

who were instructed to examine as to the condition of the building. The recommendation of my officers was to put on the roof as it had been built; and if it has contributed to the burning down of the building, I am very sorry, but it is not the only building with such a roof in thriving Charlottetown. The building will have to come down, and there will no doubt be an item in the Estimates to re-erect a building there. The hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Allen) has called attention to the claims of Owen Sound. That is a familiar name to the Government. I think we have done a great deal for that place by way of harbour improvements, and no doubt the hon. gentleman will see that we cannot do everything at every place; we must do something at one place and afterwards do something at another place. Therefore, I think the erection of a public building may remain in abeyance until we see what the improvements in the harbour bring forth. As to Napanee, all I can say is, that so far as I am concerned this is the first time I have heard of a public building being specially required there. The ex-Finance Minister has called the attention of the House to that place, which is a very important town no doubt, and it will be placed on the list of names of those places where public buildings are asked. I cannot say more than that. As to Guysboro', this is the first time that my attention has been called to it. My hon. friend from Richmond and Wolfe (Mr. Ives) has called attention to the delay in the erection of the public buildings at Sherbrooke. He is perfectly right in saying that the delay is very great. The reason for that delay is the fact that according to law if we call for tenders we have to accept the lowest who complies with the conditions and specifications of the Department. That system is one which has been followed for many years, though it has been found faulty by the several Ministers who have occupied the position that I occupy to-day. But it is provided for by an Act of Parliament, and I suppose each Minister has hesitated in asking for more powers than the Act gives. There would be less delay if we could follow the rule which prevails in some other countries, where the Chief Engineer, or other officer, makes calculations and estimates of the work to be done—makes the specifications. Then they call in some contractor who is known to be a good contractor, who has done work for the Government, and who has fulfilled his contracts well. He is asked if he will execute the work at the price mentioned by the engineer. The contract is made with such a contractor as that, and the Government is sure that they have a good contractor, and that the price is sufficient to complete the building and leave a profit to the contractor. Under the law we are obliged to accept the lowest tender, and the result is sometimes as we find it in this case, that the contractor breaks down after a certain time, and we have to take the work off his hands. This necessitates the making of new estimates and specifications for the remainder of the work. My hon. friend may rest assured, however, that my Department is pushing and will push that work to completion in as short a time as possible. The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Paterson) has spoken on the subject in a kind way, I must say, for he did not cast any reproach on the Department, but he thought that perhaps some of the buildings erected from time to time, not in the large towns, might be perhaps a little costly. The hon. gentleman must remember, however, that when you have to put a post office, a Custom house, an Inland Revenue office, a Weights and Measures Office, and sometimes an examining warehouse under the same roof, you must have a large building; you want to make it a substantial building, and, therefore, it will cost more money than you sometimes might desire. At the same time, I do not think there has been any extravagance in those places. The buildings are about the same now as when they were erected under the previous Government, and under the Government which preceded

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN.

them. My attention has been called to the same subject by another hon. member, and I called the attention of the Chief Architect especially to it, in order that he might reduce as much as possible the expense without impairing the appearance of the building or destroying its usefulness. The hon. gentleman may rest assured, therefore, that the matter has not escaped my attention. The hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Cook) has spoken in a very amusing way about wheel-barrows, carts, &c. These things may be known to him but they are not known to my Department. We had a site secured for the erection of the building, we gave the contract after calling for tenders, and the contractor is going on with the work. I am informed by my officers that the work is being proceeded with with all due diligence, and that the building, when completed, will be a substantial building, one which would be a credit to the place and to the Department. Now that I have answered as fully as I can the remarks made by the different hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House, let me say to the hon. mover of this motion, that although two members for the county of Essex have spoken to me more than once with regard to this matter, of a post office at Leamington, there is no correspondence of any kind, and I would suggest that under these circumstances he should withdraw the motion.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant). The hon. gentleman forgot to say what estimate he would put in for Paris.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. Paris is such a large place, and would require such a nice building, that I am not in a position to answer the hon. gentleman just now. He will have to wait for the Supplementary Estimates, and if he finds anything there he will be rejoiced, and if not I will be sorry with him.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Does the hon. gentleman say that he remembers nothing of any representations to him about Napanee?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. None that I remember.

Mr. BLAKE. We all know what an active memory the hon. gentleman has; we know how much he is master of the affairs of his Department, and I am convinced, Sir, that his memory on this occasion played him false. The hon. gentleman is an accessible man, he is courteous, he does not frown down those who approach him on public questions, and I am sure the first Minister was not afraid, he was not under any apprehension which would prevent him approaching the Minister of Public Works and asking him to make good those promises, which, if not made by him were made in his name, to the electors of Lennox, in connection with a post office in Napanee. Therefore, I am convinced that the first Minister must have represented to the Minister of Public Works repeatedly, must have told him time and again, and yet the Minister remembers nothing about it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman is convinced that representations must have been made to my hon. friend, and that he has forgotten them—that his usual accuracy of memory has failed him. The hon. gentleman says he is convinced this is the case, which only shows that he may be convinced, or profess to be convinced, and all the same be in error. The truth of the matter is, that I heard very little, if anything about a post office or Custom house during my election campaign. On the contrary, we heard that we should have our public buildings occupied by way of rental—that they should be rented still, because the person who rented the building was either a widow or daughter of the former proprietor, and her only means of subsistence was the rent of the building. So I never pressed that matter on my hon. friend. I must say that the Government is in an unhappy condition about all these post offices. There is no pleasing hon. gentlemen. If a public