

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I suppose I am just as immaculate as my hon. friend.

Mr. MONTAGUE. I am offering no criticism of the hon. gentleman's officers, but still we should have all necessary information.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. These Estimates have been prepared by the officers I found in the department, and I frankly admit that I did not go into these details myself. My instruction to Mr. Coste were: Do not allow one cent of expenditure which is not required, and if Mr. Coste has not fulfilled his duty, I would be very sorry for him. Now that my attention has been called to all these details, I will go very closely into them, and I promise that next year there will not be one dollar that I will not know where it has gone.

Mr. BERGERON. Where were these dredges kept during the winter?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Some were taken to Sorel, and some wintered elsewhere.

Mr. BERGERON. If they were the whole winter in Sorel, it would be natural to think that the repairs should be done during the winter at the workshops there.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. They were not all taken to Sorel.

Mr. BERGERON. Would it not be good policy to bring them into Sorel and have the repairs made during the winter?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Some are taken down to Sorel, when the chief engineer advises it. I leave him perfectly free to follow his own course, because I am not an expert.

Mr. BERGERON. It is very unfortunate that the chief engineer is not here to give us information.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I think my hon. friends are getting more information than ever was given in the House.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. It has been shown by the discussion and the Auditor General's report that the chief engineer would be able to protect himself pretty well. The Minister has explained that these dredges in Ontario that are idle are under commission, and for the time being their crews are employed doing small repairs. He has not yet mapped out the work for these dredges, although it is now the 25th of May, and that is the reason they are lying idle.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I never interfere with the chief engineer's work. He gives me an account of what he is doing. He submits to me the work that he intends doing, and I approve of it or do not. But he has full control of his work.

As to the delays, there have been no delays this year. The repairs may not have gone as quickly as they should, but that is not my fault. They were under the control of the chief engineer.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. Minister misunderstands some of us, because we were not criticising adversely what had been done by the chief engineer or himself, but were endeavouring to get information. He has kindly promised to give us, in concurrence, the cost of these dredges. I would ask him to add the number of days which each of them have worked during the season.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I shall have a statement prepared of all the days the dredges have worked and the money paid on every one of them.

Mr. HENDERSON. The hon. Minister was good enough to say that he was not going to forget his friends, and I desire to remind him that about a month ago a number of his very special friends from Oakville waited upon him with reference to the refuge harbour at Oakville, and the repairing of the pier. Supplementaries have come down, and I have seen nothing of any estimate for that work.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The Supplementaries are not yet down.

Mr. HENDERSON. May I ask the hon. Minister whether they will contain an item for the purpose of making repairs at Oakville and for the dredging of that harbour. If not, I would urge the Minister strongly to take something out of this large appropriation to make the improvements asked for.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. gentleman understands that I am not free to tell him what the Supplementary Estimates will contain. I may say that representations were made to me, and that I received a deputation which urged on me the importance of doing the work, and I am confident that when the Supplementaries come down, I will have the good-will of my friends.

Mr. MARCOTTE. (Translation.) I was very glad to hear the hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte) stating that there was a Government dredge working at St. Jean Deschaillons. I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that this is one of the most dangerous points on the River St. Lawrence; and I would like to know whether it is his intention to keep a dredge working there permanently the whole season in order to dredge and widen that part of the channel. Does the Minister propose to devote a large sum to that work?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS (Translation.) The dredge "Nithsdale" is working at St. Jean Deschaillons and will be kept at work there the whole season, just as was done last year.