

this work a number of years ago, they refused to pay any duty on the coal they used on it. They appealed to the Department of Railways and Canals, and that department, under their own signature, certified that this work was all on the American side of the river, and these parties never paid any duty on the coal they used on the work. I can prove that, if necessary. I know that, because I remember the appeal being made, and a certificate was given by an engineer of the government that this work was on the American side of the river. I think Upper Bar is on the Canadian side, but three-fourths of this work is on the American side. As for the work being of any use to marine men, I am quite satisfied that the hon. minister cannot produce any of the best marine men who will take one of the large steamers down. It is true, a very small steamer will run down there; but the large steamers run the old channel, which they have run for thirty or forty years.

There does not appear to be any more than nine feet of water. I understood that some little time ago the Gilbert people went around hawking a petition among the captains, asking them to sign it. This petition was for the purpose of getting this work going again for their benefit, and it can be easily supposed that some steamboat captains would sign the petition in order to help these people. I know for a fact that all the time that these parties were there they never expected that this work would be used. They always felt that they had a sinecure for life. It was suggested to me several times that if I would not do anything, they could keep this work going as long as they liked. I can quite well understand that the hon. minister is not aware of the condition of affairs, but I have lived all my life within a mile of the rapids and know what I am talking about. Of course, Mr. Rubidge has been on the river a great many years, but if hon. gentlemen heard the reports of these steamboat men, they would not have the impression that Mr. Rubidge knew it all. These men navigate the river and know exactly how the currents run. I must say that the work done in what is called the north channel is an excellent work. Nothing could be more needed. When the government undertook the work, it was very expensive, and one of the reasons given was that if the old channel were used, the steamboats would have to go through American waters. The engineers, therefore, took this very expensive route, which makes a splendid channel, to avoid going through American waters. But now that we have had all this expenditure made and got the channel into good shape, these people seem to be able to influence the government every year to continue placing a large amount in the estimates simply to keep them going. The north channel and the deepening of the old channel to

the lock which was put in when enlarging the Galops canal to Iroquois is a good piece of work and one that will always be very useful. Why the government continue giving these people money every year I cannot understand. I have been making this appeal year after year, and was in hopes that this year the government would see its way clear to put an end to the expenditure. If they continue this expenditure, I will have to continue opposing it, and see if it is not possible to put an end to what the people in that locality consider an outrage and a scandal. I would rather see the government put an amount in the estimates to pension off this firm, because in that way the government would save from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year. I shall therefore have to move that this item of \$25,000 be struck out. I do not believe that this firm ever earned it. I am satisfied that if the government should place that other amount in the estimates and allow these people to continue, the government will have in the end a scandal in their hands. I have been urging the minister from year to year to drop this work, because it is no earthly use, and if he cannot see his way clear to do so, I can only continue protesting. I move that this item be struck out.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. When was that contract changed?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Respecting the width, in 1897.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. The width extended?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Yes, by the contract made in 1897. That contract refers to additional work, which must mean the increasing of the width. If that is not so, I will have to try and get information later.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. The deputy minister should know that.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. It was done under that contract in the time of the late minister. I cannot give the precise date.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. I do not think the late minister changed the width at all.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I am advised he did.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. The first contract was let by Mr. Mackenzie in 1878. The total prism quantities were 200 feet and the depth then perhaps would money out about \$312,000. In 1896 there was paid to Mr. Gilbert by the department and on a judgment of the Exchequer Court, \$629,000. The contract was not extended in 1897. For the prism quantities only the amount required was \$312,000 in 1896. The amount paid by my predecessor and by myself and on the judgment of the Exchequer Court