

the year 1908, on which work ceased the day after the election. Is that work completed?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I think that work was completed. Everything that was contemplated was done and I have understood the work is likely to be very successful.

Mr. MEIGHEN. The minister will also remember that last summer at the request of certain petitioners through myself, he had the matter of another cut in the river further down looked into by an engineer. He will remember my stating that his engineer made inquiries quite as earnestly about the political complexion of those to be served as about the real usefulness of the work and, that on getting an adverse report in that regard he recommended that no work of this character be done. I gave the name to the minister at the time and he promised to look into it. Would the minister say what his report is?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I do not remember as to that, but my hon. friend, having called attention to it, I will see if there is any communication on the subject. Certainly, I would like to know the name of the engineer.

Mr. MEIGHEN. I gave the name.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Was he a civil engineer, and was he connected with the department?

Mr. MEIGHEN. I understand he was quite civil to the gentlemen he encountered there. His name was Mr. Stevens: I do not know what his professional qualifications are, but they seemed to be very largely political.

Mr. PUGSLEY. There is a Mr. Stevens in the office at Winnipeg.

Mr. SPROULE. Could the minister tell me how many dredges were employed on the work at Port Arthur during this last summer, and how many thousand yards they took out?

Mr. PUGSLEY. There were seven different dredges in the fleet of the Great Lakes Dredging Company. I do not know if I can give my hon. friend the quantity taken out by each dredge, but I will get that. Would it make any difference if I gave it to him when my main estimates come up? Of course, it is in the Auditor General's Report, but I shall put it in a succinct form for him.

Mr. SPROULE. It would not be in the Auditor General's Report for the present year.

Mr. PUGSLEY. No. I will get it for the hon. gentleman for this year as far as the returns show it.

Mr. MEIGHEN.

Mr. SPROULE. I would like to get that because I have a few observations regarding this matter. It has reference to a subject that I discussed at some length last year. If I remember correctly the amount of money voted for dredging at Port Arthur last year was over-expended by—was it \$400,000 or \$600,000?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I do not just remember the amount, but it was considerable.

Mr. SPROULE. It was nearly \$2 for every dollar that was voted. Parliament has an object in voting money. Its object is to vote sufficient for the needs of each particular work, and yet not to vote too much. The minister is supposed to have sufficient data to justify his recommending to council that an appropriation of a given amount be voted for a particular work, and it is supposed to be sufficient to carry on the work during the year. That was done in this case, but the expenditure on the work was \$400,000 or \$600,000 more than was voted. That is a very pernicious, a very unsafe and a very improper system. The minister could not justify it upon the ground of urgent need. It was not on the ground that parliament was reluctant to give him the amount of money which he asked for to be expended upon that work because parliament did not refuse it, and in so far as I am aware, no one would have objected if the minister had asked for twice the amount to be expended that year. There was something wrong about the government, or the government's officials, or otherwise they would have ascertained more closely than they did just how much they needed. But we have this example of a very improper and dangerous practice of the government spending nearly twice as much as parliament voted. Parliament did not vote the money, but the government spent it all the same. When the discussion took place I said what I repeat now, that parliament would not have been at all reluctant to have voted twice the amount of money so long as the minister would give us an assurance that it was needed. Port Arthur is an important place, there is a great deal of work to be done and if the minister had said twice as much money was needed it would have been voted. But that is not the bad feature of it. The pernicious feature of it is, to my mind, the right which the minister takes to over-expend so much at the present time under a similar resolution. Last year there was \$900,000 or nearly \$1,000,000 voted. That is a pretty good sum, and my hon. friend might have kept within the mark, but he comes and asks now for \$267,000 to provide for the over-expenditure of that amount.

Mr. PUGSLEY. This is very much less.