

receiving of the report of the Committee of Supply. The subject is one of great importance, and I do not wish to be called upon to making a ruling without being able to give the matter very mature consideration. If the hon. gentleman has in mind any particular item that he wishes to discuss, he can obtain particulars concerning it by examining the items to be concurred in.

Mr. PUGSLEY: We might take the same course, simply for to-day, as was taken in regard to the Hudson Bay item, without establishing any precedent.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I am entirely agreeable to that proceeding by consent. I raised the question only because I did not desire that the precedent should be established.

Resolutions read the second time and concurred in.

Public works chargeable to income—Dredging.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Before this item is concurred in, I would like to call the attention of the Minister of Finance to the fact that there are large amounts for dredging. I would like to point out that the dredging work in Courtenay Bay in the harbour of St. John has been entirely stopped for a great many months, and all the expectations that were held out about five years ago by my hon. friend have not been realized. The people in my constituency are very desirous of knowing why the work is not being proceeded with. Without going into detail in the matter, I would like to ask my hon. friend if he would give me the name of the official to whom I could make application for information on this most important matter. I would also like to know what is the amount of deposit the Government has from the contractors. When I was minister I required a deposit of \$500,000. I have been told this has been reduced by one-half. I would like to know, as well, whether the contractors have been released from their contract, and whether or not the deposit is still in the hands of the Government. Am I to understand that the Minister of Customs is acting Minister of Public Works?

Mr. REID: The Prime Minister has asked me to act for the Public Works Department in the meantime. In the supplementary Estimates there are a large number of items for the Public Works Department, and my hon. friend will have all the information he requires in connection with this matter when we take up the Public

[Mr. Speaker.]

Works Estimates in committee. I would suggest that the item be allowed to pass. The hon. gentleman will have no objection to this, because there is an item covering that work in the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Does the minister say that one of the items is intended for this purpose? If I were assured of that, I would have less hesitation in acceding to the request of my hon. friend. The fact that nothing has been done, and that rumour states the contractors have been allowed to withdraw their deposit of more than half a million dollars and abandon the work.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: Is that not what the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) was suggesting should be done—stop all works?

Mr. PUGSLEY: And return the deposits?

Mr. REID: My hon. friend is wrong in reference to the deposit. The deposit was not given just offhand. As far as I can remember, the deposit was not returned to the contractor. I do not wish it to be understood that this statement is absolutely correct, because it may be subject to revision when I look into the matter again, but the situation as I remember it was this: There were claims of parties for work, and the deposit was used, or is being used, or will be used, to pay off legitimate claims, after investigation, of parties employed on the work. I do not think the deposit would pay them all. I have not had much to do with it; therefore, I cannot remember whether that statement is really accurate. I may have to change it when I get the whole facts.

Mr. PUGSLEY: The minister will inquire into it and get the facts?

Mr. REID: It is very difficult for me to speak as to the facts, because it is not in my department.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It is a matter of very great importance. I have been told that the deposit has been withdrawn and that a great many claims are left unsettled. That deposit ought to be held as security. If the minister will give me the assurance that he will get that information, I will not detain these Estimates further.

Mr. REID: I will give the assurance that I will get full information on every one of these items.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am very glad to know that the minister is acting as Minister of