

that, last year the wharfage dues at St. John amounted to over \$100,000, or four per cent on an expenditure of \$2,500,000. This would largely cover the interest on the expenditures made there up to the present time. It is anticipated that during next winter the receipts will be much larger because shipping will be more extensive. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company has spent a considerable sum in improving yard room and extending sidings along its line between Montreal and St. John. I am informed that the company will be in a position next winter to handle about 15 or 20 per cent more trade than it was able to handle last season. If this work is not carried on, there will be great danger in two respects. The privately owned wharves on the east side of the harbour may be seriously damaged—some were damaged last winter and the winter before. Then there is the danger of damage to the wharves that the Government has constructed at very considerable expense, and of injury to ships lying in the docks during storms which in some winters are of a serious character. For these reasons it was thought advisable to put this item in the estimates this year and to call for tenders for the work. For my part, I wish that the work could have been delayed; I am sorry that it is necessary to ask the country to make the expenditure at this time. But having regard to the importance of the shipping interests at the port of St. John, to the importance to the whole country of having the wharves maintained in safe condition and of giving the necessary protection to the harbour generally, it is only right and proper that this work should be proceeded with if it can be proceeded with at a reasonable figure. Tenders were asked for the work again this year. In 1914 the lowest tender—I speak in round figures—was something over \$800,000. This year the lowest tender was about \$738,000. There is another tender \$50,000 higher, and there are six or seven, all of which are considerable higher than the two to which I have referred. I understand from the Public Works Department that the tenderers are people of reputation and financial ability. The lowest tender is even lower than the lowest of 1914. The work would have been proceeded with had it not been for the conditions caused by the war, which has lasted much longer than we anticipated at that time.

Mr. MURPHY: Has the contract been awarded?

Mr. HAZEN: No, it cannot be awarded until the item is adopted by the House.

Mr. MURPHY: What is the departmental estimate of the cost of the work?

Mr. HAZEN: About \$200,000 higher than the two lowest tenders.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The minister has said that some dredging was done, a bar was removed and this work made necessary. Was the dredging done at the place that we are now proposing to fill up?

Mr. HAZEN: Oh, no, it is inside of the breakwater. The engineers insist upon the necessity of this work. They say that in the future, in order to secure the needed protection of the harbour, a breakwater should be built from the eastern side of Partridge island running towards the eastern shore in the direction of Red head. However, for the present the work proposed will be very useful. It will protect wharves of very great value on the east side of the harbour; it will protect the Government docks on the west side and the shipping that comes to that port. It would be serious indeed if disaster should occur to any of the ships loading valuable cargoes to be carried overseas. The enormous development of the port of St. John in the last few years, and the revenue which is being collected through the Department of Marine and Fisheries in the way of wharfage dues, constitute in themselves a justification for proceeding with this work. In normal times I am satisfied that there would not be the slightest objection to its being proceeded with.

Mr. NESBITT: This is a partial vote; the total expenditure the minister estimates to be \$738,000?

Mr. HAZEN: This is a partial vote. A vote has been kept in the estimates practically every year since 1914, because it was felt that some time the work would have to be proceeded with.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Some years ago when I was Minister of Public Works my attention was called to the importance of this work. We were then deterred from going ahead with it only because of the large expenditure that would be involved. Of course, as the minister states, the business of the port has increased enormously since that time, and any expenditure that is reasonably necessary to protect the wharves and the shipping is thoroughly justified. I think