

of the officers of the department. The extent of repairs of this kind is hard to ascertain before the vessel is put into the dry-dock.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The ice has not required any repairs, only the ice-breakers.

Mr. PREFONTAINE. The ice required a great deal of repairs, because it was all smashed up.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am glad to hear that. Speaking seriously, would the minister tell us briefly of what particular use this ice-breaking has been? I daresay it has been of use; I am asking for information.

Mr. PREFONTAINE. I have not the particulars here, but the ice-breaker has shown that we can maintain a service between Murray Bay and Rivière Ouelle, in connection with the Intercolonial Railway. Everybody knows that the north shore of the St. Lawrence has always been deprived of communication during winter except with horses and sleighs starting from Quebec or some other point. For years and years an agitation was maintained in favour of making experiments to ascertain whether it would be possible to maintain a ferry during the winter between Rivière Ouelle and Murray Bay. Sums varying from \$10,000 to \$15,000 were voted every year as subsidies to different navigation companies, but they have always proved to be failures, and two years ago it was found impossible to get any responsible navigation company to tender for that service. It was decided by parliament during last year that a sum should be appropriated for the construction of a boat to make the experiment as soon as possible. It has proven very satisfactory, especially if you take into consideration the fact that the winter last year in Quebec and the maritime provinces was the most severe in the memory of man; so that if winter navigation in the Lower St. Lawrence has been maintained during the last winter, it is certain that the problem is solved, a matter of great importance to Canada.

Lighthouse and coast service—maintenance and repairs of lighthouses and light-ships, \$100,000.

Mr. PREFONTAINE. This amount certainly needs some explanation. The Department of Marine and Fisheries has become a very important one, owing to the handing over to that department of different branches of work really belonging to it, but which had previously been controlled by other departments. Then the development which has taken place in the last ten years in navigation, the increase in the size of steamers and the consequent necessity of better protecting navigation, has necessitated a very large expenditure. I might say that for years—and I can cite many examples—the matter has been, to a certain extent, left aside. I might mention, for instance, that there exist to-day, although

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we have spent millions, a number of obsolete lighthouses which have not been repaired for fifty years, and are therefore not at all up-to-date.

Mr. URIAH WILSON. Where are those lighthouses of which you are now speaking?

Mr. PREFONTAINE. In the Lower St. Lawrence, along the ship channel. I can cite one in particular which has been reported to me and which has not been provided for, that is a lighthouse in the county of Portneuf, at Portneuf itself. Many cases have presented themselves in that way. An estimate was made of repairs to a certain number of lighthouses, and the amount in each case would be \$300 or \$400, but when we began the repairs on these by day labour we would find that we would have to spend \$1,000 or \$1,500. Many cases of this kind have presented themselves, and for some years the habit has been to overlap on the expenditure of the following year and to leave a certain amount of standing accounts. Last year when I brought my estimates before the House and explained this question, I really never thought that the deficit, that is the amount required to be taken out of the estimates of the following year, would be so large; and this year I gave instructions to my officials to make a thorough investigation of the different claims that existed for necessary work done in the different sections of the country in order to get a full statement of what was due and what was necessary to be paid. We discovered that it would need over \$200,000 to cover the over-expenditure. In the first supplementary estimates that were brought before the House a sum of \$75,000 was provided for. At that time I must say that we had not ascertained that \$200,000 was due. Since that time we have ascertained that to be about the amount due, so in providing \$100,000 to pay off these outstanding accounts, we are still leaving a balance of \$25,000 that we have been able to pay out of other funds that were available for the same purpose. So this \$100,000 will cover all outstanding liabilities, and I hope I will not be obliged next session, if I have still the honour to occupy this position, to make a demand of this kind, because I must admit it is not good business, and should not have been done. I am not personally responsible for it, because it was the system continued from year to year, and this will really cover all our expenditure.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would like to inquire about a matter that is perhaps not very closely connected with this, which has been brought to my attention by a correspondent. It is on behalf of some pilots of Sydney harbour. It seems that in connection with these pilots there has been for a long term of years a reserve fund collected out of the pilotage received, which has been kept for payment to the widows and orphans of deceased pilots, and I think for payments