

ness is conducted conversationally. My hon. friend from Northumberland, who does not happen to be here now, and who is very constantly saying that he does not hear, is only telling what is going on all the time. It is not because my hon. friend from Northumberland does not hear as well as anybody, but he has chosen to make audible and vocal, a complaint concerning which other hon. members are silent. Discussions and answers to questions, returns and the arrangement of business which naturally cannot be carried on in a high tone of voice—it is impossible they can be, for a man cannot raise his voice to its highest pitch, when he has only five words to say—cannot be heard by hon. members generally; therefore it is really a serious question, whether for all time to come, the business of the House of Commons of Canada shall be discharged in a chamber so constructed and arranged, that, as I have said, half of the members cannot hear half of the business that is going on. For my own part, I think it is really a serious question, whether we ought to attempt to construct a Chamber, not extremely expensive, for it need not be very expensive, and this apartment could be used for other purposes no doubt—designed to discharge these duties, and to give us fresh air, sunlight during the day while sunlight can be admitted to the Chamber, and the power above all and beyond all things, of being able to hear what is going on in the Chamber—for I believe that the difficulty of hearing conduces very largely to the circumstances, occasionally—of course I make no personal reflection, as the House is full—to the House being rather empty.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I must say that there is a great deal in what the hon. gentlemen has just said. This is a matter, of course, in which both sides are interested, and we have all the same object in view, which is that hon. gentlemen should be able to hear, and that we should have as much comfort as can be obtained in a House of this kind. I must say to the hon. gentleman that these recesses, that, as he says, these galleries and this ceiling, must prevent necessarily the room being what it should be; there is no doubt about that. The room, as the hon. gentleman must remember, as to the disposition of the seats of hon. members, was changed some fifteen or eighteen years ago. Then the Speaker's chair was at that end, and hon. members' seats were just in a different direction from what they now are. Then about one-half of the House could hear, and those in the lower portion of the House could hear nothing at all; the change to the present condition of affairs was an improvement, but as the hon. gentleman says, a number of hon. members cannot hear, as a rule; I suppose three-quarters of the hon. members cannot hear as they should. It would be very difficult to change this room so as to meet the wishes of hon. gentlemen; but I think that in view of the remarks made from both sides of the House, that this is a matter which should be studied by the Department of Public Works, during Recess, which I will have done, and next Session we will be able to say whether a new Chamber should be built outside, and have an estimate of the cost, and then we may be able to meet the wishes of hon. gentlemen. I know that some have spoken of changing this room into the library, and of using the library to meet it; this might be done, but of course, it will have to be studied during Recess. This room might advantageously be used for a library; but could the library be used for our purposes? I have grave doubts about it. We would require galleries for the public, fresh air and ventilation. I only call the attention of hon. gentlemen to the position of the library; they must see this and what changes would be required. That might be the best and most feasible thing; but, at all events, it will be my duty during Recess to have the matter placed in the hands of the Chief Architect of the Department, and

have it studied, not only by him, but also by some other skilled architect, in order to see whether we could not either use the library or have to build an outside chamber to meet our requirements. Hon. gentlemen may say I would favor the latter, because I am Minister of Public Works, but I think that if we make a change which would cost a large sum comparatively, we should, at all events, get the value of our money; therefore, I say to hon. gentlemen that I will have the matter studied during recess.

Mr. FAIRBANK. I do not wish it understood that I seriously proposed that the Ministers should go to the back seats, but merely that if they did they would find what the difficulty was and take steps to remedy this great evil, which cannot be over-estimated. If this can only be accomplished by building a new Chamber, I believe that the hon. gentleman who does it, will confer upon Canada a blessing which neither he nor his posterity will ever be ashamed of. Of course, I must admit, that very many hon. gentlemen have acquired parliamentary distinction in this Chamber, but in doing so, they are under obligations to their physical endurance, as well as to their mental ability; and while many have succeeded, I believe that many also have perished in the attempt from this cause. I am very glad indeed to hear the Minister say that the matter shall receive his serious consideration. Of course, it is not for an unprofessional man to point out how this should be done. I have no doubt that to some extent it can be remedied, but to the full extent desired I do not believe it possible. I believe the remedy is to appropriate this room for some other purpose and to construct a proper Chamber upon well-known acoustic principles.

269. Additional compensation to Mr. Calvert Vaux, for the plans submitted by him for the embellishment and arrangement of the Parliament grounds, Ottawa \$500.00

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. This relates to the time when plans and schemes were proposed for the embellishment of these parliamentary grounds. On the 6th June, 1873, the Chief Architect was instructed to proceed to New York and to consult with Mr. Vaux as to plans for the laying out and embellishments of the grounds. Mr. Vaux was an architect who had a great reputation there, and I think he had contributed largely to the embellishment of the parks, &c., of New York. The arrangement was, that Mr. Vaux should receive \$500 as a preliminary fee, and one per cent. on the outlay in carrying out his designs if they were adopted. On the 9th of May, 1874, Mr. Vaux received \$500 on the supposition that his designs would not be carried out, he stating that if the Government should finally adopt his plans, he would expect the one per cent. on the amount. In September, 1876, Mr. Vaux wrote, stating that he had been informed that the suggestions in his plan had practically been adopted. The Chief Architect, to whom the matter was referred, considered that Mr. Vaux's plan had practically been adopted, and that he was entitled to an additional recompense. Under those circumstances, it was arranged that he should accept \$500 in full of all claims, instead of one per cent. on the outlay.

290. Public Buildings—Nova Scotia: Pictou Marine Hospital \$6,000.00

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. A certain amount of the appropriation in this case was allowed to lapse, and we had to get the Governor's warrant to cover that amount, \$3,000. The balance is required for contract work, Clerk of Works' salary, &c. The total amount to be provided for in Supplementary Estimates is \$6,130. The total balance required will be \$2,000 to complete. The total cost will be about \$11,000.

Mr. DAVIES. I have been unable to find an amount in the Estimates for Charlottetown Marine Hospital. Char-