

That would make for sounder criticism, a better appreciation of the points that matter, and a control closer to the events. It would also be a valuable training-ground for able men who now eat their heart out for lack of opportunity. Too much importance is attached to the act of speaking on the floor of the house. The sort of work that most needs doing at Westminster is the deliberation of a board meeting; nor need the extension of this work impair the responsibility of ministers.

Mr. SPENCE: Mr. Chairman, I should like to have some information about the item of \$39,500 for a public building at Sioux Lookout. I am utterly opposed to making large expenditures in these small places. Probably \$10,000 would purchase a public building adequate to the needs of Sioux Lookout. The construction of these buildings does not provide much labour. A few mechanics are given jobs for a few weeks, and that is all. We should be going on with the construction of something that provides work for thousands of labourers. The erection of many of these public buildings is an absolute waste and I think even the minister will agree with me in that.

We find a considerable amount being voted for Quebec, which no doubt contributes something to the revenue of this country, but I ask hon. members to look at the expenditures for Ontario. It is all to be spent in Ottawa. We realize that Ontario is the milch cow of the dominion, and Toronto the milch cow of the province. The government should be ashamed of the way that city is being treated. We are not asking for public buildings. At one time we thought we should have a large general post office, but we decided that substations would fill the bill. Some of these public buildings that are put up are nothing but a shame and a crime. The government is spending \$14,000 or \$15,000 to erect public buildings in towns containing only 500 to 1,500 people. I hope the minister will give some consideration to this practice and see that it is not continued in the future. I admit it has been done before but that is no reason why it should be continued.

Also I would suggest that these buildings should be of concrete instead of using expensive steel as they do now. Such a building would be just as strong and durable, and just as easy to keep clean, and it would cost much less than the present type of construction. I should like a little information about the Sioux Lookout building for \$39,500.

Mr. CARDIN: In reply to my hon. friend, the fact that \$39,500 is provided in the estimates does not preclude the minister when deciding upon the building from authorizing a less expensive structure than the full amount of the

estimate would provide. I am not compelled to expend the whole amount that is voted, and I frankly say that to a large extent I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Spence). There is no justification for putting up very expensive buildings in small localities where the revenue is not very large. Naturally we need public buildings even in the smaller places, but the building should be in proportion to the population and the revenues that are being derived from customs or post office. The postal revenue for Sioux Lookout for 1934-35 was \$11,195; that is a pretty good revenue for that locality.

Mr. SPENCE: Was that the net or gross revenue?

Mr. CARDIN: That is the gross revenue. I repeat, I have much sympathy with the observation that my hon. friend has made, that we should be careful to proportion our expenditures to the importance of the localities and the revenues derived therefrom.

An hon. MEMBER: We are spending far too much on public buildings.

Mr. BARBER: Will the minister explain this vote of a quarter of a million dollars for the improvement of the Plaza?

Mr. CARDIN: This is for the widening of the bridge over the railway tracks in front of the present post office building in Ottawa. The development that has been contemplated for the park where the monument is to be placed will necessitate if the plan is not changed, the widening of the bridge. It covers the larger portion of the railway tracks going south and the development of that section into a park, as it is partly developed at present. That is what we contemplate with the proposed expenditure.

Mr. STEWART: Just one other item, "Parliament building, \$70,000." What does that cover?

Mr. CARDIN: This amount is divided into the following: to provide for continuance of the works of carving—as my hon. friend knows, there is a lot more carving to be done in this building before it is completed—

Mr. SPENCE: You ought to forget about it.

Mr. CARDIN: And each year a certain amount has been spent for carving in the building. Other items are: painting iron sash and window frames, repairs to roof and flashing, redecorating halls and rooms, repointing stone work, repairs to marble floors, refinishing library floor—

Mr. STEWART: It is just general repairs?

Mr. CARDIN: Just general repairs, yes.