

still brought from one of the most shaded localities surrounding the grounds. It was suggested that the "glass in the casing of the ceilings be brought down to the under level of the casings," as traced in the plan. These suggestions have not been carried out. The report goes on to say:

"The Committee having called our attention to the want of light in the House, we beg to say that the only change to admit more sunlight without altering the building, would simply be to substitute plain for the stained glass in the windows above."

On the subject of acoustics: "They could be very much improved with comparatively small expense." But it is not my province to point out the remedy; I wish to call attention to the defect. Certainly the matter referred to by the Committee in relation to sunlight could be very easily remedied. The general site of the building perhaps is surpassed by that of no capitol in the world. This location is one that commands the admiration of all visitors. Standing as it does upon a cliff some 200 feet above the river, its location is particularly well adapted to obtaining any amount of pure air and all the sunlight that we can desire. It cannot be claimed that the science of acoustics is lost when we know that rooms are being constructed in which from ten to fifteen thousand people can hear an ordinary voice. It is not beyond the science of the day to provide a room in which some two or three hundred persons can hear comparatively well. I think it is the duty of the Government to place this Chamber in a condition in which it would be possible for members to perform their duties. I may be met with the answer that it would be attended with cost; but we have few things without cost. There are two kinds of expenditure—those which are finished when they are made, and those which only begin when they are made. An expenditure in this direction will be made once for all. If it is considered impossible to place this Chamber in a suitable condition for the purpose for which it is designed, then, I believe, the question is of sufficient importance to warrant us in considering whether we should not use this Chamber for Departmental purposes, and build another suitable for our use.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. Every year we have had complaints about this Chamber. Of course, we cannot make it perfect, but, I think, it has been much improved. As to the stained glass, that was put there before my time; but I am sure that if it were replaced by plain glass, we would very soon have complaints from hon. members that they were troubled by the sun upon their heads, and they would be asking to have the curtains drawn. The hon. gentleman complains that we have not fresh air, that it is too warm. We must have fresh air from some quarter, but it must be remembered that we cannot have fresh air in this room without producing more or less draught; I think, however, that these draughts are much less this year than previously. But we shall always have more or less draughts, as long as we have doors that are being constantly opened and shut. The hon. gentleman has said that we, on the front benches have not felt much the draughts that have been felt by occupants of the back benches. We must have draughts in the middle of the Chamber, due to the passage of fresh air through ducts and so forth. I lately saw an account of an experiment made elsewhere by which the foul air of the room was carried off and fresh air brought in by means of a sort of jet placed in the corners of the room. That might be used perhaps in the upper portion of this building; but, at all events, that cannot be done this year. The hon. gentleman has also stated that a great many of the members cannot hear what is going on and the remarks of the members. I must say, without any reflection on any hon. members, that this is greatly their own fault. I am perfectly well heard and I do not force my voice; but I am in the habit of speaking to the last row on the other side. But if hon. gentlemen will speak to the

Mr. FAIRBANK.

Table they cannot, of course, be heard throughout the Chamber. The hon. gentleman has mentioned that in warfare skirmishers go in front and the big guns follow behind. In this Chamber, however, the big guns are in front and the others behind. If, however, the hon. member had been in the House for some years he would have recognized the fact that a great improvement has taken place during the last few years. We have tried to make hon. gentlemen as comfortable as we can, and if there is anything we can do to improve the Chamber as regards its acoustic properties, or in other respects, we will be most happy to do so. If hon. members have any suggestions to make I shall be glad to receive them and submit them to the Chief Architect.

Mr. BLAKE. The points referred to by the hon. gentleman are of great consequence. The hon. Minister, I think, has undervalued the importance of sunlight. I have always admired the stained glass windows, but I have always wished that plain glass should be substituted. I agree that provision would have to be made for curtains or blinds, because during a portion of the day the direct rays of the sun would fall, for a short time, however, on members. That is no reason, however, why we should not have the light, for the greater part of the day, when the sunlight would not be direct. Another reason why there should be plain glass substituted is, that means would be afforded for rapidly ventilating the chamber by means of the windows as well as by the other methods that at present exist. I admit that the arrangement for the door behind the Speaker's chair has proved more satisfactory than I expected. Members of the back benches complain that they are subjected to a direct draught. I do not know whether it is impossible, instead of having broad gratings to have narrow openings; at all events, if the present arrangement is to continue I think there should be occasionally change of position between the occupants of the front and back benches. With respect to the acoustic properties of the Chamber, while there is much force in the observation of the hon. Minister, much difficulty is due to the fact that the speaker addressing the House is not the only speaker, for there is sometimes fifty or a hundred also engaged in conversation. There is no doubt, however, that the Chamber is a dead failure as regards its acoustic properties. We have adopted, and I do not say we should depart from it, the English system, instead of the system which prevails in many assemblages, of having a tribune. In conducting business in Committee, no doubt the system of speaking from your place is a most convenient one; but there is no doubt that it involves all sorts of difficulties as to hearing. Although the hon. Minister of Public Works is determined to be heard, I am afraid a good many hon. members behind him fail to hear him. These difficulties will always exist more or less in any Chamber where a large portion of the audience is behind the speaker; and whether, in making improvements, some plan should be adopted whereby in set debates the speaker could address the House from such a place as a tribune, if such a place here could be found, and could thereby contribute to the ease and comfort of his audience, which tends very largely to the ease and comfort of the speaker, I do not know. But in carrying on our business as we do, it is of the utmost consequence that the Chamber should be constructed, as far as possible, with respect to obtaining reasonably good acoustic results, and I believe the corners and recesses have a great deal to do with it. I do not mean to say that the hon. Minister can effect any important change in this Chamber; on the contrary, my impression is that we will never be able to conduct our business here in such a way that three-fourths of the members present will be able to hear more than half of what takes place. It is very well, when one is making a speech to raise one's voice, and the very context bridges over the difficulties of missing occasionally a word, &c., but a great deal of busi-