

subject of discussion last year, but the work was done the year before.

Mr. SPROULE. I was here when the discussion took place. The minister had no information that the work was going on, and distinctly intimated that, so far as he knew, no contract would be given in future. And now we are given to understand that the work is likely to go on. What reason is given for this change? In view of the case made out by the hon. member for Grenville (Mr. Reid), and the facts he has presented here during the last two or three years, the continuance of this work by the government is a burning scandal, it is a disgrace to the government and to the country. When Mr. Kennedy, a disinterested and capable engineer, made the report he did, declaring that there was not the depth of water and there was not the condition of bottom that Mr. Rubidge had reported, and when, without making further inquiries or satisfying themselves of the truth or falsity of that report, the government go on with this work, we certainly have a condition things that the country would not have expected. For the government to continue it now, leaves an impression on my mind that there is something behind it that neither the country nor this House knows, as otherwise it would not be continued. Now it is said that the government engineers have reported on this from time to time. So they have, but as the minister says himself, Mr. Rubidge has practically lived on the St. Lawrence river for years: he has been doing the same work for the same contractors for years: and it is a fact that cannot be denied that we sometimes have engineers playing into the hands of the contractors in a way that is neither creditable to themselves nor in the interest of the country. Now, grave suspicions have been aroused that that may be the case at the present time, and I am justified in coming to that conclusion from the fact that Mr. Kennedy, an entirely disinterested party, made a contrary report. The minister himself has not said one word to discredit the professional ability of Mr. Kennedy, and his report is the very antipodes of that of Mr. Rubidge. Now in face of that fact the government is going to commence work again after telling us that last year it was closed up for the purpose of effectually wiping it off the books, and they were paying a percentage which up to that time had been held back for the due fulfilment of the work. Now we are told that the work is going on again.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. There is nothing being done now.

Mr. SPROULE. There is a sum in the estimates for that purpose. Then why should we go on until we know more about it?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. We have not reached it.

Mr. SPROULE. But it must have been considered by council, and the minister is responsible for what has passed in council. These estimates are before this House, and in face of the allegations made by an hon. member of this House and who is in a position to know, in face of the letters that have been read from respectable captains who have been on that river for a quarter of a century, in face of the affidavits that have been read to this House, the government are going to go on with it, notwithstanding the burning scandal that exists. I say that if the government continue that work they will do it at their own peril, and an indignant public will rise up against them and condemn them.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. With regard to what the hon. gentleman said about Mr. Kennedy, I hope there is no misunderstanding. Certainly I would not attempt to discredit Mr. Kennedy, for I have had the pleasure of knowing him for twenty years; he is an eminent engineer, a gentleman of high standing. But I wish to point out that Mr. Kennedy did not report on the question whether the work was useful or not; he reported that the work had not been completed, had not been done.

Mr. SPROULE. Did he not report that he found only fourteen feet of water where it was declared in this House there were seventeen feet, and where Mr. Rubidge reported there were seventeen feet?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Even if he did, that might be the best possible reason why we should proceed to get seventeen feet of water.

Mr. SPROULE. Would it not discredit Mr. Rubidge who had made this report, and against whose report Mr. Kennedy reported after a careful examination that instead of seventeen feet of water there were only twelve, fourteen, fifteen feet, and in some cases not that much.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Then if it discredited the report of Mr. Rubidge it also discredited the late government. If Mr. Rubidge was a discredited official, why did they keep him there and continue him doing that work? This report was made in the time of the late government, all these documents which the hon. member for Grenville has read related to the time of the late government, the whole transaction relates to the time of the late government. The hon. gentleman should be more careful about raising suspicions in that unpleasant way, he should not hit his neighbours in that unpleasant way.

Mr. REID (Grenville). I may say to the minister that though Mr. Rubidge's report was made in 1891, Mr. Kennedy's report was made at the same time. But after these reports were made the work was absolutely stopped right there. Mr. Rubidge had been