

Quebec Harbour

Mr. JACOBS: Probably he was appointed because they wanted the hon. member to have no opposition the next time.

Mr. CHURCH: Any questions asked from this side of the House are not by way of objection to items to provide for the development of our national ports. We are simply looking for information—because every member of the House was not invited to go to Quebec on that trip the other day. I myself was not invited. This resolution was placed on the Order Paper on the 24th of March. It was called almost every day, but was not gone on with until some members of the House had been invited to go and inspect these improvements. I am glad they did go there, because seeing is believing, and that applies to harbour works as well as to anything else. If you want to understand a harbour development, you have to see it. I do not blame the minister, as one of the representatives of the Quebec district, for his interest in Quebec harbour. He said that some were hungry who were not thirsty. I may say in answer that the minister is both hungry and thirsty to get this matter through in the form of a resolution rather than to take a chance with an item in the main estimates. The resolution is dated March 24, but it was not gone on with until the Progressives were invited to Quebec last Saturday. As I was not one of those invited, I may say to the minister that I do not know what it is to be either hungry or thirsty.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. CHURCH: It does seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that there has been altogether too much politics in connection with the Quebec harbour since Confederation. I have a table here which was prepared the other day in answer to a question, giving certain figures and total expenditures with respect to the various ports in Canada. As I say, there has been too much politics and too little business in connection with the development of our national harbours, and the mixing up of politics with the matter, and the absence of business methods, has cost the country millions of dollars. It is true that terminal facilities are necessary at ports like Quebec and Montreal to take care of the increased business, but how is it that some of these ports are dealt with by resolution, while the others are left to shift for themselves in the main estimates?

[Mr. Marcell.]

Here is the port of Victoria, B.C., badly in need of a dry dock and terminals; what is going to be done there? What about Halifax, St. John, Toronto, Hamilton and other places which need adequate terminal facilities also and cannot get them? What I urge is that there be equality of treatment. I do not blame the minister for what has happened in the past; he has been in office only a few months. But I do not see any reason why there should be a change of officials and commissioners at the port of Quebec or the port of Montreal. If you want good government of a port and value for your money you must have continuity of officials, engineers, management, commissioners, and financing. Things must be done in a businesslike way. As it is now, the officials change with the Government, instead of the ports being administered by a permanent commission along business lines. A permanent commission would be in a far better position to decide as to how much dredging was to be done this year, how many immigration sheds and elevators, etc., should be provided, what would likely be the revenue from the port, and what increased business they could get.

Mr. MARTELL: Were not the harbour commissioners of Montreal and Quebec changed after 1911? Every Liberal that cropped up then was discharged.

Mr. CHURCH: I am not interested in the past or in politics in the way the hon. member is. He has politics for his breakfast, dinner and tea. I am not interested at all in that phase of the problem. Never mind what has happened in the past. Let us concern ourselves with the future. Let us get value for this money that the minister proposes to spend.

What does the minister mean by equipment of the port? I see by this statement and comparison of expenditures in harbours that only very small amounts were spent on Quebec harbour in the years when immigration was the greatest. In 1895-96 only \$8,000 was spent, and there was a large immigration in that year. The next two years \$6,000 was spent. In 1910-11 the amount was much greater, \$392,000; in 1911-12, \$529,000, and in 1914 \$497,000. Of the entire expenditure of \$11,000,000 on the Quebec harbour, \$5,500,000 was spent between 1914 and 1918 while the war was on. During the war the port was able to take care of all the business, of all immigration navigation, including inward and outward bound traffic at no very great expense.