

required at a certain point, or if the decision to build a public building at one point and not at another is simply a question of choice by the minister?

Mr. ELLIOTT: When an application comes in for a public building—and many of them have come in during the time I have been in charge of the department—we endeavour to secure all information possible. If after considering all the information, we come to the conclusion that some other expenditure is more urgent and that the erection of the building in question can be postponed for a time, in all probability the application is not granted. When the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency (Mr. Lavigueur) mentions that I said to him that I would recommend a public building, I do not want to contradict him, but he must have misunderstood the interview because I never undertake to recommend anything in connection with public buildings. I know the people with whom I have to deal, namely, the treasury board and council, are not favourable to erecting any public buildings which are not absolutely necessary and for that reason I am careful about making any commitments. We are endeavouring to construct only such public buildings as are absolutely necessary. That is the best answer I can give my hon. friend.

Mr. ARTHURS: Does the minister mean that he does not make any recommendations?

Mr. ELLIOTT: I do not promise to make any recommendations.

Mr. ARTHURS: The minister does make recommendations regarding public buildings?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Occasionally.

Mr. ARTHURS: In considering these recommendations, does he take the files of the past or only those immediately before him from friends on his own side of the house?

Mr. ELLIOTT: I look into the files of the past. I never take the files of the future. I endeavour to go over the files as closely as I can. I do not just get the purport of my hon. friend's suggestion that I take only files relating to friends of the government. Is that what my hon. friend said?

Mr. ARTHURS: Yes.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I read the other files.

Mr. BENNETT: The minister reads the titles of the other files.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I read the other files pretty carefully.

[Mr. Kennedy.]

Mr. ARTHURS: Will the minister state how many items are included in the present estimate which have been put forward in previous years by members opposed to the government?

Mr. STEVENS: How many escape the minister's scrutiny?

Mr. ELLIOTT: When my hon. friend looks over the estimates under consideration, I do not think he will find much in the remark he has made. If he will take note of the ridings for which money is being granted, I think he will see that political considerations have not governed.

Mr. BOYS: The minister has just informed the committee that he has received many applications; that they are all considered on their merits, and then either granted or refused as the case may be. Do I understand that that has reference to applications which are made verbally, as well as to applications which are made in writing? I would like to ascertain from the minister whether it would give him or the officers of his department much trouble to give the committee some idea of the number of applications which have been made since he has been minister, together with the amount of each proposed building. I do not think that would entail very much work, and the information would be very interesting. I do not care whether it is given under this item or under the general vote, but I certainly would like to have that information if I can get it.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I think perhaps I can give a reasonably accurate answer. Within the last year we have considered applications which either have come in or were in the department already for public buildings running to well over one hundred, and in amount running to something over \$5,000,000. That is only approximate.

Mr. BOYS: What I would like to get would be a statement indicating the cities and towns and villages whence these applications came, and the amount of money involved in each. I learn now that there are only about one hundred, and of necessity it is not going to take a clerk in the department very long just to give that additional information as to the place and the amount involved.

Mr. KENNEDY: I take it from the minister's answer to my last question that these are expenditures which in his judgment are absolutely necessary.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Yes, I take the responsibility for these expenditures.