

ister of Public Works (Mr. Elliott) has said, contracts are being let frequently—you saw three or four yesterday—and certainly between July 28 and August 7 many contracts were made by the outgoing government; the date for the expiry of the tenders having arrived between July 28 and August 7, contracts were let by the administration in the ordinary course of business in order that work might go forward and employment be provided.

That is what the Minister of Public Works in the late government did; that is the course which the late government took. The Prime Minister went on to say:

I take it that was the purpose of the late government in doing that. So in respect to these undertakings they will be advertised and carried forward as public works under the provisions of the law.

So the Prime Minister himself there distinctly said, if I put the right construction on his words, that the money that was voted and earmarked for certain public works by the last parliament would be expended just as fast as tenders could be called for and contracts let.

I come back to the telegram which was sent by the secretary treasurer of the municipality. If I am misinformed I hope the Minister of Public Works will correct me, because I notice his deputy is sitting in front of him. May I say at this point that I have every admiration for the officials of the Department of Public Works. They are very courteous and if a man is at all reasonable in his demands they are always ready to do everything in their power to give service. I think I have always been reasonable. I am informed that no reply was received to the telegram sent by this secretary treasurer, who was authorized by his council and who knew the local situation. I do not think it is fair to treat any public body in that manner. If I am wrong in my statement I would ask the minister to correct me. If the minister will say it was answered I do not wish to proceed further.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I cannot answer my hon. friend without having the file before me. However I assure him that we in the department are particularly careful to answer every communication received.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: My information may be wrong, but that is the word I received before the opening of this session from the secretary treasurer of the municipality. It seems to me that we are leaving our institutions open to criticism and to the possibility of their losing the respect they should at all times command. I repeat, and it cannot be repeated too often, that the will of the last parliament was expressed to the effect that this building

[Mr. Beaubien.]

should be constructed at the point I have mentioned, that was not done. The question of reduced revenues, and of expenditure being made out of revenue, is no answer; it is not even an excuse. When the Minister of Public Works sat on this side of the house he knew that the revenues were decreasing. He could learn that from the reports issued by the audit department; he could see it in the reduction of customs and excise collections in the Department of National Revenue. He knew that railway company revenues were decreasing, and everybody knew that by the end of the year there would be a considerable reduction in receipts. At the same time this amount was voted and was not expended.

During the last election campaign what was the cry of the Conservative candidates in the province of Manitoba? I do not know whether all used the same expressions in regard to the late government of the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, but I know some of them said "What is the use of sending this man back to Ottawa? He has been there for a good many years, yet Manitoba has received very little money for expenditure on public works". What is the difference today? In the last session of the last parliament \$382,600 was voted for the province of Manitoba.

An hon. MEMBER: There was an election coming on.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: It does not matter whether there was an election or not. It was the will of parliament that that amount of money should be voted, and I wonder why my hon. friends who were then on this side of the house did not oppose the vote. Will the minister tell me why he did not oppose it? I have stated the accusation made against us in the province of Manitoba. In the present estimates \$81,700 is allocated to the province of Manitoba to be spent during the coming year. I wonder how my hon. friends from Manitoba sitting on the other side of the house can justify that.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Economy

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Economy?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Yes.

Mr. VENIOT: There was no economy in my county.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Economy was not practised when \$2,000,000 was authorized to be spent on the Welland canal.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is an expenditure under a contract.