

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I submit that the course I have taken is perfectly sound and sane. The mere fact that on certain information and at the request of members of parliament or others a certain sum is put in the estimates, does not obligate the government to make the expenditure under all circumstances. Let us get down to this particular case. Dominion City is a small, though no doubt an important place. My hon. friend has in season and out of season vigorously urged the claims of Dominion City, but, as he has said, the postal revenue is only about \$1,300, and there are no other public services there that require accommodation. The postmaster's salary absorbs practically all the revenue. If we were to erect a post office building at even the small expenditure of \$10,000 that he mentions—and I am sure that that would not suffice to complete the building and furnish it—we would have an annual expenditure for interest on capital outlay, maintenance and caretaker's wages, and with these added expenses there would be a substantial debit balance each year against that particular building.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Have all the public buildings a credit balance to-day?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I have not any doubt that there is a debit balance against several of them. But in the smaller places expenditures on public buildings for services that will show a deficit, are, in my opinion not warranted at this time. When revenues are abundant we may be able to overlook these local deficits, but I think my hon. friend will agree that any government with a sense of responsibility must take into consideration the prevailing conditions, the demand for public buildings, and all the other demands that are made upon it, and if it is to command the confidence of the people it must in large measure cut its coat according to the cloth. My hon. friend has again referred to the Welland canal. I submit there is no parallel between the two cases.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: How much by way of dividend is the Welland canal paying to-day?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I hope the Welland canal will pay very substantial dividends to western Canada. There was no part of the Dominion louder in its demand for the construction of the Welland canal than western Canada.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: I have no objection to the Welland canal.

[Mr. Beaubien.]

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): A very substantial part of the motive behind the construction of the Welland canal was to get the western wheat to the seaboard as cheaply as possible. The Welland canal is a great public work upon which a very large expenditure has been made. The continuation of such a great national undertaking is not at all comparable with the erection of a small post office building. The Welland canal had to be completed, and I am sure that on reflection my hon. friend will agree that the government acted wisely and properly in continuing a great work, the completion of which is absolutely necessary from a national standpoint. Let me assure him again that there has been no discrimination, either on provincial or political lines; I do not know the political complexion of the tenderers or anything of that nature. In regard to relieving unemployment, as I said this afternoon, when you let a contract often you are disappointed in the amount of relief that is afforded local unemployment. We have had many complaints that a contractor has not considered local conditions, that he has brought men in from outside and has purchased his materials elsewhere. We have no control over a contractor in that regard. If we insist on his purchasing his materials locally, or employing local labour, he comes back with a claim for extras. I can assure my hon. friend that we will give his claim for a building at Dominion City careful consideration, but I really do not think it is warranted at the present time, and this is the only reason why it has not been proceeded with.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: I do not wish to delay the passing of this small vote for the province of Manitoba, but I cannot allow the minister's statement to go unanswered. In the first place, there was no guarantee that the \$2,000,000 spent on the Welland canal would relieve unemployment. As he well says, it is very hard to say just how much local unemployment these public expenditures, especially when made under contract, do relieve, because the government has no control over the contractor with respect to whom he shall employ and where he shall purchase his materials. At the same time the Minister of Railways will not deny that he said in view of the unemployment situation the expenditure of the \$2,000,000 on the Welland canal was perfectly justified. I think I am quoting the minister correctly; his remarks will be found in Hansard. The Department of Railways and Canals had no control over the contractor in that case with respect to where he secured his labour; he was free to get it in Toronto, Winnipeg or some place else. In a word, he was