

ing, when I call the next items I expect a relevancy of discussion on each of them. Now, in order to give the hon. member for West Elgin an opportunity of speaking, we will call the second item, which has reference to the Manitoba dredge.

Mr. CASGRAIN. We have not called that yet.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. No, but it is not in order to discuss the general dredge question on the item of the Manitoba dredge.

Mr. INGRAM. Very well, I will put myself in order by asking about the first item. What about the vessels comprising this item of \$30,000?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I have explained at considerable length this item of \$30,000. But as the hon. gentleman may not have been in, I will explain it again. This is to provide for defraying the expense of urgent and general repairs to the hulls and machinery of the dredges, tugs, scows and barges, which are the property of the government, in the different provinces of the Dominion.

Mr. THOMSON (North Grey). We have wandered considerably from the matter that is before the committee, but there is one question which I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Public Works, and that is if the government own any dredge of sufficient capacity to dredge out the present administration?

Mr. INGRAM. Mr. Chairman, you have been good enough to allow me the same latitude as you have allowed other hon. gentlemen before me. I would like to refer to a question which was asked the right hon. leader of the government (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) last week, and to the answer that he was supposed to give us before this. Last week a question was asked in regard to the division of the Public Works Department and the right hon. First Minister promised to bring an answer down last Monday, but the answer has not yet been given to the House. I think it is quite important that we should know something about that subject, that we should know whether the department is going to be dismantled or not. Several days have elapsed since last Monday and I will say—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. Order. I decided upon this matter the other night that the question of the policy of the government in dividing the various duties in connection with the Public Works Department and the Department of Marine and Fisheries was not a question that was referred to the Committee of the Whole and that it was wholly and entirely irrelevant to the discussion of the questions that were placed before us for consideration. Having looked into that matter more carefully since I gave that decision the other night, I must inform

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

the committee that if they want to find out the policy of the government they must find it out in the House when the Orders of the Day are called. Any hon. member can ask the government to explain their policy in regard to this matter, but it is a question, in my opinion, that we cannot take up and discuss in committee. It is out of order. It is irrelevant.

Mr. CASGRAIN. Mr. Chairman, of course I bow to your ruling, but I think we can get over that difficulty. I am going to move that the committee rise and report progress. I think we should not pass any more of these items before we know what is the policy of the government upon this question. It is an important question. It is perfectly well understood in this House and understood by the country that an announcement in regard to it has been made in the speech from the Throne. In the speech from the Throne I find this:

Bills with respect to the creation of a railway commission, the amendment of the patent laws, the militia Act, Chinese immigration, the reorganization of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, the settlement of railway labour disputes and various other subjects will be submitted to you.

Here we are far advanced in the session, probably not so near the end of the session as some hon. gentlemen may desire, but fairly well advanced in the work of the session, and we have not had any intimation from the government yet as to what is the policy of the government in regard to what my hon. friend from Montreal, St. Mary's (Hon. Mr. Tarte) called the dismantling of the Public Works Department. Here we are asked to vote large sums of money in connection with public works that, if report is true, will be spent next year not by the Department of Public Works, but by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It is in the remembrance of every hon. member of this House that when the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries went before his constituents, one of the excuses which he gave why he accepted the Department of Marine and Fisheries and why he did not insist upon having the Department of Public Works which my hon. friend from Montreal, St. Mary's, had just left, was that he was to get one of the most important portions of the Department of Public Works transferred to his own department; that is the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It was laid down then by the government candidate, not only by the government candidate, but by a minister, speaking, I take it, for the ministry itself, that this part of the Public Works Department which deals with the question of transportation, the most important question now before the country, the question of improving the harbours and rivers in this country, was to be transferred to his department. That was the language which was used in regard to