

Mr. CARVELL: I cannot understand some of the methods by which it is being constructed. The work, however, is going to be of very great convenience, not only to the people of Laprairie and that portion of the South shore of the St. Lawrence, but to the general travelling public. I was there about a month ago, and at that time it would have been almost impossible for people to reach Montreal by ordinary means of conveyance if that highway were not there, because, after all, it is simply a dyke seventeen or eighteen feet high, upon the top of which is a highway. In going over it, I was impressed by a few things. The first was that I did not believe in the method of construction. I do not understand why it was necessary to build a concrete face up and down the whole length of that dyke, which must be a mile long, as a protection against the ice shock. If it had an ordinary rock embankment about one and one-half to one, that is all that would be required.

Mr. LEMIEUX: The best rock is Roch Lanctot.

Mr. CARVELL: On the river side, two-thirds of it I suppose, is now finished. Another thing that impressed me was that it was a great pity the embankment was not made two or three feet wider. It ought to be sufficiently wide to admit of a street railway track. It may be possible even now to put a track on the top of the embankment, but that would, to some extent, interfere with the ordinary highway for vehicles. That, however, is largely a matter for the Provincial Government and the people of that community, because, once this work is constructed, if I remain in this position, I think I shall have to take the position that it is purely a local work which rightfully belongs to the municipal or provincial authorities, and I would feel very much like washing my hands of it. I do not think, however, we would be justified, under present conditions, in carrying out the plans to their minutest details and putting a concrete covering over the whole surface of the road, especially when the road on either end of it is merely a macadamised road. It should be constructed up to the highest standard of a macadamised road to conform with the general conditions of the road on either end of it, so that if a man goes along in an automobile, he can make just as good time over the dyke as over the highway. When that has been accomplished, the

10 p.m. Government of Canada will have pretty nearly done its duty.

[Mr. Lemieux.]

I want to assure my hon. friends that we intend to prosecute that work just as soon as we can get through with this session of Parliament and I can look around and satisfy myself as to the most economical and business like methods of finishing it. We shall not put off until the autumn, we shall finish it up at once, and we shall give the people of that community just as good a road over the dyke as they have on either end of it.

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend takes the right view of the whole situation. Many years ago Laprairie was a very interesting town. The first railway built in Canada started from Laprairie. One of the two old wharves which my hon. friend saw, was the terminus of the first railway built in Canada, in the forties. It ran from Laprairie to St. Johns. Then Laprairie ceased to be the terminus by the construction of the Grand Trunk. There was a time when this village was very thriving. There were two banks, and there was quite a big trade, and two steamers were plying between Montreal and Laprairie. Then the Victoria bridge was built, and one of the steamers disappeared. Later on, the Dominion Government gave the Grand Trunk new subsidies to rebuild the Victoria bridge, but unfortunately they gave the Grand Trunk powers to charge the poor farmers such tolls that I consider them being mulcted. From all those considerations, therefore, something is due to the people of that community. The land, as the minister has noticed, is very low. The river St. Lawrence forms a bay from the Lachine rapids down to the Victoria bridge, and every year Laprairie is flooded. I could not give an estimate of the property damaged or lost as a result of those annual floods. For years past, under the old Conservative Government, under the Laurier Government, protection works have been erected, but they never were completed. The present work will complete what was started very many years ago. The trouble is that this amount has been in the Estimates since 1911, but through purely political considerations the works have been postponed from year to year, because the elections were not forthcoming. The minister has now visited the district, and he intends to apply this amount, and to make the dyke as useful as possible. Let him finish the work as speedily as he can. Not only the people of Laprairie, but the people of Montreal will benefit by it.