

Public Works, because, on the occasion of the banquet that I refer to, he told the people of St. John that Pugsley's ideas were all too small, and that if they wanted more money for St. John harbour all they had to do was to go to the Minister of Customs.

Mr. RFID: That was before the war.

Item concurred in.

Dominion public buildings—rents, \$700,000.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he will not look into the question of the rents which are paid out in the city of Ottawa for public buildings. It does seem to me to be extraordinary that, with all the public buildings which are owned by the Government for the accommodation of its employees, the Dominion should be paying rents running up to in the vicinity of half a million dollars—I am not quite sure whether they exceed that or not—for private buildings in the city of Ottawa.

I am told there are men here who make a business of acquiring land and erecting office buildings on it for the purpose of renting them to the Government, and others who rent buildings and then sublet them to the Government, middlemen who do the renting of the Government. Since this Government came into office the rents have become enormous beyond all reason, and that in spite of the fact that the Government has, within the last three or four years, expropriated all that property facing upon Vittoria and Wellington streets, running for half a mile, and containing upwards of one hundred splendid buildings, where many officials could be accommodated. Still the Government are paying out in the vicinity of a half million dollars a year for rent. I brought this matter up on Supply, but received little satisfaction. I would ask the minister to go into the question very carefully, as there is no reason why these enormous rents should be paid in Ottawa.

Mr. REID: I went into the question of the use of the Wellington street buildings very thoroughly when acting for the late Minister of Public Works a year or two ago, and asked the deputy minister to make a report of all buildings in that district that could be used for Government offices.

Mr. PUGSLEY: About one hundred of them, are there not?

Mr. REID: A good many, probably one hundred. I gave instructions to the deputy,

which were concurred in by the minister on his return, to see that these buildings were, so far as possible, used for office purposes as required by different departments. I believed that this would effect a great saving. The deputy minister agreed with me and at once had the buildings put in repair, so that they would be suitable for office use. He informs me that practically all the buildings suitable for offices are now occupied by the departments. He prepared a statement showing the total feet capacity of the buildings and the total now occupied by the Government, and that information, together with all information about the St. John works, I shall have when we are again on the Public Works Estimates. The hon. member will then find that we are carrying out the policy which he advocates.

Mr. PUGSLEY: What is the total rental, about one-half million?

Mr. REID: Yes, it is a very large amount. That will all be shown in the statement. Since the war the number of officials in some departments has so increased that much more space is required.

Item concurred in.

Resolution agreed to.

Special allowance to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to cover travelling and other expenses in connection with his services while acting as deputy to His Excellency the Governor General, \$2,500.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member for Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) asked a question when this item was before the committee, and the Prime Minister promised to give some information. The item has reference to a reduction by one-half of the allowance formerly made to the Chief Justice for travelling expenses.

Mr. LEMIEUX: The Deputy Governor General.

Mr. MURPHY: The question was whether the amount had been cut in two, and the information was to be given to the committee before the item was finally adopted. Has the hon. gentleman obtained the information?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: No, I have no information about it. The hon. gentleman might raise the question when the supplementary estimates are under consideration.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. gentleman from Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) raised the ques-