

It is doubtless true that in the construction of large buildings there generally arises unforeseen causes of expenditure which swell the ultimate cost beyond the sum anticipated; but it is, nevertheless, to be regretted that the nature of the site chosen for these structures was not fully ascertained at the outset. It would have also been well that a system of heating and ventilation evidently entailing so large an outlay should have been closely investigated and, if fully approved, after its probable cost had been submitted, it should have been made to form part of the plans before tenders were invited, as a great number of air-flues, and recesses for steam-coils, &c., had subsequently to be formed in the walls, and arrangements made for cold air ducts and warm air vaults. Thus the contract works of the interior had to be so much changed that it was alleged by the contractors to be all but impossible to separate "contract" from "additional work." Besides, a large portion of the work connected with heating and ventilation were in such positions that they had to be executed before the contract works could be commenced, so that when the appropriation of 1857 was exhausted and operations suspended, in 1861, it was found that a sum fully equal to that paid on the contract had been expended on additional works.

At this time the outside walls of the Departmental Blocks were generally carried up to the level of the main cornice, and the principal part of the Buildings roofed in, but not slated. The towers were of a similar height to the main walls.

The south front and wings of the Parliament Building were also built up to the line of the main cornice, and the interior walls considerably advanced, but no part of the permanent roof was on. The foundation walls of the Library were carried up to the plinth course, and the exterior works partly executed.

The contractors having prepared and delivered a large quantity of material when the works were stopped, and having the requisite plant provided, the Government, therefore, deemed it advisable to first offer them the completion of the Buildings as recommended by the Commission of Inquiry, and this having been accepted, operations were resumed in May, 1863, upon a basis by which many of the difficulties hitherto experienced were obviated, inasmuch as the different classes of work done were measured and paid for at a fixed schedule of rates, and proportionate prices for items to which the schedule annexed to the contract did not directly apply.

The Departmental Buildings were accordingly completed in 1866, and a final settlement made for the work done under the second contract was satisfactorily and promptly effected.

The contract for the Parliament Building, however, still remains in force, as the upper part of the main tower of that structure is yet unfinished, and the Library, as before stated, is only carried up a few feet higher than the roof of the lean-to by which the central part is surrounded. With these exceptions, the whole of the Building has been completed.

Taking into consideration the many difficulties which have attended the construction of the Buildings, arising chiefly from the causes above referred to, it is, nevertheless, satisfactory to be able to state, that the work generally has been performed in a substantial manner, and at a rate which, under the circumstances, cannot be deemed excessive.

The interior arrangements appear to be well adapted to the requirements of the service; the various apartments are suitably fitted up, and some of the best modern improvements have been introduced. The House of Commons has been adapted for the increased number of Members; additional means have been provided for ventilation, and an attempt has also been made to improve its acoustic properties. The original arrangement of the seats in the Senate Chamber has not been altered, but some additional ones have been provided.

The exterior effect of this group of Buildings is greatly enhanced by the natural beauty and prominence of the site, which renders them conspicuous from every part of the surrounding country, so that, in approaching the city in any direction, their irregular mass and numerous towers present a constantly changing and picturesque appearance. Upon closer inspection, their vast extent, ornate character and architectural merits, become apparent; and, in brief, they may be fairly classed amongst the best specimens of the pointed Gothic style on this continent.