

the proper time. Years ago the engineers were allowed to purchase ahead materials that they thought they might require; they would get it at a time of year when it was cheap, and store it up for future use. They cannot do that to-day. They are more hampered by restrictions, and in consequence the country is paying more.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. gentleman is certainly working himself into an excited condition and an awkward position. He says that here is certain work, and if it is not started almost immediately and something done in connection with it there will be great losses possibly on account of the fall storms. He tells us that he has not said a word about it—

Mr. HUGHES: Not a word in regard to the method in which the work was to be done.

Mr. STEVENS: I know that he and his colleagues have been sitting in this House for four months and have never opened their mouths about the precarious condition in Prince Edward Island. Now he comes before the committee and says, "Oh you must let this work at once, willy nilly, any way you like; get it done at once, because if you do not you are going to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars by the destruction of work elsewhere". The position is preposterous. The minister has been before the committee three months with his estimates. We passed numerous estimates presented by the minister which he has no notion of using this year; in some cases he tells us the work will not go on this year, but he is providing for contingencies in the future. Why did not the hon. gentleman point out that these works in question were in jeopardy? Why did he not ask the minister and the committee to provide for this work? If he can show that there is an emergent situation calling for prompt action to save public property, he will find a very willing supporter in me in getting the estimates passed. The hon. member and his colleagues from that province have been attending this session for four months and have never opened their mouths, never said a word about this matter, and now, about the last week of the session, he asks us to recklessly endorse a policy which is a complete departure from that towards which we have been working for years. The minister shakes his head. What position is he in? The hon. member says that the policy of letting the contract by tenders takes too long and should be departed from. The minister shakes his head and says no. I suggest that they get together and settle that difference themselves. So far

as I am concerned I am going to tell my hon. friend, whether it is agreeable to him or not, that I stand for the principle of calling for tenders. Let me repeat what I said a moment ago—

An hon. MEMBER: Oh no, no.

Mr. STEVENS: I will go over it again, and the hon. member for Belle River is not going to make me depart from it. We will give him a session on Belle River, Ontario if he is not very careful about it.

Mr. HEALY: I will go through with it.

Mr. STEVENS: We will use Belle River, Ontario, as an illustration in this matter.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Marcell Bonaventure): I think we had better limit ourselves to the item under discussion.

Mr. LEADER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. STEVENS: We could use Belle River as an illustration, but I am not going into that just now.

Mr. LEADER: I hope we can avoid a political controversy to-night.

Mr. STEVENS: I want to thank my hon. friend for his pious interjection.

Mr. LEADER: I hope it will do the hon. member good.

Mr. STEVENS: I might have a retort, but I do not want to be unkind. Sometimes it is well to suppress these things. By the way, seeing that we are talking about revetment work and rivers and protections, my hon. friend would not have called it a waste of time discussing the difficulties that arose at Portage la Prairie last year or the year before. On that occasion floods occurred calling for an emergent action, and he was very willing to have it discussed.

Mr. LEADER: We got over that difficulty.

Mr. STEVENS: He delayed the committee of the House, and quite properly so, but here to-night we have an emergency condition arising. The hon. member for Kings (Mr. Hughes) tells us that a large extent of public property down there is about to be wiped out of existence if we do not act to-night. I am going back to where I was a moment ago when I do not think he was in his seat. I pointed out that we have passed in Prince Edward Island alone a dozen items and in other provinces many more, where the minister is going to do the work by day labour without calling for tenders. I pointed out