

so many yards. Then when he comes into a hard place he will skip over it, and you will find that the bottom of the harbour is very uneven after the work is done. That has been the experience in our country over and over again. For these reasons I know that when an appropriation is made for dredging, an effort is always made to get a government dredge if possible.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.). I should be glad indeed if one or two of these old dredges that our hon. friend wishes to see condemned, were sent down to Nova Scotia, where we have been suffering for years for the want of dredging. I think it is over two years since this modern dredge was promised to us, and apparently it will be two years more before it is given to us. Now, after that dredge is completed, I am not so sure that it will be a success in some places in Nova Scotia. It will succeed well where there is a sandy or muddy bottom, but when you get hard and rough work it will be found that the spoon dredges are the only dredges that will be successful. But we will leave that alone and we will plead with the hon. Minister of Public Works just now to send a couple of those old dredges down to Nova Scotia, where we are suffering for the want of them. Money has been voted for dredging in the county of Lunenburg year after year, but there is no dredge to do the work. There is no part in the Dominion that is suffering so much to-day from the want of dredges as the province of Nova Scotia.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. And there are not dredges enough to do the work elsewhere.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The hon. member for Welland (Mr. German) has raised a very important question that requires the very serious consideration of this committee. I find that in the various parts of the Dominion the work that seems to be most necessary and urgent is dredging in the harbours and ports. I have to some extent been looking into the matter and I find that we are in this position in Canada, notwithstanding what my hon. friend says about it being a profitable business, that we can hardly get a contractor to undertake dredging work for us. Some dredge owners have notified us that unless we pay higher prices, owing to the increase in wages and the cost of living, they will go to the United States where they say they can get plenty of work at higher prices. If we are going to do the urgent work that is required in some parts of Ontario and elsewhere in the Dominion we will have to pay higher prices this year than we have been paying in the past. It may be that some of these dredge owners have lost money. If any hon. gentleman states that dredging can be done at so much a yard, unless he is referring to some particular location, and to some particular kind of ma-

terial, his statement is likely to be very misleading. A man may have a contract at sixty cents a yard and lose money on it, while, if the work is to be performed at another place, he may make money at ten cents a yard. It is no criterion to go on to say that dredging can be done at so much a yard unless we know the conditions. I may say that in almost every case, unless we are prepared to give an increase in price to the contractors, we cannot get them to enter into a contract at all. We prefer to give the work to such dredges as we have in Canada but the work is so pressing in some of our more or less national ports that unless we bring in dredges from the other side we will be unable to meet the demands of the country. If we do so, we must pay the same rates as they are able to get there. We have not been able to get any offers this season from dredges on the other side. The report of the department shows that for a dredge of 500 yards or 600 yards capacity per day, we have been in the habit of paying, in past years, under certain conditions, \$3 per hour, or \$80 per day. There are very few places now where we can get dredges of that capacity for less than \$10 per hour, and for much larger dredges we have to pay as high as \$12 and \$13 per hour. The dredges, it is true, that we have, are somewhat old, but I am told by the chief engineer of the department that the average is about \$35 per day for the size of a plant of a capacity of 500 yards or 600 yards per day. That is a matter that has to be looked into most carefully. I am not prepared to say offhand whether it is cheaper to have dredges under the control of the department or whether it would be better to let all the work by contract. At the present time we cannot get anything like the amount of work that is urgently required to be done taken by contract at all. We are applying to the owners of plants on the other side of the line to see if we cannot reach some of the most urgent cases. The information of the department is in contradiction of my hon. friend from Welland, because the figures show that dredges of the same capacity are averaging about \$35 per day. The most urgent work from one end of the Dominion to the other that I know of in the way of public works is the dredging which is required to be done, and I think every dollar we vote ought to be expended to the best possible advantage according to our best information. At the same time I think we would make a great mistake if we hesitated to vote a reasonable amount of money to make the necessary improvements to our ports and harbours.

Mr. REID (Grenville). Did I understand the hon. minister to say that the cost of dredges ran as high as \$35 per day?

Hon. Mr. TARTE. Small dredges.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The chief engineer says that the average