

years there was this general vote that had been expunged, and there was no general vote, although it has crept back now. The whole object of putting estimates before this House is to let the House know what they are voting the money for. That is why we have votes for contingencies for each special item of work, and the contingencies of a department are voted as contingencies, with the idea that they take in all the contingencies. My hon. friend says that he must have travelling expenses. You take your travelling expenses from every work that is conducted in this country. If an engineer goes to a particular work, his expenses are charged to that work. This \$5,000 is over and above all that.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
Not always.

Mr. FOSTER. That is the rule, that is the way you get your travelling expenses, that is the way you pay your clerk of works—out of the vote given by Parliament for that particular work. But I want to repeat that these are really contingencies and travelling expenses, and they should be so exposed.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
I must take issue with my hon. friend. There are a great many surveys wanted at places for which no money have been voted.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman did not take a dollar for surveys out of this vote last year.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
It was expended in a general way. I must again say that I simply pursued the same system as had been followed in the past.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I do not think the officer who advised the Minister was candid. The hon. member for York has explained how the vote has been irregularly dealt with, and that a change of system is required. We will not agree that it is always a satisfactory answer for the hon. Minister to say that there has been an abuse of long standing and it was simply continued. The question is whether this is a proper way of keeping the account, that the amount voted generally for harbours and rivers should be expended on contingencies. I do not think the Finance Minister would agree that the vote on harbours and rivers generally should be used for departmental contingencies.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
The report of the Auditor General for 1895-96 shows that this item was expended by the Conservative Government for the same purpose as it was expended last year. The details appear at part II., page 157, and the items include telegraphic service, express charges, travelling expenses and similar expenditures.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.
That, however, was not a proper system to follow.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
I am very glad my attention is now called to it.

Mr. GILLIES. The question is whether the system in regard to the expenditure of this \$5,000 for harbours and rivers generally is a proper one and should be continued, for if it is irregular it should be discontinued. I now direct the Minister's attention to item 161, which is a vote for 1897-98, \$115,000, Harbours and Rivers, Nova Scotia. Now, only \$38,500 appears for this purpose. Why has this large reduction been made in the service?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
The hon. gentleman had better wait until the Supplementary Estimates come down.

Mr. GILLIES. I may not be here at the time. Item 161 last year shows \$2,000 for a breakwater in my province (L'Ardoise—repairs to breakwater). That sum has not been expended. I had considerable trouble in inducing the Minister to put that sum in the Estimates. During the season I met the Minister in Montreal and urged the necessity of making the expenditure. He promised it should be done, but it has not been carried out. The Minister is well aware that there was a by-election pending during the whole of last season. I now ask the Minister why this amount of \$2,000 was not expended on that work after it had been voted by Parliament, instead of the work being allowed to go to pieces and washed away by storms on the Atlantic.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
The reason I did not expend the \$2,000 was because the engineer reported that the sum was insufficient. This year I have placed \$1,500 additional in the Estimates, so as to be able to carry out the work. That is my only motive.

Mr. GILLIES. I am not referring to the hon. gentleman's motives, but I have my own opinion in regard to it. The hon. gentleman last year stated, on the report of his engineer, that \$2,000 would be sufficient for the work. How did it occur that the engineer so rapidly changed his mind? When was the report received stating that this amendment would be insufficient?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.
I do not remember the date. The report came in that the amount was not sufficient, and I thought it better to wait and obtain an additional sum. I therefore put \$1,500 additional in the Estimates.

Mr. GILLIES. If the work had been proceeded with in last July, and the \$2,000 expended when it had been voted by Parliament, it would have been amply sufficient, as was reported by the hon. gentleman's