

vessels to sail in through such a channel. If ever there was an expenditure of public money that should call forth the condemnation of hon. gentlemen opposite—that is if they have been correct in their denunciations of public expenditures in the past—this is one, and more especially when the hon. Minister must admit that almost within hailing distance there is a natural harbour, the harbour of Midland, where there is a very large elevator, and on the other side, there is the town of Owen Sound with a natural harbour. Yet the hon. gentleman proposes to take \$150,000 to dig a trench to endeavour to permit vessels to come into the town of Collingwood, when he knows that it cannot possibly become a point for grain distribution, or handling of freights to any large extent. Of course, we all know the reason why it is done. The reason is, not on grounds of public policy, not because the town of Collingwood is to be accorded it as a matter of right, but simply because the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy), as a powerful supporter of the Government, has demanded that it should be done. I am not condemning the Government for doing this work on behalf of the people of Collingwood, because the wharfs there are in sore straits, but I am saying this in order to show that these hon. gentlemen opposite when in Opposition were always ready to denounce an expenditure, no matter how trivial it was, simply as a bait, as an allurement, to constituencies to send representatives to support the then Administration. Yet, in face of all their past professions and promises, they are plunging this country to-day in an expenditure of \$150,000 simply to dig a trench, nothing more, and the Minister, I believe, knows that it does not at all come up to what the people of Collingwood asked for. I say that the people of Collingwood can never expect to have a good harbour there when they have nothing more or less than a trench 150 yards wide in which to tow vessels. Now, I want to ask the Minister this further question: Is there any understanding with the people of Collingwood, or with the representative of North Simcoe, that there is to be a further appropriation made so that the harbour, when completed, will at least present the appearance of a natural harbour, or is the Minister prepared to state that the Government does not stand pledged to do anything further than to dig this trench of 150 yards in width, at a cost of \$150,000?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. Had the hon. gentleman known the facts of the case, he would not have spoken in the very unfair way that he has spoken. When I came into office I found that tenders had been asked for by the late Government, and plans had been prepared. Messrs. Boon & Armstrong were the lowest tenderers, for

the sum of \$144,000. Of course, the hon. gentleman is a better engineer than those that I have in my department, and he says this amount of money is excessive.

Mr. BENNETT. I did not say that.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I understood my hon. friend to say that this sum was only sufficient to dig a little trench. Well, as I said, I found plans had been prepared and tenders asked for; and the chief engineer of my department had reported that the tender of Boon & Armstrong was too low, that it could not be acted upon, and the Minister had accepted the advice of the engineer, and had decided not to accept Boon & Armstrong's tender because it was found to be too low. I sent back the cheques with the tenders. Later on Boon & Armstrong came to me and offered to change the conditions, and the chief engineer arranged to make the conditions as stringent as possible. They represented that they were quite able to do the work for the amount tendered, and although the chief engineer thought it was a very low price, I consented to give them the work, imposing, as I said, upon them very stringent conditions. I am glad to inform my hon. friend that they have placed the security to our credit in one of the banks of Canada, that all arrangements are completed, and that they are about to start work. Now my hon. friend finds that the width is not sufficient. I am sure that he knows that in many places in the St. Lawrence the width of the river is no broader than that, and still large vessels are able to pass up and down. I did not change the plans that I had found prepared. I found the tenders in my department, and after careful consideration I gave the contract to these gentlemen.

Mr. BENNETT. Now the Minister has not answered the very pertinent question that I put to him, namely, is it the intention of the department to limit the expenditure at Collingwood simply to the excavation of this trench?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The intention of the Government is first to carry out this work, and we shall see later on what to do.

Mr. BENNETT. That is the point to which I wish the Minister to commit himself. Now, I asked him to what further extent, after the expenditure of \$150,000 has been made, does he intend to saddle the country? Does he intend to carry out the pledges which have been made to the people of the town of Collingwood—because I understand that they have been assured that an expenditure will be made there of over a quarter of a million dollars. Now, I want the House and the country to understand where the Minister stands. He is asking us to-day to make him a grant of \$150,000, in round numbers. He proposes then to dig what is only a trench into