

Mr. McLENNAN. Just one word in regard to the observations of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule). I allowed the other hon. gentlemen who were not here in 1896 to go on. I sympathized with them considerably because I knew that they had very little knowledge of what they were talking about, but the hon. member for East Grey got up and posed as a purist in regard to the improper practice of husbanding grants like this until the eve of an election. I might as well tell the hon. gentleman that the Minister of Public Works and myself were defending at every step the conduct of the government that he was supporting, and that the very bridge that we were defending the construction of was built by the government that he was supporting, and that the work was proceeded with at the very time I was running my election against my predecessor in 1896.

Mr. SPROULE. What has that to do with this ?

Mr. McLENNAN. That bridge was under construction and another wharf at Seaside costing \$8,000 and yet the hon. gentleman and all the others got up and asserted that that it was an immoral practice to be holding these grants up until the eve of an election. The bridge that so much criticism was made about was constructed by the government which the hon. member for East Grey was supporting during the campaign of 1896. The Minister of Public Works and myself very successfully, I hope, defended the act of that government.

Mr. SPROULE. I never mentioned elections in connection with this vote.

Mr. McLENNAN. Yes, the hon. gentleman did.

Mr. SPROULE. Not a single solitary word. My contention was that it was improper to ask a vote from the House without any estimate or information to give to the House to show that it was needed or what it was going to cost. I said that the explanation given by the hon. member for Inverness was an excusable and justifiable reason for delay, but that now, when they come forward and ask for a vote to go on with that work, they should be able to give us information. I did not say a word about an election then and what the hon. gentleman has said now is altogether uncalled for and gratuitous on his part.

Port Hood harbour—closing northern entrance with brush and stonework, \$15,000.

Mr. J. D. REID. What shape is this work in ?

Mr. FISHER. This is for a continuation of the work of closing up the space between the mainland and an island, the harbour having been originally protected by a natural beach.

Mr. J. D. REID. What is the total cost going to be ?

Mr. FISHER.

Mr. FISHER. Nearly \$100,000 of which about \$60,000 has already been spent. Last year we spent \$5,000, we propose to spend \$15,000 the coming year and \$15,000 or \$20,000 more will close it up.

Mr. SPROULE. How is this work being done ?

Mr. FISHER. By day's work.

Mr. SPROULE. Does the minister think that a work like this should be done by day's work.

Mr. FISHER. It is very hard to say just how a work of this kind can be done by contract.

Mr. SPROULE. Is it not a pier ?

Mr. FISHER. No, this is on a sand bank which used to be sufficient to protect the harbour, but this has been washed out and this work has been done at low tide, the brush and stone being brought on to create a sort of breakwater. This is done at different times as it can be done and for that reason it has to be done by day's work.

Mr. SPROULE. It seems to me that this is the kind of work that a contractor would have no objection to tender for. It is a large work and it is not a work that there should be very great difficulty in making a specification for or in estimating the cost of because the cost of stone, the cost of brush and the cost of putting these in place could easily be arrived at, and as there is a large amount of it I think that it would more properly be done by tender and contract instead of by day's work.

Mr. FISHER. I think this is a class of work for which a contractor would probably charge a very high price to protect him against loss by accidents caused by storms arising and washing away the work. For this reason it would be cheaper to do it by day's labour. No contractor would undertake such work without asking for a price which would protect him against accident.

Mr. SPROULE. Any contractor would meet with almost the same difficulty on almost any work which was set out anywhere in the water. It may be that here there is greater danger than elsewhere but it seems to me that even that would not justify the expenditure of this large amount of money by day's work. I think the minister said that it would probably cost \$100,000. Will any one say that it is a good plan to expend \$100,000 on a breakwater and do it by day's work ?

Mr. FISHER. My information is that the first part of this work was a good deal in the nature of an experiment, but as the work went on it was shown to be feasible. It has therefore been carried on and has proved effective.