

believe it is a sound one. I believe further that it is impossible—whether it is a municipal government or the federal government that is concerned—to get the work done as cheaply and as efficiently by day labour. That has been proven, I think, from experience, and it is a mere waste of time to give reasons or to argue about it. That has been demonstrated often, and I am very critical of the tendency of the department and of the minister to pass item after item without that understanding. I protest as heartily as I can against it.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has told us that he has had very considerable experience in work of this kind but I think I shall have to doubt the hon. gentleman's word.

Mr. STEVENS: I do not care whether my hon. friend doubts my word or not; it is a matter of supreme indifference to me.

Mr. HUGHES: I am quite convinced from the remarks of my hon. friend that he has had no experience in this class of work. Now to begin with, it would be very difficult indeed for any engineer to tell what repairs are needed until the old part of the work is taken down. He must take down part of the structure in order to draw the plans, so that the contractor could work from these plans. He has to do the best he can, looking at the work, to estimate the extent of the injury. When the money is voted he has to employ men to open up the work and he may find it will require less repairs than he expected. He may find more work in good condition than he anticipated or he may find himself obliged to make more extensive repairs than at first appeared necessary. My hon. friend will agree with me in that.

Mr. STEVENS: I never even affirmed anything different from what the hon. member has stated. I stated that where there was work of this character requiring different operations, such as the teaming of rock, the making of brush mattresses and the driving of piles, they should call for tenders for these different things. I have not the specification before me, but I might mention several things that are necessary in connection with wharves and breakwaters.

Mr. HUGHES: To show the fallacy of the method suggested by the hon. gentleman, I have just to mention that in the province of Prince Edward Island and along the sea coast last autumn we had an unprecedented storm, which did a great deal of damage to breakwaters and wharves. These repairs must

[Mr. Stevens.]

be made before the fall season this year, or there is great danger of the storms taking structures away altogether. The money is only being voted to-day. If we called for tenders it would be at least two months before those tenders could be let. The time for doing the work would be past. It could not be done in the fall of the year when storms are frequent. It must be done at this season of the year or not at all. The whole scheme outlined by the member for Vancouver Centre would be impracticable. The resident engineer who knows the conditions and the circumstances under which the contractor has to work has recommended this method, because he could not recommend anything else, and the statement made by the hon. member that the members from the province of Prince Edward Island approached the department, approached the minister and approached the engineers, to influence them to have the work done this way, is a pure assumption, a pure fabrication, and has no foundation in fact. I have not spoken to the engineer in regard to any method he might follow in regard to this work, and I think I can say the same for the other members from Prince Edward Island. I have not spoken to the minister in regard to any method that should be followed, and I am quite sure that the other members from Prince Edward Island have not done so. The hon. member for Vancouver Centre says that the work could be done by putting it into several divisions, and tenders could be asked for each small part of the work. Well, well, that statement of itself is sufficient to show that the hon. member does not understand it at all.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister just stated he was doing it that way.

Mr. HUGHES: If the minister sees fit he can do it by asking tenders from the local people.

Mr. STEVENS: Would the engineer not know what he was talking about?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, and it is left entirely to his discretion and judgment. Being a capable man he sees that he gets value for the work performed and if more discretion were left to the engineer better results would be obtained. There is too much red tape in the letting of contracts, particularly in the matter of repairs. Engineers are too much tied down. In the olden days, when there was more latitude and competent engineers were on these jobs, better and cheaper work was done. The material was purchased at