

B.H.F.—G.M.

25. 511—A.

Re. ICE-BREAKING OPERATIONS AT COLLINGWOOD, DEPOT HARBOUR AND MIDLAND.

In connection with the ice-breaking operations at Port Arthur which have been carried on by the Department for some years past, it will be remembered that last season, at the request of the Marine Association, supplementary operations were carried on at Collingwood, Midland and Depot Harbour. If these are to be continued this season it will be necessary to make arrangements at an early date. The expense at Collingwood and Depot Harbour is very small; in each case, last year, the total expenditure was \$300. The expenditure at Midland was \$4,000; the reason is that the approach to Midland is landlocked and ice forms much earlier than at the other places. The elevators in that harbour are also situated at long distances apart, and a very considerable length of the channel has to be kept open.

Instructions are requested in this matter.

“B.H.F.”

Acting Chief Engineer.

Now, Mr. Fraser, I understand, was the officer appointed to look into this matter and this was his report.

Mr. BENNETT.—What was the date?

Mr. PRINGLE.—It was the 12th November, 1908. This is his report in which he points out the reason why Midland Harbour costs more than other harbours?

The WITNESS.—It is.

Q. Now then we are dealing here entirely with the payment of the \$5,500 for keeping the harbours open in 1910. The same officers had charge of that matter, Colonel Anderson and Mr. Fraser?—A. They had.

Q. And they reported favorably, as we find by the record, as to the terms of the contract. Now, in the preliminary stages of this investigation something was said in regard to it not costing the Government anything in 1911. You were fully alive, however, to the situation at Midland Harbour?—A. I was.

Q. You received a notification from Mr. Bennett, Member for the County of Simcoe, as to the Department taking the proper steps to keep this harbour open?—A. I did.

Q. This was communicated to you by a letter, and acting upon that letter the Department decided if at all possible to have their own steamer, the *Simcoe* to come down from the Sault to Midland Harbour?—A. That is correct.

Q. The Steamer *Simcoe* was delayed, however?—A. It was.

Q. And if the mild weather had not set in, you would have made arrangements with the local people, as in former years?—A. I certainly would have.

Q. And you went to Midland for that purpose?—A. Expressly for that purpose.

Q. But after the conditions, the weather conditions, changed it did not become necessary to make the arrangement. Now, earlier in the season, it looked very much like as if this harbour was going to be frozen up, and active steps would have to be taken to keep it open?—A. The cold weather started in very early, and very severe this year.

Q. Mr. Bennett's letter is dated December 4, 1911.

Mr. BENNETT (Simcoe).—You had better put it in.

WITNESS.—(Roads). “The ice is forming here, and I am informed more grain vessels are to arrive at Port McNicoll, and therefore under the circumstances I hope the *Simcoe* will soon turn up and keep the harbours open.

“Yours truly,

(Signed) “W. H. Bennett.”