

and our rivers. We should have a definite policy laid down by the minister who is to be responsible.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. A definite policy about what? Is it about repairing dredges, or what else?

Mr. CASGRAIN. As I have said, the question has drifted far away from the repairs of dredges. Hon. gentlemen opposite have been permitted to go into other questions.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. When the hon. gentleman speaks about a policy, it is only fair that he should say upon what matters he wants a policy pronounced.

Mr. CASGRAIN. We have had the hon. members for Yarmouth, Inverness and Bellechasse urging their views, and we ought to have some definite announcement as to what is the general policy of the government on the matters brought up by these hon. gentlemen, and in order to have an authoritative statement of that policy we should have here the hon. minister who, according to the declaration made by him at his election, is very shortly to run that branch of public works which has to do with harbours and rivers.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE. Is it possible to very much improve on the advanced policy inaugurated in 1896 and carried on up to last year?

Mr. CASGRAIN. I have not any opinion to express on that point. My hon. friend the ex-Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Tarte) no doubt did a great deal to advance the policy which the late government had begun. But I would like to know whether there is to be a change in that policy, or whether it is to be followed out?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. It seems to me that the answer I gave my hon. friend from Bellechasse (Mr. Talbot) was plain, frank, clear and distinct, when I said that I had already placed in the estimates appropriations to provide dredges for the important works which he and others have represented as so much required below the city of Quebec. As long as I occupy the position, I shall be responsible for the policy of the department and be prepared to declare it as soon as I have received the sanction of my right hon. friend the Premier and my colleagues. I agree that my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Public Works appreciated much more than some others the requirements of the country, and very much more than those who preceded him. I trust that we all recognize the great necessity for the improvements started in 1896, and I have no doubt that the policy then begun will be continued even to a greater extent.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. I trust that my hon. friend will go ahead quicker even than I en-

deavoured to do. If he does, he will get my cordial support. I did the best I could and the Department of Public Works did the best it could. I should be very sorry indeed if that department were dismantled, as seems to be announced. The department is a unit to-day. It is organized on a solid basis. Its officers work together. They are proud of their work. As a French Canadian, let me say that the Department of Public Works has been largely manned by men of my race. I should be very sorry if that department, which is the only one where French influence has a good deal of weight, were dismantled, and I would appeal from such a decision to the larger tribunal of this country. I hope such will not be the case. The announcement has not been formally and clearly made. The Department of Public Works has done splendid work during the past few years. All the officers have given their best energies to the work. It has been said that we have drifted a little far from the \$30,000 for repairs to dredges, but perhaps I may be allowed to ask my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works whether he has taken into consideration the report made to him with reference to the dredging of the north channel below Quebec, and whether any decision has been arrived at?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I have not had an opportunity of considering that report yet.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. That is one of the reasons also why the other channel has not been dredged so far. The two departments of Marine and Public Works have been discussing whether it is better or not to improve the north or south channel. That is one additional reason why the improvement of the south channel has not been made. My hon. friend the Minister of Public Works has said, in discussing the item which is under debate, that he fears that he will be obliged to pay more this season for dredging work. I would like very much to know in what parts of the country and on what works he expects to be obliged to pay more?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I was referring more particularly to the arrangements we are trying to make for dredging on Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. These are very broad limits.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Well, it is a very broad question.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. But my hon. friend knows the works on which he expects to spend money. He says that he expects to be obliged to pay more for dredging in certain places. Surely it is a fair question to ask him what these works are. I do not mean to embarrass him—

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I do not feel at all embarrassed. I said the hon. gentleman's question was a general