

Department of Public Works.

As much as possible, creosoted timber is being used in the construction or repair of said works, but the cost of the material which has to be procured from the United States, and the fact that its use prevents that of our own lumber, call for the earnest consideration of the necessity of the establishment of creosoting works in this country, either as a public or a private enterprise.

DREDGING.

Foremost among the dredging operations performed under the direction of the department, stands the work done for the purpose of deepening and maintaining the ship channel from Montreal to Quebec to the standard depth of $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The work was done this year by four dredges, the "Laval" and Dredges No. 8, 11 and 12, the quantity of material removed having been 437,642 yards, and the cost of dredging depending on the nature of the material to be removed. Thus the average cost of the "Laval's" operation during the season was $46\frac{1}{2}$ cents per yard, while dredge "No 11" worked at an average cost of 17 cents per cubic yard.

In the Maritime Provinces, dredging was done at 17 points by 5 dredges, the "St. Lawrence," "Canada," "New Dominion," "George McKenzie" and "Prince Edward."

The average cost per cubic yard of material removed, ranged from $16\frac{2}{3}$ cents for the "St. Lawrence" to 57 cents for the "George McKenzie."

In Quebec, the dredges "St. Louis," "Nithsdale" and "St. Pierre" worked at eight different points, the average cost of the "Nithsdale" being $33\frac{1}{2}$ cents per cubic yard and that of the "St. Louis," $19\frac{5}{8}$ cents per yard.

In Ontario dredging was performed at 19 points by five departmental dredges and two hired dredges. The five vessels owned by the department were the "Challenge," "Ontario," "Nipissing," "Queen" and "No. 9." The latter working on the Kaministiquia River at Fort William, performed its work at the cheapest rate known for some years in the department, the average cost per cubic yard having only amounted to $3\frac{1}{3}$ cents. The averages of the others were, "Challenge," $14\frac{1}{8}$ cents; "Ontario," $28\frac{1}{8}$ cents; "Nipissing," 17 cents, and "Queen," 14 cents.

The total number of yards removed by the whole fleet during the year was 1,079,754 yards.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Of the public buildings mentioned in last year's report as being in course of construction, the Lazaretto at Tracadie, was finally completed during the last fiscal year. The erection of the drill hall at Halifax, the post office at Victoria and the post office at Pictou, was carried on vigorously and it is hoped will be finally completed during the next fiscal year. Owing to the difficulties experienced by the contractor for the Rimouski post office, the works were suspended during the latter part of the fiscal year, but steps were being taken at the same time to carry the building to a completion, and it is expected the same will be finished during the next year. Contracts were entered into during the year covered by this report for seven new buildings; one in Nova Scotia, the new immigration building at Halifax, to replace that destroyed by fire on the 27th January, 1895; two in Ontario, a post