

in which they are given. When the minister does something right in my constituency I would be the first to offer my praise, and when something is done improperly I will be just as frank. I ask for information about the public works at Isle Verte only in fulfilment of my duties as a watchdog of the exchequer, and in defence of the attitude of the minister when it has been assailed by his own friends in my constituency.

I speak now in all fairness, and I hope the minister will accept my observations in that light. I should be very happy if he would tell me how much of the \$13,300 will be spent for labour, and how much for materials.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The hon. member has asked for information regarding expenditures at Isle Verte, one of the specific items in the estimates. In the ordinary course of events that work will be done by contract. I believe the hon. member will agree that in advance of asking for tenders it is not in the public interest that engineers' reports and estimates of costs should be made public. I assure him that the specifications or plans have been under consideration and are subject to revision. Suggestions have been made as to possible changes or improvements which might be made in the plan as outlined when the estimate was prepared.

The hon. member has been fair enough to read practically the whole of the report of the district engineer. As I recall it he omitted only one paragraph on page 4, which gives details of the work, and I believe that paragraph was not material to the discussion. I say to him, and to every hon. member in any section of the house, that I welcome honest, candid, fair criticism. That is the only way in which the administration of a department such as the Department of Public Works can be kept clean and efficient.

Mr. POULIOT: The minister will admit that he is treated fairly by this side of the house.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): When the hon. member made his criticism of expenditures I assured him there would be a thorough and complete investigation.

Mr. POULIOT: For which I thank the minister.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I repeat what I have stated on many occasions, that if an hon. member rises in his place, makes a criticism and states he believes it to be well founded and a matter which should receive investigation, it will be investigated, regardless

[Mr. Pouliot.]

of consequences,—let the chips fall where they may. That will be my policy as long as I have the honour of being in charge of the Department of Public Works. Following that policy, instructions were given the district engineer to investigate the matter about which the hon. member has spoken. The hon. member has quoted practically the whole of the engineer's report. I believe it is only fair to say the answer of the district engineer is that the complaints are not well founded. Unfortunately from time to time hon. members from all parts of the house receive information which they believe to be correct, but which upon investigation either by themselves or by others is found not to be as accurate as they had supposed. The report of the engineer goes into the statements of my hon. friend in detail and gives his finding. Some good comes of these investigations; all I ask is that my hon. friends convince themselves in the first instance that the complaints are well founded, or that there is some good reason for an inquiry, because these investigations involve time and expense, and some complaints have been found to be frivolous, not well founded, really unwarranted in the first instance. I do not go so far as to say that that applies to the complaints of my hon. friend in this case.

Mr. TETREAULT: I have listened with great attention to the hon. member for Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot), who is a notable member of this house, because he is on his feet about every five minutes. I noticed he was trying to cut a channel through the administration of this department with a hammer and chisel. I have some remarks to make at this time about the previous administration. I will not use the same tools as my hon. friend; I am going to use a dollar bill or a thousand dollar bill. While the committee is considering public works estimates may I make a few remarks which I presume will be of interest to our hon. friends opposite who have been so bitterly criticizing the Department of Public Works on account of public expenditures and political interference. My hon. friend from Témiscouata will, I trust, bear this in mind and listen to what I have to say with regard to public works carried out in my own constituency under the previous administration. Listen to the interesting story of the erection of a post office—

First, I may inform the committee that my Liberal friends waged three elections with the promise to build a post office in the town of Waterloo, Quebec. It was in 1921 that they