

and that is made up entirely of statutory increases.

Mr. FOSTER. Practically all have had statutory increases ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. All that are eligible.

Mr. BENNETT. If the deputy minister is here I would like to get information with reference to the valuation fees paid for the new departmental buildings.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Would not that discussion more properly come up on the estimates for the new buildings ?

Mr. BENNETT. Perhaps so, but if the deputy were here we might have the information now.

Mr. PUGSLEY. The deputy is not here, but I will have the information for these particular items when they come before the House.

Mr. FOSTER. I see that Mr. M. N. Mathé, a second-class clerk, has been paid \$427 for travelling expenses ; how was that expended ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. During the short time I have been in the department it has come under my notice that quite a number of clerks are necessarily sent to look after public works in various parts of the Dominion.

Mr. FOSTER. Mathé seems to be a second-class clerk.

Mr. PUGSLEY. He might have some special information which would enable him to attend to particular work. I will obtain the information.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, that, and the travelling expenses of Gelinas, \$369.

Mr. DANIEL. There seems to have been only \$44,000 expended last year out of the \$62,000.

Mr. PUGSLEY. That would be accounted for by the fact that the Auditor General's Report only covers a period of nine months.

Mr. BENNETT. At page V—23, Auditor General's Report there is an item of \$704 for Mr. W. O'Mara in connection with that land purchase ; is he on the permanent staff.

Mr. PUGSLEY. He is not. The purchase of the land for the new Dominion buildings was quite a large purchase and there were a good many properties to acquire. A gentleman was appointed to examine the properties, make a valuation, and endeavour to acquire the properties by purchase. He was of course also instructed to arrange for the expropriation of those properties which could not be acquired otherwise. In the discharge of his duties he felt it necessary to employ the gentleman to whom my hon. friend refers. His employment was temporary.

Mr. PUGSLEY.

Mr. BENNETT. Who was that—Mr. Riopelle ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. Mr. Riopelle was the gentleman who was appointed to acquire the properties.

Mr. BENNETT. I find on page V—329 and 330 of the Auditor General's Report some correspondence about a payment to a clerk named Emile Lacas of \$129.16. It would seem to have been a question between the Auditor General and the Deputy Minister as to whether or not this man earned the money. The Auditor General calls attention to the fact that the records of the department prove that the man had worked during the month in question, and he makes this note :

Mr. Lacas' time-book has not yet been received, and the payment is still withheld.

I was in error in saying he had been paid. Is the minister aware whether the matter has been cleared up ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I am not aware. Mr. Lacas has applied for leave of absence. He is at the head of one of the photographic branches of the department. I have been aware in a general way of the discussion that has taken place between the Deputy Minister and the Auditor General, but I am not aware whether the matter has been settled.

Mr. BENNETT. Is he still in the employ of the department ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. He is still in the employ of the department, but I have recommended that he be granted a short leave of absence.

Mr. BENNETT. And he is now on leave of absence ?

Mr. PUGSLEY. I do not know whether he has actually taken the leave or not.

Mr. BLAIN. Will the hon. minister inform the committee what his policy is in respect to his employees taking part in elections ? We have the advantage of a new minister, and I think the present is an opportune time for him to lay down a policy in this respect. We have had some trouble in regard to that in the past, and we do not wish to allow our new minister to get into the same trouble.

Mr. PUGSLEY. I am sure I appreciate and desire to express my appreciation of my hon. friend's anxiety not to get me into any trouble, and it will be a great pleasure to me to have his assistance at all times. I am not aware that any of the officials of the department over which I preside have taken part in elections ; I do not think it would be desirable, and I would discourage such a practice. I received a request that a gentleman employed in my department might do certain clerical work in connection with elections by reason of