

as a highway, and that what has been done has materially improved conditions; instead of injuring the road it has made it better. It is true that some work may remain to be done to render the road passable at all times, but that would have been true of the former road, and my hon. friend's request for further expenditure cannot be made in pursuance of any agreement on the part of this government to do anything further than has been done. It would be a matter of grace. Probably the work is desirable, but it is another illustration of the demands that are being made for more expenditures, demands which go far to cancel requests from other hon. members that we should spend less. I do not know how we can spend more and at the same time spend less. My hon. friend has made representations in regard to this matter and I regret I have not been able to see my way clear to meet his request.

Mr. DUPUIS: The minister states that we urged his department to do this work last year, and he was kind enough to receive a delegation from the town of Laprairie in connection with this matter. In reply to the argument advanced by the minister may I point out to him that when he says there is another road parallel to this one for which I am asking money, he is not exactly correct. There is no road parallel to the one which I am asking to have repaired. The road over which the public is bound to pass is about two miles longer than the one on the shore and it goes south instead of towards Montreal. The minister states that the work done by his department was not for the purpose of building a road but was for protection, and that is quite true. But I would point out that the Department of Public Works, or any other department for that matter, when it undertakes a public work, has certain responsibilities if it injures other public works, causing damage thereto. In that event it is the duty of the department to repair the damages or to rebuild the road in such a manner as to make it available to the public as it was before. Although this is not a very favourable time to ask for a further amount of about \$10,000 which would be necessary to put that road in a proper condition, I urge upon the minister that it is imperative. This road is absolutely necessary, and the town of Laprairie, which is responsible for it, will be bound to answer to the public for it. If I were discussing the matter from a legal point of view I would say to the minister that if my client were sued by parishes and townships to the south of that road for damages sustained by the travelling public, as a lawyer I would bring the Department of Public

[Mr. H. A. Stewart.]

Works into the action in guaranty in that suit, and I am sure that, as the minister knows, before a court of justice he would be compelled to restore the road to its former condition.

I have no complaint to make against the Department of Public Works with respect to the dyke; I am quite satisfied in that connection, and I congratulate the minister on the work done there. But I am not speaking of the dyke; I am speaking of the road which was covered by it. The minister said that the road which was covered by the dyke was in bad order. That is perfectly true, but the farmers on the south shore who now have to travel an extra two miles used to go by that road, thus shortening their trip to Montreal by two miles. Going and coming, it would represent a difference of four miles. I believe the people on the south shore are entitled to a proper road, and that the Department of Roads in Quebec is very generous, inasmuch as it is not bound in any way to contribute a half share towards the rebuilding of the road. I say that in offering a payment of \$10,000 the department in Quebec is acting generously, and the federal Department of Public Works should not refuse to assume its share of the cost of the rebuilding made necessary through the construction of a dyke within the town limits of the town of Laprairie. I am pressing for that work because it is absolutely necessary; it is most urgent. The people are threatening suit against the town of Laprairie if the road is not opened. Upon whom is the responsibility for the closing of the road? My answer is that the Department of Public Works at Ottawa is responsible.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The information my officials give me is to the effect that the work on the road was submitted to and approved by the town of Laprairie.

Mr. DUPUIS: You mean the dyke?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Whatever was done and whatever effect it had upon the road was approved by the town of Laprairie. If the people of that town wish to have the highway improved they are perfectly free to go ahead with the work. We believe we have made their task much lighter, and the expense involved will be much less than it would have been had we not done as we have done.

Mr. DUPUIS: I am sure the minister's officials will corroborate my statement when I say that before beginning the work on the dyke they obliged the town of Laprairie to deliver into their hands and to place under their authority a certain parcel of land, including a road. They threatened that unless