

and I make bold to say that the dredging carried on by that department with dredges owned and controlled by the department costs three or four times less than the dredging carried on elsewhere by contract. The Public Accounts Committee will meet soon; my statements will be clearly printed, and nobody can prove that they are not right. The dredging on the St. Lawrence to-day is carried on at a cheaper rate than dredging has ever been carried on in this country. Now, if my hon. friend will think over the position twice, he will admit that the work of improving the St. Lawrence cannot be carried out unless you have ship-yards to repair your plant. The department has a large plant. Of course there will be breaks every day. The dredges are working in hard material, taking up stone and rocks, and there are sure to be breaks and all sorts of accidents. To carry out successfully a work of that kind you must have ship-yards of your own. The plant that is at the disposal of the government to-day is the finest plant that any concern on this continent owns, and it would be a great pity indeed if it were ever destroyed. But, of course, if we are contented with old dredges such as the hon. gentleman has seen at work, I freely grant that we are working in the wrong way. These old dredges should have been replaced. But it requires money to build dredges. Every time I came before this House and asked for money, I was told that I was spending a lot of money. We have not spent enough in improving our waterways. One of the most competent men on transportation, Mr. Hays told us to-day elsewhere that we could not handle the trade that is in store for us; and he is perfectly right. The St. Lawrence channel should have been deepened and widened long ago. But it takes time to build dredges. There are not in this country any contractors who have dredges to carry out the work on the St. Lawrence and we have been obliged to build, year by year, the dredges that are carrying out the work. Now, the dredge that is being built in Sorel for the maritime provinces will probably be the best dredge in the world.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.). When will it be ready?

Hon. Mr. TARTE. The Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Sutherland) has given us to-night the very sad news that it will not be ready this year. I am very sorry for it. The plans for that dredge were carefully prepared by a man of large experience who was in a position to take advantage of the knowledge of the world in building dredges. He was employed first by the Harbour Commissioners in Montreal. He then went to the United States and was employed on very large works on the Mississippi river and elsewhere. He came back to this country. Then he made a trip to

the old country to take advantage of the new knowledge on the Clyde and other places there. So that plans for that dredge was prepared with all that knowledge available. I am sure that my hon. friend (Mr. German) on reflection, will admit that, under the present circumstances it would be very bad policy indeed for the department to discard all that magnificent new plant which has been built with every possible care and on which we have spent large amounts of money, and replace it with dredges owned by contractors. I say again there is no contractor in this country, no firm of contractors that has dredges, I will not say equal, but dredges that can be compared with the new modern dredges that have been built by the department during the last year. Let my hon. friend look carefully into that question, and I say again he will find that the dredging carried out in the Department of Public Works with dredges owned by the government and under our own control costs three or four times less than the work costs when it is carried out by outside men. You cannot possibly get contractors to carry out dredging for less than twenty or twenty-five cents a yard, or eight dollars an hour—and small dredges at that. The dredging carried out on the St. Lawrence does not cost more than four or five cents a yard. These are the facts as they are.

Mr. GERMAN. Notwithstanding the hon. gentleman's (Hon. Mr. Tarte's) assertion that the government is doing work cheaper than the contractors are, I beg to differ with him. And, as this government seems to be prolific in commissions, if they will appoint a commission to look into the whole matter, they will find that the work can be done by contractors cheaper and with greater satisfaction to the country than it can be done by the government. Now, I am well aware of the fact that the late Minister of Public Works did, with a great deal of éclat, construct and launch an enormous dredge in the city of Toronto. I believe it is called the 'J. Israel Tarte.'

Hon. Mr. TARTE. Not a bad name.

Mr. GERMAN. Not a bad name, a very good name. It cost an enormous amount of money. It can do a certain class of dredging work, but in soft material only, and when that class of work is exhausted the dredge will have to tie up, and will lay there as a white elephant on the hands of the government. The hon. gentleman says that the government has much better dredging plant than the contractors. I do not dispute that, because the government is in the dredging business. But I say the government, instead of going into the dredging business, should allow this work to be done by contract. They should follow in that respect the example of the United States government. If they would inquire