

amount advanced to these dredging companies for work done during this current year and he suggested that I and others on this side of the House were blocking the estimates by which they would be unable to get their pay. I said to this gentleman that if the Government would put this in the supplementary estimates for the current year I was sure that hon. gentlemen on this side of the House would be willing to facilitate the voting of the money in order that the Government could discharge its obligation. We ought to see that our debts are paid first before we proceed to vote moneys for next year. Let us wipe out the obligations of the current year. In regard to the Transcontinental railway I think there is a very serious condition of affairs existing. I am told that there are large contractors who have done their work months ago to whom vast sums of money are due, as well as to the banks which are carrying them, and that these gentlemen cannot get one dollar of the money which has been due for months for work that has actually been done for the Government of the country.

Mr. WHITE: Have the accounts been certified by the commission or its engineers?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am told there is no reason whatever for refusing payment.

Mr. BORDEN: Who are they?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am not going to mention names. I am told that the chief engineer, the sole commissioner, went off on a trip to Europe and that these gentlemen were obliged to wait months and months for the money which is due them. I think that before we proceed to vote moneys to carry on the work for the coming year, it is our duty to see that the obligations of the present year are properly met.

Mr. ROGERS: My hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Pugsley) is good enough to say that he does not wish to attack my predecessor, the hon. member for Jacques Cartier, but I must confess that he rather does that in a statement which he has made regarding the Miramichi dredging contract. No person knows better than my hon. friend (Mr. Pugsley) that this contract had been let by himself when in charge of this department provided for a certain amount of dredging, a portion of which was in shallow water, leading out into deeper water, and that a contract had been let by him for dredging at the further point out in the water at forty or forty-five cents a yard, while the other was let in the portion near the shore at eleven cents per cubic yard. This work was carried on for a considerable time and the contractors were complaining, and my predecessor un-

Mr. PUGSLEY.

dertook to deal with them and they forfeited the amount of their deposit and forfeited their contract. There was no other course open to the department than to forfeit the amount of the deposit. That deposit was forfeited to the Government, the Government have it, and the Government were obliged to ask for tenders for the dredging in the deeper water. The second contract was let at twenty cents a yard, as compared with forty cents a yard under the contract let when my hon. friend (Mr. Pugsley) was minister. The hon. gentlemen referred to certain contractors not receiving payment in connection with work they are doing. Let me tell him that as Minister of Public Works I have yet to see one letter from any contractor under the department saying that he has not received his money when his accounts were properly and honestly presented to the department for payment. I am surprised that my hon. friend from St. John should hear of conditions which I as minister have had no notice of.

Mr. PUGSLEY: My hon. friend (Mr. Rogers), I regret to say, has attempted to make a defence of the action of the dredging contractors who have received the new contracts for work upon the Miramichi. I am sure my hon. friend cannot be correctly informed as to the two dredging contracts which existed. When I was Minister of Public Works there were two situations with which we had to deal; one was what was called the Grand Dune Flats, which is inland and protected, and the other was a bar which was at a considerable distance out and which was exposed to storms. Tenders were called for the work separately and the lowest tender for dredging the bar was at forty-five cents per cubic yard, the tender being that of the W. J. Poupore Company, and the lowest tender for the dredging of the Grand Dune Flats, which is comparatively easy dredging was a tender by a Company controlled by Messrs. Loggie, at eleven cents per cubic yard. The lowest tender in each case was accepted, each tender being entirely for a separate class of work, the conditions being different with regard to each so far as exposure to storms and the kind of soil is concerned. The Messrs. Loggie are absolutely responsible people, reported to be worth at least one million dollars, and they are the gentlemen who entered into a binding contract with the Government to do this work of one million cubic yards at eleven cents per cubic yard. Their contract was for a lump quantity of one million yards at that price. The Messrs. Loggie worked for one season and they never kicked, or never urged that they were getting too low a price, but were prepared to stand by their contract whether they made money or lost money. After the