

Dredging Company received for the services of dredge 'No. 9' and plant at Midland harbour \$10 an hour. The Marlton Dredging Company received for services of the dredge 'Arnoldi' and plant in Goderich harbour \$8 an hour. Now, I come to the government dredges. First there is the dredge 'St. Lawrence,' which the hon. Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Sutherland) stated the other night in this House cost new \$15,364.

The average cost per day for running that dredge was \$76.82, and yet I should say that she was twice as large as the Gilbert dredge. Here is the dredge 'New Brunswick' a dredge similar in size to the Gilbert dredge and she cost \$7,368, and the average cost for running her per day is \$36.84. The dredge 'Challenge' cost \$8,903, and the average cost per day for running that dredge is \$44.50. The dredge 'Nipissing' cost \$10,307 and the average cost per day for running her is \$51. The dredge 'Ontario' cost \$7,338, and the average cost per day for running her is \$36.69. The dredge 'Sir Richard' cost \$6,044, and the cost per day for running her was \$30. I see here an account: paid A. D. Cameron for dredge 'Nithsdale,' tug and scows, 206 days at \$40 per day. I see here an account of the Canadian Construction Company at Farren's Point, right on the St. Lawrence for a better dredging outfit than the Gilbert Company have: Use of dredge, 642 hours at \$12 an hour; scows, 409 hours at \$2 per hour; tug, 420 hours at \$6 per hour, making \$20 an hour for the whole dredging outfit. I see in the Auditor General's Report an account from M. A. Cleveland, who is working within half a mile of Gilbert, and who would be ashamed to admit that his dredge is not twice as good as Gilbert's; he gets \$10 an hour for his dredge, \$2 an hour for his tug, and fifty cents an hour for his scow, or \$150 a day for his whole plant. I have met many of these contractors and I have asked them if they made any money at these prices, and they said of course they did and any one of them would be delighted to take this contract in the Galops at these prices. Here is an account from Larkin & Sangster who are working at Iroquois three or four miles from the Gilberts; they charge \$7 an hour for their dredge, 75 cents an hour for their scow, and \$6 an hour for their tug. William Davis & Sons who are working half a mile from the Gilbert people charge for their dredge and crew \$7.50 an hour, dump scow, 50 cents an hour, and tug and crew, \$4 an hour. Here is the government again, and the dredge 'Prince Edward' she cost \$16,357; she is a very large dredge and it costs \$81.88 a day to run her. The dredge 'New Dominion' cost \$42,078, and it costs \$60.39 a day to run her. Everybody knows that it is supposed to cost more to run a government dredge than a private dredge. The dredge 'George MacKenzie' cost \$10,049.83, and it takes \$50.24 a day to run her. The dredge 'Canada' cost \$15,863 and it takes

\$79.31 a day to run her. I find in the Auditor General's Account for 1902, that T. F. Moore is paid an account for services of the dredge F. F. M., tug and scows, 504 hours at \$8 an hour. I mention these instances to prove to the minister that these private dredges simply cost \$100 a day for the whole dredging outfit, and that the highest cost per day of the government dredges runs from \$35 to \$75. In view of these figures the minister will see that \$425 a day is an outrageous price to pay the Gilberts, and I may say that the people of that locality are complaining bitterly of this enormous extravagance. I find from the Auditor General's Report that the Gilberts got their draw-back of ten per cent paid them last year, and as I understood, that settled up the whole claim in full. Last year the minister (Hon. Mr. Blair) admitted to me that the whole work was completed; and if these contractors went on after the 1st of July last year, they would do so at their own risk; that they should not have gone on without instructions from the department, and therefore if they did so, they are not entitled to this \$25,000. I appeal to the minister and to the government in the interest of the country that this expenditure should not be continued. I have made this appeal in vain to the late Minister of Railways and Canals. The work is not necessary, and I am satisfied that if the deputy minister and chief engineer of Railways and Canals were put on his honour, he would not disagree with me. I believe that he would say that under the present conditions the vessels coming down the north channel through the Cleveland works and using the present lock going up; this work on the Gilbert contract is not necessary at all and will never be used. Why these contractors should be continued as a leech on the government at such an enormous cost to the country, is something that I cannot understand. It is time it should be stopped. I should like to hear from the acting minister whether the government intend to continue this extravagance. The work cannot be proceeded further this year, and the new Minister of Railways and Canals will have ample opportunity of going into the matter before the next session of parliament. I appeal to the government not to vote money for the work now so that the new minister may not be harassed by these people and their friends to proceed with the work. I believe in all sincerity that the government should drop any appropriation for the work until next session of parliament, between now and which time the new minister will have ample opportunity to look into the matter and be enabled to give his candid opinion upon it. I trust that the government will take my suggestion on this, because I believe it would be in the best interest of the country that they should do so.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I have already spoken, Mr. Speaker, but with your