

Mr. FISHER. The Coal Company undertook to build this wharf and make these improvements as an ordinary contractor, and this is to pay the balance of the contract.

Mr. BLAIN. Is this on public or private property?

Mr. FISHER. On public property.

Mr. BLAIN. My understanding was that it belonged partly to the Dominion Coal Company.

Mr. FISHER. The Coal Company owned the property, but an agreement was come to at the time of the contract, that the work to be done should be open to the public and be for the use of the public.

Mr. BARKER. Is that a written provision of the contract?

Mr. JOHNSTON. Yes, and the contract has been produced on three occasions in this House, and is a matter of record for at least two or three years. The Dominion Coal Company own the land and the harbour, by reason of the fact that it is an artificial harbour; but an arrangement has been made between the company and the people of Glace Bay, which has been discussed in this House on several occasions, by which the public are entitled to all the privileges in this harbour that they have in any other harbour of the country. There is a contract between the Dominion Coal Company and the government to that effect, and as that company is a responsible company, it will be subject to damages if the contract is not carried out. It serves all the purposes of a public harbour, and the people of Glace Bay generally are satisfied with the arrangement and have so signified on many occasions.

Mr. BLAIN. My information is that the public are not quite satisfied, but that they see growing up there a great monopoly, which I am informed has the support of my hon. friend who has just spoken. The minister has stated that the policy of the government is to expend money only on government property. My hon. friend varies that policy in this case by expending money on property owned by a private corporation. Therefore my hon. friend will have to be a little careful in future in stating that the policy of the government is to expend money upon public property rather than upon private property? I could give him some instances in the province of Ontario where the government have expended money upon properties owned by private individuals.

Mr. FISHER. That is the general policy, but at the same time there may be instances and special circumstances where it is advisable to make the change, and if ever there was an instance here is one, where an

important harbour serving a large number of people is in the hands of a private corporation, and by an arrangement with that corporation the government is able to secure all the benefits and advantages which that corporation has provided for the benefit of the public.

Mr. SPROULE. Has the government any control over the charges?

Mr. FISHER. Yes, a contract is entered into by which this company is obliged to put all the benefits and advantages of their expenditure at the disposal of the public at large, and as a further expenditure of government money was necessary in order to complete the work, the company obligated themselves to give all their former work for the benefit of the public.

Mr. AMES. In case any other coal company should wish to ship coal by that wharf could they do so under this contract?

Mr. FISHER. No.

Mr. AMES. Therefore that coal company has the absolute and exclusive monopoly, so far as coal shipping is concerned, of a wharf for which the government pays \$25,000.

Mr. FISHER. There is nothing in the contract to prevent it.

At one o'clock, committee took recess.

Committee resumed at three o'clock.

Mr. AMES. Mr. Chairman, the question I asked before you left the Chair was whether this contract would permit another coal company, in case there was another coal company in the neighbourhood of this wharf, to use this wharf for the shipment of their coal, or whether, in the case of coal shipments, it would give an absolute monopoly to the Dominion Coal Company in respect to this wharf.

Mr. FISHER. I am informed that it would not and am also informed that there is no other coal near there and no mines that can be used for that purpose.

Mr. AMES. It may be that there has been no coal discovered up to the present time but unless the entire area subject to this place is owned by the Dominion Coal Company, one can never be sure that, with the great wealth of Nova Scotia, additional deposits of coal may not yet be discovered. It may be that a coal mine will be discovered somewhere in the neighbourhood which will be subject to this particular harbour.

Mr. FISHER. I am informed that this whole area has been exploited for coal and that is all in the hands of the Dominion Coal Company.