

year by the contractors in the progress of the construction work at Courtenay bay under the contract.

Mr. LEGER: The minister said that this work commenced year's ago. Has he any advice from the engineer as to when this work will be completed? Millions and millions of dollars have been expended there, and so far I do not know of any work that is nearly completed.

Mr. McCURDY: I will give my hon. friend information as to the amount that has been paid out in connection with Courtenay bay and the present state of the work. The work is, however, still far from completion.

Mr. FIELDING: The work is a very large and important one, and I think the committee would be glad to have some information of a general character regarding the nature of the work that was contemplated, what has been done, what remains to be done, what amount has been expended and what will be the cost when the contract is completed.

On the motion of Mr. McCurdy, consideration of the item was postponed.

Civil Government—Public Works—Salaries, \$598,510; Contingencies, \$85,000.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I understand that my hon. friend, after consultation with his head officer in the department, has reduced the engineers' districts in the various provinces. I do not blame my hon. friend if he has erred on the side of economy, but this reduction has caused many heart-burnings, and I am afraid that some injustice has been done, at least in the district with which I am most familiar. I called the minister's attention at the time, during recess, to what I considered to be an injustice. Of course, the hon. gentleman acted on the advice of his chief officer, and I am not blaming him personally.

The particular case I have in mind is that of the Chief Resident Engineer for the district of Gaspé, which is a large district, comprising the peninsula of Gaspé and the Magdalen islands. The gentleman who had charge of that district was Mr. Joseph Tétu Bertrand, a very worthy official of the department. I happen to have known Mr. Bertrand since, I am sorry to say, nearly thirty-five years ago. He was a class-mate of mine at the University of Ottawa, and as far back as the year 1884 or thereabout, he began his studies as an engineer at McGill. The Department of Public Works, then under the direction of

the late Sir Hector Langevin, availed itself of Mr. Bertrand's services, and during 1884 and for several years afterwards he was sent to various points in the province of Quebec. In 1897, if I mistake not, at the instigation of the then sitting member for the county of Kamouraska, now Mr. Justice Carroll, supported by my humble self, the then Minister of Public Works, the late Mr. Tarte, appointed him District Engineer for the district of Gaspé. Mr. Bertrand has had charge of the various works which have been under way in that district, and during those twenty-four years I believe that he has given the Department most excellent service. During that time he was considered as more than a local resident engineer, because the department sent him on special missions as far as British Columbia. Mr. Bertrand was retained, for instance, as one of the advising engineers for the works on the Fraser river, a highly technical work, and I know as a matter of fact that the engineers with whom he was associated were pleased with his reports and his advice. In the lower St. Lawrence the works which he was more especially connected have stood the tests of time. I think if my hon. friend would consult his deputy and the other officials of the department, he would find that Mr. Bertrand has given, as I stated a moment ago, excellent service in that district. When my hon. friend decided to adopt the policy of reducing the districts, a policy I am not criticizing at all, because I believe he intended to effect some economy, some injustice, inadvertently, I am sure, was done in the province of Quebec to that old and efficient official. If a chief engineer had to be appointed in the reorganization it seems to me that, in justice to Mr. Bertrand, he should have been appointed head of the enlarged district, but another gentleman, against whom I have nothing to say, and who may also be a deserving official, was appointed in his stead. Mr. Bertrand, as a matter of fact, was reduced in his standing, and to-day he is only a senior clerk in the Rimouski office. I do not know, and I should like my hon. friend to inform the committee, whether Mr. Bertrand retains his former salary, or whether his salary, which was none too large, has been increased. I hope however, that in the new organization my hon. friend will make it a point to act fairly towards that deserving official. There are always to be found in the different departments overzealous officials; I do not mean in the sense