

Montreal we have a post office which is absolutely inadequate to the wants of the city. It is a great deal too small and quite insufficient in many ways. I believe the government has had under consideration for several years a scheme by which additional accommodation might be given in the Montreal post office. The hon. minister, no doubt, is aware that the government pays a very large amount of rent in Montreal. I do not know the amount, but I feel satisfied that it is more than sufficient, if it were capitalized, to give us in Montreal a large post office, where all those government offices now occupying rented premises, could be installed, and where the ministers themselves, when they come to Montreal, would have suitable rooms for the transaction of public business. I do not know if the present minister has given his attention to that subject, but I think some arrangement might be arrived at by which, by spending even less money than is actually spent, we could have a suitable public building in Montreal for the post office and other public buildings as well.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The matter has received some attention since I have been at the head of the department. The Post Office Department have recommended a new system in dealing with the mails in large cities, where they think the service can be more efficiently carried out by the establishment of branch offices. They think that especially in large manufacturing centres it would be better to take the mails from the station, as they do now at Toronto and Montreal, directly to the branch offices. In the city of Montreal it is intended to have a public building at some distance from the present office, which will relieve the congestion in the head office.

Mr. MACLEAN. Regarding public buildings in large cities, I wish to direct the attention of the Committee to the fact that great progress is being made in architecture, and commercial and business reasons now decide the style of architecture rather than outside appearance. Architects will now give you a building that is expressly adapted for the business that you have in view, and I hope that hereafter the department will devote their whole energy, especially in the large cities, in adapting their public buildings to the business they are destined to serve. In Toronto we have a custom house which is a very florid piece of architecture, but is deficient in light. The public have to go up a large staircase in order to do business, there are no elevators, no telephones or anything of that kind. I hope the department will follow the example of the corresponding department in the United States and make their public buildings suited to the purposes, with all modern conveniences, and especially with an abundance of light. These improved

buildings are now being erected in all advanced countries. They have got rid of this idea of monuments, and florid architecture, and sculpture, and are putting up purely business buildings where utility is the chief end in view.

Mr. MONK. Can the minister state about what amount the government pays in rents in the city of Montreal?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The Public Works Department are not paying rents for all the departments, so we cannot give the information at the present time. But it is an important subject and I am going to have the amounts made up in Montreal and some other cities, and will give them to the Committee.

Mr. BELCOURT. Since the attention of the minister has been drawn to the post offices in Montreal and Toronto, I would like to join the chorus of hon. gentlemen opposite and direct the attention of the minister to the post office in the city of Ottawa. This capital city is growing rapidly, proportionately more so perhaps than any city in Canada. The post office was built many years ago, and for a long time it has contained in addition offices for the customs, the inland revenue and the Ottawa Improvement works. Business is certainly in a very congested state in the Ottawa post office, and when the minister is looking into this question I hope he will not forget the capital. Of all the cities I am acquainted with, Ottawa has the greatest need of additional accommodation.

Mr. PUTTEE. Since attention is being drawn to public buildings in the large cities, I wish to call the attention of the minister to the fact that probably the most urgent case in the Dominion is the post office building in the city of Winnipeg at the present time. This may not be the proper time to speak of that subject on the estimate that is before us, but I would urge the minister to give his attention to Winnipeg, and hope that he will be prepared when the estimates for Manitoba are reached to announce his intentions of providing buildings adequate to the demands of the public services in Winnipeg.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I fully recognize the importance of this question. As the country becomes more prosperous no doubt additional facilities will have to be provided in all the large commercial centres. In regard to Winnipeg, I have had a careful report prepared and will have to ask the House for money to enlarge the building there. The situation in Montreal depends, as I have explained, somewhat on the policy of other departments. I believe it is the intention to build branch offices so as to relieve to some extent the central office. The same remark may be applied to Ottawa. I endorse every-