

estimate of Mr. Day though it had been made several years ago, and also the estimate of Mr. Stead based upon Mr. Day's estimate, thought that the tender price was too high and before deciding he made further inquiry. I say that Mr. W. J. McCordick, who had been for I think 30 years superintendent of dredging in the maritime provinces—I do not know whether he was appointed by the late Conservative government or by the Liberal government between 1873 and 1878, but at all events he remained for 18 years in the employ of the Conservative government enjoying their confidence as he enjoyed the confidence of this government to the most marked degree. My hon. friend from St. John knew the late Mr. McCordick, and I think he will agree with me that it will be difficult to find an official of the government who was ever more careful to guard the public interest than that gentleman. If he ever erred at all with regard to accounts it would be on the side of protecting the government and against the individual claimant—Mr. McCordick was directed by the chief engineer to go to Gaspereau and examine into the work which was being done, with a view to giving his opinion as to whether the tender price was fair and reasonable. There was no man in the lower provinces better qualified to give an opinion than Mr. McCordick for the reason that he had been for 25 years in charge of the government dredges. He knew just what a dredge would do, he was familiar with the weather conditions and the effect of gales upon such an exposed coast. He went to Gaspereau, saw the dredge at work, saw the conditions, and he reported—and my hon. friend must have seen that report because it was on file before the Committee on Public Accounts. He reported that in his judgment 90 cents per yard was a fair and reasonable price. I was not content with that and I directed that Mr. J. K. Scammell, the resident engineer in St. John in charge of dredging work, should also be sent to Gaspereau independently of Mr. McCordick to make an examination and give his opinion as to whether the tender price of 90 cents was fair and reasonable. He went and reported and his report was on file before the committee. In his judgment 90 cents per cubic yard was fair and reasonable. Then Mr. Stead, the resident engineer, who had adopted Mr. Day's original estimate of 20 cents per cubic yard for work done by the government dredge, also reported that 90 cents per cubic yard was fair and reasonable, and the chief engineer having those reports before him also certified that in his opinion 90 cents was fair and reasonable. Therefore, before the formal contract was entered into agreeing to pay to the Maritime Dredging Company their tender price of 90 cents per

Mr. PUGSLEY.

cubic yard, we had the reports of Mr. W. J. McCordick, of Mr. J. K. Scammell, of Mr. Stead, and of the chief engineer Mr. Lafleur, that the price was fair and reasonable. With all these certificates I sent a recommendation to council that the tender price be accepted. Now then, the Maritime Dredging Company continued the work during the fall of 1908, but as it got along towards November the weather became very rough and they took the dredge away to St. John. Last year, in order to continue the work I endeavoured to arrange as early as possible for one of the dredges to go there to continue the dredging operations. I asked the president of the company or one of the directors, or I think both of them, if they would go back and they said they did not care to do so because of the heavy storms which frequently prevailed there and they also referred to the fact that one of their scows had been swamped, entailing considerable loss.

Mr. CROCKET. Who is the president of the company to whom the minister spoke?

Mr. PUGSLEY. Mr. John E. Moore.

Mr. CROCKET. And the other director?

Mr. PUGSLEY. Mr. George McAvity. The pressure was continued by the people of Port Elgin and by the member for Westmorland to go on with this dredging. I was urged in the very strongest way to continue it because there are large interests at Port Elgin, there is considerable shipping, large quantities of lumber are shipped from there, and it was urged upon me, and I was impressed by the fact, that it was very important to continue the dredging as early as possible. I was able later on in the season, to remove the dredge 'George McKenzie', one of the government dredges from Nova Scotia and bring it to Gaspereau for the purpose of continuing the work. I have had a statement made up showing the actual cost of bringing the 'George McKenzie' and taking her back, the actual cost of operation while she was at work, and after allowing a reasonable amount of interest and wear and tear and sinking fund, besides a reasonable profit, the cost is as near as may be \$1 per cubic yard as against 90 cents paid the contractor. These are the facts with reference to Gaspereau. The place is very much exposed, the depth of water is not very great at low tide or even at high tide, and the circumstances attending the dredging are very unusual, so that I am satisfied that the engineers exercised a fair judgment when they placed the cost at 90 cents per cubic yard.

Mr. BARKER. If the hon. minister is correct in his story, then the chief engin-