

Anse à L'Ilot, Quebec—landing pier, \$2,500.

Mr. MONK. Before going into the details of the expenditure on harbours and rivers of the province of Quebec, I would like to ask my hon. friend if the government intend carrying out the suggestion of the Transportation Commission named in 1903, which has long since made its report to the government? As far as I can judge from the estimates to-night, the government has laid aside the recommendations of that commission except in some unimportant details, and has continued, since that report has been before it, the same course as it did previously, namely, of laying out certain public money on public buildings or wharfs here and there, according to the recommendation of members who represent the counties interested or in deference to some influence or suggestions powerful enough to obtain the expenditure of public money. But, as I understood the intention of the government when it named that commission, it was that we should have before us as soon as possible a comprehensive scheme which would enable us to solve the problem of transportation, which is daily becoming more urgent, and, having been fully informed as to the best solution of that problem, we should apply ourselves, if the recommendations of the commission had the approval of the government and parliament, to carrying out that scheme. Now, that report has been in the Department of Public Works for over two years, it has been printed, and, although it has not attracted much attention, it seems to have met the approval of everybody who has had anything to do with it. Yet, this year some \$700,000 is to be spent on public buildings in the province of Ontario and nearly \$500,000 in the province of Quebec. How are the sites for those public buildings selected? How is it that a public building is erected in one village instead of in another? It seems to be a matter of arbitrary decision by the government, acting under the influence of the strongest pressure. If from public buildings you turn to harbours and rivers, which more particularly concern the question of transportation, you find that last year we spent on that item in the province of Ontario about three quarters of a million, exactly on the same plan or want of plan that we have been acting upon for the past ten years. In the province of Quebec last year we spent about three-quarters of a million on wharfs and piers, built here or there, under no rule, but as the government decides under pressure from the members of parliament who represent the constituencies concerned or under some other strong influence. This year my hon. friend asks for the province of Quebec about the same amount and for the province of Ontario a larger figure than that of last year. These expenditures seem to be made without any rule, any guiding principle or any system. It is very difficult for one

Mr. FISHER.

sitting to your left, Mr. Chairman, to take any particular case and to say that a wharf should not be built there because there is no necessity for it, because this immediately attracts to him a large amount of disapproval from the locality concerned. That is why I am criticising in a general way. Now, let us look for a moment at the two principal recommendations of the Transportation Commission in regard to these two provinces; and let me say that these recommendations are made by experts, by men specially chosen by the government because of their particular knowledge of the question, and these recommendations have met with general approval and with the entire concurrence of the government. They have recommended improvements on the great lakes. They have recommended equipping immediately, without a moment's delay, the port of Midland, for two purposes—for transmission by rail from Midland to Montreal and other lower ports, and as the entrance to the Trent canal which canal should be terminated without a moment's delay. They recommend equipping with elevators, and preparing in a general way, exactly as the ports of Superior and Duluth on Lake Superior in the United States are equipped, the port of Depot Harbour.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but he will understand that we are not discussing the principle of these votes. We are on the item of a pier at Anse à l'Ilot. These remarks should be made when the Speaker is in the chair.

Mr. MONK. I rose when you called the vote for harbours and rivers in the province of Quebec, but did not catch your eye.

Mr. FISHER. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but I hope this will not be taken as a precedent. When we come to the individual items, I hope we shall confine ourselves to those items.

Mr. MONK. What I say applies to all the items for the province of Quebec, and will abridge the time of the committee. With regard to the province of Ontario the recommendations of that commission are general as to the improvements of the ports of the great lakes and as to the aids to navigation. With regard to the province of Quebec, the commission has recommended that we should nationalize and render free the ports of Montreal and Quebec. They say this is urgent, that it should be done at once. They recommend in detail some important improvements on the St. Lawrence river; for instance, the widening of the channel from 300 feet, where it is in some places, and where wrecks and strandings continually occur, to 800 or 1,000 feet. They recommend rendering the channel safe from Montreal to the sea. They recommend the same thing at Quebec. On the 19th of