

nothing is being done about the seventy-five miles of the Thames between London and Lake St. Clair . . . I am glad that Mr. Porter was down through here yesterday, said Reeve C. V. Skinner of Thamesville. The provincial government has been absolutely too slow in handling this flood problem. They have not been paying any attention to Chatham and Thamesville.

One could go on quoting the heads of municipalities throughout that area. I do not rise to say whether or not their observations are true, but I do rise to point them out to the leader of the opposition.

Mr. GRAYDON: May I ask my hon. friend if he would mind sending over the copy of the last paper he quoted from?

Mr. MARTIN: As soon as *Hansard* has had it, I shall be glad to.

Mr. GRAYDON: I want to see that everything is on the record.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. C. C. I. MERRITT (Vancouver-Burrard): Mr. Speaker, we have successfully distributed the blame for flood conditions but have not followed my leader's suggestion that steps be taken now to benefit by the lesson and have these various authorities get together for the future. May we now turn to the other grievances, the redress of which my leader asked, and see if we can hear something from the government with regard to the grievance of the people of Halifax, namely the fact that five months have already passed since the vacancy in a seat there but no writ of election yet issued. I was about to say that I was surprised that no attention was paid by any member of the government to this grievance. I waited until Your Honour stood up to put the motion to the house before I rose to call any further attention to it, because I would have thought that somebody in the government would make a reference to it and give us some idea when we might expect a by-election in Halifax.

Mr. GRAYDON: They have not got things fixed up down there yet.

Mr. MERRITT: They might not have things fixed up.

Mr. GRAYDON: How is the weather down there?

Mr. McCANN: Smith is down getting the weather fixed.

Mr. GRAYDON: Who is Smith?

Mr. McCANN: The hon. member for Calgary West.

Mr. GRAYDON: Do you follow him carefully?

Mr. McCANN: Well, we watch him.

Mr. GRAYDON: That is good business.

Mr. McCANN: The papers report it.

Mr. MacINNIS: What paper?

Mr. MERRITT: Perhaps now, Mr. Speaker, I can continue. I am not a bit surprised because I have been here for a little over two sessions, and this is the third time that I, myself, can remember getting to my feet in these circumstances, when something that needs an answer has been mentioned from the opposition benches and the government just try to pass it off, not even saying anything about it, or giving us any idea of what their intentions are. This is a matter that cannot be passed off any longer. It is a matter as to which I do not ask when a writ of election is to be issued. I demand that it be issued and issued at once. I am going to give my reasons for that demand. Already we have had five months in which the opportunity was there to issue the writ. The writ has not been issued, and the people of the dual constituency of Halifax have been half disfranchised.

Mr. ISNOR: Which half?

An hon. MEMBER: The better half.

Mr. MERRITT: As some hon. member says, the better half. Think what that means, Mr. Speaker. That is the capital city of the province in which responsible government first appeared on this continent, the cradle of responsible government in Canada. We on this side of the house have asked in a kindly way all during this session that some statement be made and that a writ be issued, but we have had no word from the government as to why they have not taken the step which they took so quickly in connection with by-elections they thought they could win, but which they held off taking in connection with by-elections they knew they were going to lose, a course which did them no good at all in the end. I have here the issue of the *Halifax Chronicle* of December 10, 1946, in which the surviving member for the dual member constituency is quoted as follows:

Mr. Isnor made this statement after he held a long distance telephone conversation with party officials in Ottawa. He said that winter conditions in Nova Scotia were not suitable for holding an election.

Mr. ISNOR: Is that not right? What would you say to that?

Mr. MERRITT: That is just the point I am coming to; I do not know anything about it, and I do not suppose officials of the Liberal party in Ottawa would know anything more about it than I do, because they are no closer to