

700. The construction was suspended during the war but has since been resumed and the ship is now complete. This is to pay the final amount due to the contractors.

Mr. STEVENS: When was the vessel delivered?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Last fall.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister should give a statement of the amounts paid on the contract, when paid, and just how this item is made up. I notice there was no vote last year, nor has there been any for a number of years with respect to this contract.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Payments have been made to the extent of \$743,645. The balance is being asked by this vote.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There are no extras at all?

Mr. LAPOINTE: No.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And no diminutions—that is to say, no set-offs?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I am informed that the contractors are claiming extras, but we have not finally decided that such extras should be allowed and we are simply asking for the balance of the amount of the contract.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the department admit that the vessel is in accordance with contract, in every way perfectly satisfactory?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Absolutely, yes.

Item agreed to.

Amount required for the construction of one self-propelling hopper barge, \$285,000.

Mr. STEVENS: Is this a new vessel?

Mr. LAPOINTE: It is new to the extent that its construction has not yet been started. It is necessary in connection with the operation of the elevator dredge for which an amount has just been voted.

Mr. STEVENS: Has any contract been let?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Not yet.

Mr. STEVENS: Have tenders been called for?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Not yet.

Mr. STEVENS: Will tenders be called for?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Surely.

Mr. STEVENS: Will tenders be called for from the whole of Canada?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Surely.

Mr. KNOX: Is the work contemplated by this and the preceding item to be carried out on the St. Lawrence channel only?

Mr. LAPOINTE: It is primarily for that purpose, but the dredge may be used elsewhere if it is needed.

Mr. KNOX: Is this work in the nature of permanent improvement?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes. There is a very dangerous spot in the St. Lawrence river below Quebec called de Beaujeu Bank. It is proposed to deepen the channel on the northern side of the river so as to avoid de Beaujeu Bank. Of course, the work is asked for by the navigation companies and the public generally. It will have, among other effects, the result of reducing considerably the rate of maritime insurance and increasing the safety of navigation.

Item agreed to.

Lighthouse and coast service—agencies, rents and contingencies, \$210,000.

Mr. LEGER: I would like on this item to put a few questions to the hon. minister with reference to the marine agencies in our part of the country. In the winter of 1918 the marine agencies in the maritime provinces, which since Confederation had been run on provincial lines, were changed, apparently by the Marine Department's officials, in a very arbitrary manner. The marine agency at St. John, which properly had control of all the aids to navigation in the province, had the whole of Baie des Chaleurs, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait taken away from its jurisdiction; the latter district was transferred to the Prince Edward Island agency at Charlottetown and the Baie des Chaleurs agency was transferred to the Quebec district. I believe the change should not have been made; I would like to see each province have its own agencies. For instance, if anything happens in Kent county, or on the north shore district of New Brunswick, we have to get the agent from Charlottetown to come to that district. Now, some of the matters requiring attention are of a very trivial nature and a method of that kind is certainly not economical. I wish to read the following item bearing upon this matter which I took from a New Brunswick paper the other day: