

Supply—Public Works

The application can go to no other department. Certainly it cannot go to the Department of Transport. For that reason I feel I am in order in discussing the development of power under the estimates of the Department of Public Works and particularly under the first vote in those estimates.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, there has been no application to this department under the Navigable Waters Protection Act and if the hon. member is in order in discussing what the power policy should be on the St. Lawrence river then another hon. member would be just as much in order in discussing what the power policy should be on the Columbia river, the Yukon river or any other navigable water in Canada. The hon. member may have some slight excuse for making his speech if there were an application before the department for a project of this kind but there is no such thing and I suggest he is out of order.

Mr. Chevrier: There were informal discussions as the minister has stated.

Mr. Green: I understand that any discussions which took place occurred when the hon. member was himself president of the St. Lawrence seaway authority and he ought to know all about it and why he would seek to drag in this discussion at this time on a broad question of policy concerning the development of power on the St. Lawrence river is quite beyond me.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, may I ask if the minister has forgotten his answer to me in the house to the effect that informal discussions had been taking place between his officials and those of Quebec hydro for the development of power in the Lachine section? That is on *Hansard* I submit, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Green: I understand that over two years ago when the hon. member for Laurier was president of the St. Lawrence seaway authority discussions of a highly informal nature took place between different governmental authorities including the St. Lawrence seaway authority on a very junior level. However, this is not the place to drag in a debate on the question of policy concerning the development of power on the St. Lawrence river.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, if I may speak again to the point of order, I wish to say I do not like the expression used by my hon. friend when he refers to my attempting to drag in a discussion of power policy. It is not a question of my dragging in a discussion to debate here the various alternatives that are applicable and which will have to be determined by the minister's department. It

is not a question of dragging this subject in but rather one of discussing the position between one province vis-a-vis the other.

It is a question of discussing what attitude the government should take with reference to power in one province as opposed to another province. I submit I have a right to put that on the record because the minister's department is the only place in which this can be done. If I cannot do it here, then any minister can rise and say, "Well, I have nothing to do with this". Surely, there has to be some place where the matter of power can be discussed and I submit this is the place.

Mr. Green: The hon. member could have and should have made his speech in the throne speech debate. He can make his speech in the budget debate, as he knows. On either of those occasions an hon. member can speak on any subject but it is absolutely foreign to the discussion of public works estimates, especially when there is no such application before the department.

Mr. Chevrier: I submit I have the right to do it here.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I would suggest to you that on the first item of a department's estimates the widest possible discussion has always been permitted. The Minister of Public Works suggests that this matter could have been discussed in the debate on the address, or in the budget debate; but undoubtedly that is an inadequate opportunity, because a member may desire not only to state his position but undoubtedly as well he seeks to get ministerial reaction. No opportunity is given in these general debates to obtain the reply of the government to the point expressed by an hon. member. This is a question which obviously under the Public Works Act comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Public Works. It surely is limiting the rules and the traditions of debate on the first item to preclude an hon. member from raising a question that admittedly comes within the authority of the minister. If the minister could successfully argue that it does not come within his jurisdiction, then my submission is not valid.

Mr. Green: It does not.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It is clear that under the act it does. The hon. member for Laurier has read the section which details the minister's jurisdiction in this particular. Surely, if this is the case—and the section is clear—there can be no doubt that the hon. member for Laurier is in order and within the rules of the house.