

opinion of experts is that the closing of this gap is necessary to protect the wharves and also the very large amount of shipping that is coming to the harbour and using these wharves on the western side. Therefore, this is simply carrying on a work which has been in progress for a number of years.

Mr. REID: My reason for asking it to stand is this: Tenders have been called for, they are in the department and I would not like to dispose of the matter without consulting my colleagues. We might allow the whole item to stand and I will bring it up when members are present without taking any advantage or asking it to be passed in their absence.

Mr. CURRIE: The hon. member for St. John wants to knock out a \$10,000 item in Ontario, but he objects to the leaving out of an item for a quarter of a million dollars of which Ontario pays a large proportion. One item should stand against the other.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I would not do any injustice to any part of Ontario, or any other portion of Canada, but in the case of this building I have no doubt the post office is being carried on in rented premises. The land has not been purchased. The report says that the vote is required to purchase the land. The ex-Minister of Public Works last session dropped similar items with respect to public buildings and made the announcement that no public building would be undertaken while the war lasts.

Mr. CURRIE: Hundreds of thousands of dollars needed to repair docks and improve harbours in Ontario, but there has not been a dollar of new work put in. This condition at St. John has existed from time immemorial.

Mr. PUGSLEY: No.

Mr. CURRIE: There is no condition there that requires any change, and we could go on for three or four years more without having this work done. I quite agree with the hon. member that this is new work, and by what means of hocus-pocus that big item of a quarter of a million dollars can be put in these estimates, and even before it appears in the estimates tenders can be called for, is, I fancy, something entirely new in this department. This item is not urgent, and I think if one item stands the other should stand. If it is any money to be spent at St. John the late minister stands up for it, but he spends the time of this

[Mr. Pugsley.]

House trying to stick his knife into the items of other provinces, and I think it is time he was called in that respect—because if the rule is to be applied it should be applied all round. If it is a good rule, I am willing to abide by it; but let the hon. member for St. John abide by it and take the advice of his own colleagues and ask the minister to strike the item out.

Mr. PUGSLEY: My hon. friend is labouring under a very grave misapprehension. I did not try to stick a knife into—

Mr. CURRIE: You are, all the time.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I never did that. On the contrary, when I was minister and since that time, I have always encouraged development in all parts of Canada. See what has been done in the hon. member's own constituency, at Collingwood, and all through western Ontario. Very important works were constructed. I would appeal to representatives from these sections of Ontario as to whether or not I showed a generous spirit, not a niggardly spirit, in regard to improvements. The hon. member seems to think that conditions in St. John are what they have been for many years. That is not so. There has been a very large degree of harbour development there; a great deal of dredging has been done, and the wharves have been built lower down the harbour and nearer to the gap from which the southwesterly storms affect the harbour, and it becomes, so these experts say, necessary to protect—

Mr. CURRIE: What experts?

Mr. PUGSLEY: The engineers and people connected with the harbour, experts of the department. There is a vast deal of shipping coming to St. John. It would amaze the hon. member to know what is being shipped to Great Britain, largely munitions and supplies for the Allies. Many vessels with cargoes of enormous value sail from the harbour, and those familiar with the harbour assert that it is necessary to fill up the gap in order to protect the shipping now coming in such great quantities to the harbour, and also that it is necessary to protect the wharves upon which a large amount has been expended by the Government.

Mr. CURRIE: I think the whole item looks very suspicious. For that reason I think the best thing we can do is to strike it out altogether.