

Durham—public building, \$4,000.

Mr. ELLIOTT: This is to complete a public building. It includes fittings and lock boxes, \$2,300; grading and sidewalks, \$1,000; superintendence and contingencies, \$700.

Mr. LUCAS: What are the population and revenue of this town?

Mr. ELLIOTT: The population is 1,640; the revenue, \$5,684.

Mr. LUCAS: Is this recommended by the Post Office department?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Yes. This is an excerpt from the report of the chief post office superintendent made in 1920: Population 1,640; four industrial concerns employing about 300 hands; two banks; sixteen stores. The post office is located in a building, one of a block of stores. The floor space is 650 square feet, of which the public lobby comprises 350 square feet, leaving a working space of only 300 square feet. The carriers working in the office are not separated from the rest of the staff. It is recommended that more space be provided.

Item agreed to.

London—tractor for postal purposes, \$1,350.

Mr. GARDINER: Is that the usual price for a tractor?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Yes.

Item agreed to.

Niagara Falls—public building, \$100,000.

Mr. ELLIOTT: The existing building was partly destroyed by fire on November 9, 1927. A larger building is necessary to provide accommodation for the post office and customs. The present property is not large enough to give the desired accommodation, and it may be necessary to purchase a new site and erect a new building. In either case \$100,000 is necessary for a beginning. There is nothing political in the vote.

Item agreed to.

Ottawa departmental buildings—fittings, etc., \$60,000.

Mr. HEAPS: The minister will remember that I put a question on the order paper about three weeks ago with respect to the lighting of this and the other public buildings in Ottawa. I find that for the year 1927-28 the government paid to the privately-owned corporation for electrical energy \$86,524.31, and to the publicly-owned utility \$38,964.86. In other words, considerably more than twice the amount was paid to the privately-owned corporation.

Mr. CHAPLIN: What was the quantity of current used?

Mr. HEAPS: I am going to ask the minister for that information. I think when there is a publicly-owned utility able to supply light and power for the buildings the government ought to give it the preference, particularly in Ontario. I do not know whether the minister has information as to the amount of energy supplied to the government buildings by both the privately-owned and the publicly-owned utility, and the price paid to each. If he has not that information available to-night, I hope he will be able to bring it down when we take up a vote of a similar character on another occasion.

Mr. ELLIOTT: An answer to a similar question was given a few days ago. The hon. member has the figures of what has been paid to the two companies. One is a local company; the other provincial. One pays taxes to the city; the other does not. One has a stand-by power plant which can be used in cases of emergency; the other has not. I am not able to give my hon. friend information as to the amount of current, but I shall be glad to obtain it for him. The prices paid to each company are the same.

Mr. HEAPS: Why should not the government patronize a publicly-owned utility?

Mr. ELLIOTT: We patronize it to a certain extent.

Mr. HEAPS: But why to such a small extent compared to the privately-owned company? That the latter pays taxes is not a very good reason for this discrimination, especially in view of the fact that the government itself does not pay any taxes to the city of Ottawa.

Mr. ELLIOTT: The local concern does not get all the business, but we thought it was entitled to its share. I do not think it would be fair to give everything to the provincial concern that has the local business in the heart of the city, when the local concern is supplying light on the outskirts where the service is a little more costly on account of distance. After careful consideration of all the circumstances it was thought to be a fair division between the two concerns.

Mr. GEARY: The hydro is a local concern.

Mr. ELLIOTT: It does not pay taxes here.

An hon. MEMBER: It is municipally owned.

Mr. ADSHEAD: This is one of the votes where the Public Works department probably has erred in the wrong direction. Last year