

Sir EUGENE Fiset: I would ask the minister to refer to a vote contained at page 38 of the estimates, "Rimouski—harbour improvements—the Foundation Maritime Limited to contribute one-third of the cost of pier extension—under contract. . ."

Mr. CHAPLIN: I would like the minister to answer the question why this work was not done under contract.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): In reply to the hon. member for Lincoln I can say only that he is correct in his interpretation of the Public Works Act. It is provided specifically that for any works exceeding in value \$5,000 tenders should be asked and the contracts awarded in pursuance of those tenders. However there are a few exceptions and apparently the hon. member for Temiscouata was able to convince the minister of the day that this work could be done more advantageously by day labour. Representations were made to that effect and as has already been explained the work was begun by day labour under a former administration.

Mr. POULIOT: I would ask the hon. gentleman if that work will be done by contract or by day labour?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The work having been begun by day labour and having been carried on to a stage at which a contract could not be let, it will be continued by day labour.

Mr. POULIOT: I have just a word to say to my hon. friend from Lincoln. Although he knows we all like him, I am sorry that the word "grouch" is not parliamentary because I would have used it this time. However I do not understand that he is complaining about my utterances in the house. I have always been very polite to him and if I have had to urge upon the government the necessity of building a new station at Rivière du Loup it is because the station is not yet built. If the station had been built I would have thanked the government on behalf of my people and it would have been unnecessary to make a speech in that connection.

Mr. CHAPLIN: "A" speech.

Mr. POULIOT: May I suggest to the hon. gentleman that at the next Conservative caucus he might tell the government—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hanson, York-Sunbury): I would remind the hon. member that we are discussing the appropriations for harbours and rivers in Quebec, not railway stations. He must confine his remarks to the item before the committee.

[Mr. Chaplin.]

Mr. POULIOT: What I wish to say can be said in a sentence. Before the hon. gentleman from Lincoln brings the matter before his party caucus it might be well for him to insure his life.

Sir EUGENE Fiset: With reference to the vote on page 38 of the estimates to which I called attention a moment ago, are the Foundation Company going to be compelled to pay the one-third that they have agreed to pay for the work? The minister will recall a petition he has received from the chamber of commerce of Rimouski, supported by the seven navigation companies operating between Rimouski and the north shore, asking that the channel be enlarged 400 feet and deepened 22 feet. Of course, I quite understand that with the present necessity for economy the government is not asking for any appropriation for these works. But would it not be possible by using a government dredge to take off the hog's-backs that have developed in the deep channel and so enable the navigation companies to bring their vessels up to the wharves to be loaded? I do not think the cost would be very high, and it could be paid out of the general vote for dredging. No doubt the minister realizes how important it is to have this work done at the earliest possible date in the spring. The boats of these seven companies operating between Rimouski and the north shore provide the lower St. Lawrence with a local market, the importance of which cannot possibly be exaggerated. The whole north shore within the last ten years has developed so rapidly that the former population of 500 has now become about 20,000. This population has to depend upon supplies coming from the south shore, and Rimouski being the main port of the lower St. Lawrence, the minister will understand how important it is not to interrupt the good work which has been carried on in years past. I hope he will be able to instruct his deputy to detail one of his dredges to undertake the dredging that is necessary to give a uniform depth of 17 feet to the channel, which it was when first dredged.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): With regard to the payment by the Foundation Company of their agreed portion of the cost of the work, I am advised that the obstructions which he mentions do not interfere with their ships coming into the wharves.

Sir EUGENE Fiset: I am sorry to hear the minister's statement. One of the reasons why I am asking for this dredging is that the company's boats draw nearly 16 feet, and at