet, he reminded the House, four and a half months before the contract expires, and ample time to take the matter up and have specifications prepared in the most advantageous manner, as has been done in the past. Every person in the Province who has the equipment to enable him to carry on the work will have an opportunity to tender and suddenly acquire the wealth which his hon. friend thinks the last contractor has accumulated. (Laughter.) In conclusion he directed Mr. Whitney's attention to the statement of the gentleman interviewed by *The Mail and Empire*, a reputable gentleman, and commended it to Mr. Whitney's careful consideration. That gentleman was magnanimous enough to say that he would be glad to accept the contract at the same prices for three years. Was that the best that gentleman could do? If it was, surely there could be no great bonanza for the present contractor. (Government applause.)

Mr. Whitney—That gentleman says he would be compelled to largely increase his plant.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt, continuing, explained that there is ample time for intending tenderers to equip themselves for the work.

Mr. Whitney pressed for an answer to his question whether or not an investigation has been going on.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt—There is no investigation at all.

#### A Fraud Perpetrated.

Mr. Matheson, while admitting that the present prices for press work, folding and stitching might be low, attacked the Government for having so drawn the specifications that the extras upon the work of putting covers upon the statutes for 1897 had, under the contract allowing extra pay of three cents per section for all over 600 pages, so increased the amount paid the contractor that instead of getting \$1,275 for the work he received about \$5,000. There had been a fraud perpetrated upon the Province in this respect. Under the same clause the cost of the revised statutes would have been \$75,000 instead of about \$46,000, but the Attorney-General had insisted that the contract did not include this work, and had made a new arrangement with respect to it by which the work was done for \$35,000. The Government had, he admitted, done their duty in this matter, and the Government supporters applauded this candid admission of facts.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt pointed out that the revised statutes are only issued

once in ten years, and therefore were not included in the contract. There is a large schedule of work in the contract, he explained, and while some of it is done at a loss there may be profit on other items.

The Attorney-General explained his reasons for ruling that the revised statutes did not come within the contract. He also called the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite to the fact that the contract now about to expire had only been awarded to Messrs. Warwick Bros. & Rutter after the tender had been reported on, not only by the officials of the House and experts in Toronto, but also by the Queen's Printer at Ottawa, an officer of the Conservative Government then in power there; all of whom reported that it was the lowest. The Government in awarding it, therefore, felt that they had exhausted every means in their power of determining which was the best tender. (Cheers.)

#### Mr. Kribs Wants Information.

When the House was in Committee of Supply Mr. Kribs (South Waterloo) asked how the item of \$60,000 for civil government was to be expended. Mr. Harcourt said that if Mr. Kribs would pay a little attention to the last copy of the public accounts he would see for himself. However, he admitted the fairness of the question. In 1897 the Province made an expenditure under the head of civil government of \$2 less than \$251,000, the amount asked for the year. The present amount asked for was one-fourth of that, or sufficient for three months' expenditure under this head. And because they asked for the amount it by no means followed that they would spend it. He assured his hon. friend that not in ten years had they spent the last dollar of the money the House authorized them to spend. Mr. Harcourt referred to the growing demands under that heading of ex-

penditure and to new items, such as the Forestry Department, the Bureau of Mines, etc. He knew his hon. friend would not ask the Government to stand still, to mark time, and as the Province grew so the expense of civil government would increase.

Mr. Harcourt made a passing reference to the potential resources of the Province, which Mr. Whitney, who followed, said was not in dispute. He explained that Mr. Kribs was not in the habit of voting away sums of \$60,000 in a few seconds and his desire for information was natural. Mr. Whitney asserted that the Government was voting sufficient supply for the first three months of 1899, which virtually made it unnecessary to call the House until next spring.

Mr. Kribs was quite indignant over Mr. Harcourt's reply. He disclaimed any desire to have the Province mark time or stand still. "I only asked you what the item was for," said Mr. Kribs, "and the next time I ask you a question I want a civil answer." (Laughter.)

Mr. McLaughlin (Stormont) announced that the Opposition intended watching what was being done with the people's money, and Mr. Wardell (North Wentworth) asked why, if in January last, estimates were passed for the pre-