

Mr. TALBOT. And that steamers are fairly ploughing their way through that mud at the risk of their boilers.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. I quite agree that there is sand, and there is rock also. However, there were no dredges available, and that work could not be carried out just then; and there was not so much hurry for it because of the tide. I would have been only too glad, if it had been possible, to have that piece of work done, which, if I remember rightly, is only two or three thousand feet long; but the reports in the department were to the effect that the dredges that were available were not capable of carrying out that work. It is unfair to insinuate that I am to blame because that work has not been done.

Mr. TALBOT. I did not say that.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. The Minister of Public Works said he could not understand why that work was not done before. The tide was there, and it is still there, and there was more pressing work to be attended to. If the House will allow me to give my candid advice as to what should be done, I will say this: We all admit that there is a large quantity of dredging necessary in all parts of this country. Business is developing; harbours and rivers urgently require dredging. If I were in the position my hon. friend occupies, I would not hesitate one minute to come before this parliament and ask for all the money necessary to build a proper plant to carry out that work. I quite grant that in some parts of the country it must be as well to hire dredges; but there is so much dredging to be done in all parts of Canada that for twenty-five years to come the largest fleet of dredges we can supply will be required. My hon. friend has only to look at the records of the Public Works Department to find thousands of requests from all parts of the country for dredging. We have to face the situation. We have been too cheese-paring in the past; we should have spent more money to improve our waterways. My frank advice to the government to-day is not to hesitate, but to go ahead. Parliament will not at all grumble at the demands which it may be necessary to make upon it for improving our waterways.

Mr. TURGEON. I wish to call the attention of the hon. Minister of Public Works to the necessity of dredging along the north shore of the province of New Brunswick. The trade of that district has been very much hampered for the want of it. I may say that the harbour of Caraquet, the harbour of Shippegan and Little Shippegan, in fact, all the harbours of the counties of Restigouche, Kent, Northumberland, as well as in the county of Bonaventure in the province of Quebec, are in much need of dredging. The hon. Minister of Public Works

Hon. Mr. TARTE.

has referred to the great appliances for dredging now used in different parts of the country; but if we have to wait until such appliances have completed their work in the large places, before they can come to the smaller harbours, our trade will have to take another direction. I know that the hon. minister is endeavouring to give every case his best attention. I called his attention yesterday to the necessity of doing some dredging in the harbour of Tracadie, where large lumbering interests are suffering. I hope he will be able to meet the necessities of these cases, on which I think reports were made by his own officials. A report was made in 1893, I believe, recommending some dredging in the harbour of Bathurst, one of the greatest in northern New Brunswick, and ever since we have been waiting from year to year for a dredge. I would ask the hon. minister to consider the suggestion that he should purchase at once either in Canada or in the United States a dredge for service on the north shore of New Brunswick, or in the Baie des Chaleurs. I believe we should have a dredge for that locality which could be moved from place to place according to the most urgent need. There is trade enough to be done on both sides of the Baie des Chaleurs to warrant such an expenditure, and I hope the suggestion will receive his best consideration.

Mr. CASGRAIN. It seems to me that this question has developed considerably. We started by discussing repairs generally, and we have had speeches from several hon. gentlemen, including the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Talbot), the hon. member for Yarmouth (Mr. Law), and the hon. member who has just taken his seat, asking for dredging to be done in their constituencies. We have an hon. gentleman who is interested in the policy of the Department of Public Works. I refer to the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Mr. Préfontaine). That hon. minister distinctly stated that it was the intention of the government to give the Department of Marine and Fisheries the work of improving our harbours and rivers. If that be the policy of the government—and that policy was solemnly stated during an election contest—we ought to have the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries here to give his views as to what will be done in the future regarding the various matters brought up in this debate. No doubt the Minister of Public Works is giving all the information he can, but, under the circumstances, he is not in a position to formulate before this House the policy which the government intends to pursue in the future with regard to the different works which hon. gentlemen opposite have pressed on the government to-night. We should have the hon. Minister of Marine here to tell us what will be his policy in these matters, when he takes over into his department that branch of the Public Works Department which deals with our harbours