

fore we leave this item. The \$70,000 that the hon. minister is asking now is to be added to the \$10,000 vote of last year making \$80,000—is that right?

Mr. EMMERSON. To be exact in figures the estimate before me is \$79,556.95 for the proposed cribwork which is to be a guard pier and a current breaking pier. The \$10,000 voted last year has been applied on that, and if you deduct the \$10,000 it would leave \$69,556.95. We ask this year for a total vote of \$70,000 assuming that the contingencies may possibly be short.

Mr. LENNOX. It is hoped that the \$70,000 we now vote will complete the work.

Mr. EMMERSON. It overlaps it by a few hundred dollars, and we hope to keep it within that figure.

Mr. LENNOX. The \$10,000 is already expended?

Mr. EMMERSON. In the purchase of timber and in securing the services of experts.

Mr. LENNOX. And upon the new scheme; the old scheme being entirely abandoned?

Mr. EMMERSON. Wiped out entirely.

Mr. LENNOX. In my opinion the Minister of Railways has not pursued a constitutional course in this matter. We voted \$10,000 last year for a specific purpose, the object of which was explained to us. It was said that this \$10,000 would complete the object, and the committee was pledged last year to a total expenditure of \$10,000, whereas now we are pledged to a total expenditure of \$80,000, and the \$10,000 voted last year has been appropriated, without authority I believe, to this new scheme. I do not question the wisdom of the new scheme, but I say that there was no authority to apply the \$10,000 to that purpose without coming to parliament again. It is for the minister to say whether there is any explanation required.

Mr. EMMERSON. I have earned a very good reputation for not speaking too much and I would not wish to destroy it by going to the other extreme; but if the committee will pardon me I will explain. This bridging of the Grand Narrows, the connecting link of northern and western portion of Cape Breton with the southern and eastern portion is a very important matter. If anything happened to that swing or draw-bridge, the whole traffic of the Sydneys would be interrupted. Protests were made against the old plan by the business interests of Sydney who represented that if that cluster of piles were put down there would be danger not only to the vessels but to the bridge as well, because, should the currents swing these vessels against the draw there would be a complete interruption of traffic. As the responsible head of the department I

did not think that any risk should be taken and as this \$10,000 was entrusted to the Department of Railways to overcome the difficulties at that point, and without there being any plan or specification for carrying on a particular work, I do not think parliament would wish that the old design should be carried out, if it were found that it should not accomplish the good intended. No advantage has been taken of parliament by the action of the Railway Department, because the money was voted for the purpose of removing the difficulty and danger at that point, and it has been devoted to that purpose. That was the whole object that parliament had in voting that money. It is true that the department thought that the \$10,000 would be sufficient, but upon investigation it was found that it was inadequate.

Mr. BLAIN. That is all very well, but is it not rather misleading the committee? The minister says that upon examination it was found that the expenditure of the \$10,000 would not be sufficient. I do not know that any member of the committee would complain that a larger expenditure was found to be necessary to accommodate the trade of that place, but we do complain that when it was represented that this \$10,000 would be sufficient, the minister appropriated it to part of an expenditure that will run up to \$79,000, and he did that without consulting parliament. Then after the contracts are let, the timber purchased, and the \$10,000 paid out, the minister makes the statement that he has changed the plan without consulting parliament. Are we to understand that is the policy the hon. gentleman proposes to pursue?

Mr. EMMERSON. The money is voted for a specific purpose and is applied to a specific purpose. We have, it is true, entered into contracts, because if we had not done so, we would have been unable to get the timber after parliament had met and voted the money. It was necessary to let these contracts during the winter months, so that the country would get the advantage of the least cost in securing the material. There must be some discretionary power left to the Department of Railways in regard to a government owned and government operated railway. If not, that is one of the strongest arguments that could be used against government ownership. If we could not exercise some discretion and do work when it is essential to the safety of the road and the traffic, or to prevent a paralysis of business, I am sure it would be impossible to meet the requirements of the country.

Mr. MORIN. If I remember rightly, before recess the minister said he had bought the timber for that sheer wharf or pier for \$35,000.

Mr. EMMERSON. We have entered into contracts to that amount.