

tial nature. I can tell the Minister frankly that a depth of eighteen feet of water will not place the harbour of Collingwood in a position to compete with either Midland or Owen Sound for the grain trade of the west, from Port Arthur and Duluth. At present we have vessels coming into Midland carrying as much as 130,000 bushels of grain, and eighteen feet of water is not sufficient to accommodate them.

Mr. FOSTER. I have listened to this discussion with a great deal of interest, because this matter was before the late Government for some time. In the first place, I want to ask my hon. friend, if, as it appears, the \$80,000 is voted for 1897-98, and that there is no corresponding appropriation for the preceding year, whether any preceding vote for Collingwood harbour was made for this work?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I think there was a vote of \$25,000 charged to capital account. I think there was some debate last year on the same ground.

Mr. FOSTER. I was inclined to dispute the accuracy of that statement. I quite remember the debate. The estimates, as they were brought down, proposed to vote these items and some others on capital account. The debate arose as to why these should be charged to capital account whilst all other similar appropriations were charged to the consolidated fund, and it ended with the Minister of Trade and Commerce advising and the Finance Minister accepting the advice, to transfer it from capital account and charge it to the consolidated fund. My own impression is that when we came to that agreement, it was struck out from the capital account, but was not afterwards charged to the consolidated fund, so that there was really no vote of money for Collingwood harbour in the Supply Bill. What I want to call attention to is this: My hon. friend led me to think that what he was doing by this vote of \$140,000 was simply making an entrance to the harbour, but I have mistaken entirely the whole trend of the communications which extended over four or five years between the town of Collingwood and the Government, if the entrance to the harbour was all they required. It seems to me they had two objects in view; in the first place, a deeper and a better harbour; and in the second place, a deeper entrance to that harbour.

Mr. McCARTHY. I understand the work was, just as the hon. gentleman says, intended to be, not merely the entrance to the harbour, but the harbour itself, and it is for this whole work that the contract was let.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. That is so.

Mr. FOSTER. This contract does not make a complete work.

Mr. BENNETT.

Mr. McCARTHY. Yes, it is all the work which the Government engineer thought was necessary, both inside and outside.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. And the Grand Trunk Railway, also. They saw the plans.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman knows better about the present condition than I did. He and his department ought to know whether or not this expenditure of \$140,000 will complete the whole work in Collingwood harbour, or whether it is simply the entrance.

Mr. McCARTHY. It will do the very work you called for by your invitation to tender which was sent out in January, 1896. That tender is now being embodied into a contract.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The plans are absolutely the same.

Mr. FOSTER. I quite understand that, but the impression I wish to have confirmed or dispelled is this, that no matter whether contracts were called for or not for this very work by the preceding Government, this is not the whole work, but simply the entrance. I understood from the hon. Minister that this would not complete the work, but that what was required to be done afterwards would have to be looked into afterwards.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. What I meant to say was this: Suppose in ten years or twenty years more, there should be more accommodation required, that would be looked into.

Mr. FOSTER. That makes that matter clear. But my hon. friend will admit that he should not lead the House into a large expenditure for an initial work without taking the House into his confidence as to the cost of the whole work. My own opinion was that the preceding tender was more a tentative tender to find out what the actual cost would be, and it was not carried out because we had not the money voted. It was not proposed to put that tender into execution until we had the authorization of Parliament in a vote. That, I think, is a fair principle to go upon. Here you are simply coming down and saying you want from this Parliament \$140,000. On being asked what for, you reply: Well, my engineers have looked into this thing, they have made me a recommendation, and I have undertaken, in the name of the Government, a contract calling for an expenditure of \$140,000, not one dollar of which is voted. My hon. friend will find that that is a very bad rule, especially in large expenditures. Parliament should be left unfettered and it is the right of Parliament to demand that before a Government binds a country by a contract, Parliament should be called upon to give its adhesion to the