

Mr. SPROULE. Well, that is about the same plea that the girl put up that it was a very little one.

Mr. PUGSLEY. It is not a bad plea.

Mr. SPROULE. But the sin is always the same and the principle involved is exactly the same. The principle is that the minister takes it upon himself to expend money which has never been voted by parliament, and which, therefore, he has no authority to spend. If it was any sudden or urgent case, such as a bridge being swept away or anything of that sort, he could resort to a Governor General's warrant and there would be no complaint. I am not saying that the money was improperly or unwisely spent, but I say the principle is a bad one of over-expending what parliament has not granted. This is the finishing up of the present year. We have no information about how much each of these dredges has earned. If all the dredges were employed here they must have earned a pretty large sum if they have earned nearly a million and a quarter of dollars in one summer.

Mr. PUGSLEY. The seven dredges are only at Fort William. There are dredges at Port Arthur as well, and then there are the breakwater and the revetment wall to be included.

Mr. SPROULE. This is \$267,000 for additional dredging.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Yes, but the \$900,000 was for dredging at both harbours, and there were the breakwaters and revetment walls in both places.

Mr. SPROULE. Then, I am doing an injustice to the minister in assuming that this was all spent on dredging. But the principle is practically the same. He requires so much money for his works up there, and it ought to be his duty to have his engineer give him a correct estimate about how much is needed for the year, submit that to council, get the approval of council, bring down his estimates, give parliament his reasons why it is needed, and parliament would grant it as it did last year. If this were done I think it would be a very exceptional circumstance which would justify the over-expenditure of the amount that he has over-expended this year, or that he over-expended last year. Now I should advise him, if I may be permitted to give him advice, to try and bring to bear upon the operations which he has under consideration some business intelligence and present to the House a reasonable estimate of what is needed. The House is not reluctant to grant it, and then, when the vote is made he should keep the expenditure within the vote because if he does not do that there is something lax about it, something wanting in the judgment of his engineers,

and something bad in himself. This transaction is one that should not be indulged in too frequently. It may be justified occasionally, but the minister seems to indulge in it every year. I think it is about time the House gave him to understand that it will not consent to this kind of business in future to any great extent.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I would like to get an explanation from the minister as to why, in granting this contract covering the number of acres that he refers to and extending to a depth of 25 feet, one firm was given the whole work. It seems to be an enormous undertaking.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Yes, tenders were called for all the work. I think new tenders were called for after I became minister for a depth of 25 feet. I think the original tender was for a depth of 22 feet.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Is it to be deepened 25 feet over the whole 30 acres?

Mr. PUGSLEY. Yes, eventually. Some of the work was first let at 22 feet, but it was decided to make it a uniform depth of 25 feet.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. How many years will the work extend over?

Mr. PUGSLEY. It depends a good deal on the extent of the development there. There will be 18 miles of harbour frontage on the Mission and Kaministiquia rivers. Things are moving very rapidly at Fort William and Port Arthur, and we will have to meet the exigencies of the situation by going just as rapidly as the business demands. I should think it would take three or four years to fully complete the work.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. The minister has explained that there is a profit in dredging with government dredges, and I think a year ago the member for Welland (Mr. German) affirmed that view. Would it not have been wise in undertaking such a large work to secure government dredges?

Mr. PUGSLEY. On the contrary, the member for Welland thought the work could be done more cheaply by contract than by government dredges.

Mr. BLAIN. Then the minister differs from the member for Welland on that point?

Mr. PUGSLEY. If we have government dredges we can keep better control of the work than we can over contract dredges. Unless we can take the measurements in situ and let the contracts for the work in situ there will always be a possibility that perhaps the government is not getting full value for its money. We have to depend so much upon the honesty and the judgment of the inspectors that while I think