

year the Public Works Department expropriated the site which was part of the Windsor, Essex and Lakeshore Rapid Railway Company's property. The property was encumbered and legal proceedings have been in progress ever since. The proceedings as to title were only completed a few months ago and this amount is to pay the award for the property, \$1,500 and \$200 legal expenses, making altogether \$1,700. It is not the intention of the Government to go on with the public building this year.

Oshawa, new public building, \$5,000.

Mr. J. D. REID: This vote is required to complete the construction of the new examining warehouse at the existing public building. The items entering into it are: To complete the contract, \$2,000; fittings and furniture, \$2,000; sidewalks and grading, \$500; contingencies, etc., \$500, making a total of \$5,000. The contractors are the Russell-Navin Construction Company, Toronto.

Ottawa Departmental Buildings; to connect with Central Heating Plant, \$11,000.

Mr. CAHILL: What buildings are to be connected?

Mr. J. D. REID: The East Block, West Block, the Langevin Block, the Post Office and the Supreme Court Building.

Mr. CAHILL: Are the connecting tunnels not already built?

Mr. J. D. REID: They are already built, this is to connect them all.

Ottawa Department Building, fittings, etc., \$100,000.

Mr. CAHILL: What is this vote for?

Mr. J. D. REID: The vote is required for the purchase and installation of steel filing cases, adjustable roller book shelves, steel drawers, and so forth, required for offices in the Parliament and departmental buildings, Ottawa. The increase of \$25,000 in this appropriation is due to additional fittings necessary owing to the readjustment of offices, particularly in the Hunter building, the Daly building and the new Parliament Buildings, and also to alterations and additions to the fittings in the postal note division of the Post Office Department. The estimated cost of \$15,300 was requested by the Post Office Department at different dates.

Mr. CAHILL: Where are those fittings usually bought?

[Mr. J. D. Reid.]

Mr. J. D. REID: These different fittings are made by two Canadian companies only. Of course, all this work is done through the Purchasing Commission, not by the department.

Mr. PEDLOW: Why is it that the department still insists on supplying the public service with steel cabinets? I had occasion to take exception to the purchase of these cabinets last year, when I pointed out that on a contract for 500 steel cabinets a saving could be effected of \$7,000 by purchasing wooden cabinets of the same dimensions at \$27 each, instead of \$41 charged for the steel cabinet. I also obtained information at that time that the department had during the same year ordered about 2,500 of these steel cabinets at an average price of \$49, entailing an increased expenditure over and above the cost of the same style of cabinets in wood of \$55,000,—or in all an additional expenditure of \$62,000 in that year. As a result of the representations I then made the firm I interested myself in obtained a contract for a number of wooden cabinets, with a resultant saving to the department. I am at a loss to understand why the department still insists on buying the more expensive article. I made an investigation at the time of the claims made by the manufacturers of the steel cabinets that their product was fireproof, but I found that those claims were not well founded. Those cabinets are made of tin, and are merely a cooking apparatus for the documents contained in them. After the fire which destroyed the old Parliament Buildings it was found that the contents of the steel filing cabinets were charred beyond recognition, while the contents of the wooden cabinets were intact where the cabinets themselves were not entirely consumed, showing clearly that the wooden cabinet was preferable to the steel. But apart from that consideration is the enormous saving to be effected by purchasing wooden cabinets. I think that in the interests of economy the department should look into this matter and at all events give the wooden cabinets a trial in preference to purchasing the more expensive article, for I am sure that on investigation it will be found that the claims I am making on behalf of the wooden cabinet will be fully substantiated.

Mr. J. D. REID: This is the first time the matter has been brought to my attention. I will look into it and see if the saving suggested by the hon. member can be effected.