

to the committee—and I am going to do so again—that a limitation of \$5,000 was fixed by order in council, if I am not mistaken. That has been adopted for years as a policy and as the limit to which we should go in doing public work by day labour. Now the minister tells the committee in connection with item after item that he is going to do the work by day labour. I have just cited one for \$7,000 which I protested against. There was another item above that for \$7,000. I protested against that or the hon. member to my left did, and I protested against this one of \$4,800. I am not going to be diverted from doing my duty, because it is a duty devolving upon hon. members, by the criticisms and small sneers of the hon. member for Kings. The minister is going back to an old system where an engineer, in conjunction with those who may influence the government to undertake the work, will go to a district and say: Here, we are going to repair this wharf; we do not know what it is going to cost until we tear it down; but we are going to tear it down; we want you to haul brush, haul rocks, drive piles and so on, and we are going to do the work by day labour. Will anybody suggest for a moment that that system is better than the system which I have been advocating of calling for public tenders for these works? My hon. friend cannot escape by simply saying that he discovers evidence of ignorance on my part of this class of work. I am not here nor am I called upon to give credentials to my hon. friend on that score. I am willing to assume my responsibility in that regard. I insist again on protesting against this departure from the long adopted policy of this country.

Mr. LEADER: I do not contend that I know anything about repairing or building wharves, nor do I rise to take issue particularly with the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens). But I should like to say a word in support of day labour under certain conditions and in certain circumstances. I have had a little experience in municipal work on a very small scale and have found that it was better done by day labour in many cases. Because there is an old tradition that parliament must call for tenders for any work costing over \$5,000 seems to me no reason why we should retain it if it is not a proper way to expend public money. As an instance, I might cite a local condition in my riding where we repaired the dykes on the Assiniboine river. The estimate of the department was forty cents a yard for this work, but the government did it by day labour and I believe the job was well done for at least half that

[Mr. Stevens.]

estimate. I should like to take this occasion to say that under certain circumstances I believe it is a proper course to follow to perform this work by day labour.

Item agreed to.

South Rustico (Oyster bed bridge)—Wharf reconstruction, \$2,500.

Mr. MURDOCK: I move that this item be struck out.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I welcome the support of the Minister of Labour. I am glad there is a check on the minister from some quarter anyway.

Mr. GRAHAM: Is anybody going to retard this motion?

Motion agreed to.

Tignish harbour—Repairs to breakwaters, \$7,400.

Mr. DOUCET: How is it that there was an item of \$2,700 last year for repairs and this year an item of \$7,400 for repairs?

Mr. STEVENS: Is this the extra because of day labour?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Some two thousand dollars odd were expended last year on urgent repairs, and a further sum is required this year to repair the north breakwater, consisting of renewal of flooring, stringers and covering, also strengthening channel face with piling. It will also be necessary to rebuild the top portion of the south breakwater a length of a hundred feet. The damage that is to be repaired this year was caused by the storm of last October.

Mr. LEWIS: Is this to be done by contract?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): No, by day labour. I tried to make clear to the committee a few moments ago that on an item like this more than two-thirds of the expenditure will be for materials which will be obtained by competitive bids. The suggestion that the department are adopting new methods is not right, or at least I am so advised by my officials. The policy that is being carried on to-day is the policy that has been carried on for years in this department. A large portion of the expenditure is for lumber in one form or another, and competitive bids are asked for in connection with that material.

Mr. MEIGHEN: How are the competitive bids asked for? Who supplies the names? The secretary of the Liberal Association?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): No, I think not. The specifications are sent by the engineer