

only point at which a deep water wharf can be built. Then it becomes a public wharf instead of a private one.

Mr. FISHER. As we have let the contract, I think we can reduce this amount by \$5,000.

Item reduced accordingly.

Father Point—wharf repairs and breakwater, \$24,000.

Mr. FISHER. The wharf was damaged last season, and this is for repairs.

Mr. AMES. When this work at Father Point is finished, will it be possible for the steamships to draw up alongside the wharf and discharge their mails?

Mr. FISHER. No.

Mr. AMES. Is it the intention of the government to use Father Point instead of Rimouski for that purpose?

Mr. FISHER. A deputation came up to see the government in regard to that the other day, but we have not yet decided, because we have not sufficient information.

Mr. AMES. There are often times most vexatious delays at Rimouski. I was present on one occasion, it took six hours to transfer the mails from the steamship to the train. The steamer had made a very rapid passage, the fact of which was heralded everywhere, and this delay of six hours in transferring the mails was exasperating. If Father Point could be used for that purpose, it would be a great improvement. Has the department that question under consideration?

Mr. FISHER. Yes, the whole matter has been under consideration not only of the department but of the government, but there are serious difficulties in the way. The transfer of the mails from Rimouski to Father Point would mean a very large expenditure of money, probably from \$300,000 to \$350,000. At the same time, the necessary dredging every year at Rimouski may cost so much that it might be better to expend even half a million dollars at Father Point if it is found that that would accomplish the object in view. But even that would involve two or three years' work; so that before deciding upon a change the government would have to consider the whole question carefully.

Mr. AMES. Is that expenditure mainly for a spur line from the Intercolonial?

Mr. FISHER. That would be included. The first expenditure would be to prolong the wharf and build the breakwater; then we would have to build the spur line. At present the water at Rimouski is rather shallow, and the tender employed for the mail service is frequently stuck. We dredg-

Mr. GIRARD.

ed the channel out last season, and the dredging was effective for the time being, but I regret to say that this spring the report is that a good deal of the channel which was dredged out last season has filled in again. If that is to go on year after year, it would be better for us to spend half a million at Father Point. But we need all the information necessary before deciding a question of such magnitude.

Mr. BERGERON. It seems to me that I heard two or three sessions ago that the government were considering whether they would bring the mails to Father Point or to Rimouski.

Mr. FISHER. It has been talked of for a long time.

Mr. BERGERON. I think it would be better to decide the matter at once instead of going on spending money every year at both places.

Mr. FISHER. This expenditure at Father Point is necessary even if the mails are not taken there, because this wharf affords shelter for the pilot boats for the lower St. Lawrence.

Mr. LEMIEUX. I may say that the opinions are not unanimous in favour of Father Point. I have heard several large steamship owners say that Father Point was the preferable place, whilst others have contended that Rimouski was the better place. I may say that last summer I went to Rimouski and met there a delegation of interested parties, I met also a deputation from the Montreal Board of Trade. The question has never been so live a one as it is at present. In the next estimates my hon. friend will see quite a respectable amount for a new tender for the mails at Rimouski, and the experiments made this summer will probably decide whether Rimouski or Father Point will be the place where the mails and the passengers will be landed.

Mr. AMES. Meantime we are going on year after year fostering both of these places at an expenditure of \$25,000 or \$30,000 on each when only one is required. In the last three years we have spent about \$100,000 at Rimouski and about the same amount at Father Point. If Father Point is to be selected as the point for landing the mails, it is not necessary to continue to spend \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year at Rimouski. I have on several occasions been carefully over the ground at each of these places. I do not think you can ever make Rimouski a suitable port, because it is in a long shallow bay, and every spring the sand will drift in around the wharf, and almost out to the end of the wharf you have shallow water and always will have. Now if it is decided that one or the other is to be the