Ontario.

245	Stratford Post Office, Custom House, &c	$1,000 00
	Clifton Post Office, &c	5,000 00
	Port Hope Post Office	5,000 00
	Gananoque Custom House, &c., &c	4,000 00
	Lighting a portion of the Parliament Buildings by electricity	7,400 00
	New pump and connections for water works, Public Buildings, Ottawa	1,600 00
	London Post Office—Fittings and furniture	1,600 00

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. This is to complete public buildings in several towns in Ontario. Stratford Post Office and Custom House will have cost, when completed, $42,500; this $1,000 completes. We ask for $5,000 to complete the Clifton Post Office, which will have cost altogether about $35,000. On Port Hope Post Office and Custom House we have expended, to the 31st of December last, $20,400; the total estimated cost of the work will be $39,000 altogether. The Gananoque Custom House will require $1,000; this will cost altogether not quite $12,000.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. My attention has been called to the excessive charges made in the legal department, for which I do not hold the hon. Minister responsible, but which are utterly out of all reason. Work for which an ordinary business man would charge $50 or $100 is charged at the rate of $600 or 700 to the Government. All sorts of charges, such as never before heard of, are made.

Mr. DAVIES. The charges made are refreshing to lawyers coming from the Maritime Provinces. Take the account for the Hamilton building. For search of title there is a charge made of $603.90. After the gentleman, J. A. Macdonell, has made every possible charge of which the imagination could conceive, he charges 1 per cent. on the cost of the whole building, $359, which is practically a commission. This gentleman was away nine days, and for that service $185 are charged.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I thought, in legal matters, there was complete protection, by having the costs taxed by the proper authorities. These costs, I understand, were properly taxed.

Mr. DAVIES. These costs were not properly taxed. They were referred to Mr. Barwick.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Mr. Barwick was employed to get the costs reduced.

Mr. DAVIES. If it is to be understood that lawyers employed to search titles for the Government are to charge 1 per cent. on the total value in addition to all other costs, it is well that the fact should be known, as there will be some very heavy bills to be submitted in future. The next case was in regard to the St. Thomas building, and Mr. Macdonell was more moderate. His account was $145. He charged for the deed alone $35, and fee on title, $70. His account for Chatham building was $106, and again we have the 1 per cent. fee. No person ever heard of such a charge in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Mr. WOODWORTH. Is not the reason given by the leader of the Opposition and the Premier why judges' salaries cannot be equalized, this—that the emolument and fees in Ontario are much larger than the fees in the Maritime Provinces?

Mr. BLAKE. I never heard before of such fees as these for such services.

Mr. DAVIES. The charges are first amusing, and after a time they strike one as utterly outrageous and indefensible. There is a charge in connection with the Toronto conservatory, of $131; for the Leamington lighthouse, $169. In every case the percentage charge is brought in.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. My attention was called to some of these accounts the other day by some remarks made, I think, in the Public Accounts Committee, and I accordingly looked into some of them. After doing so, I called the special attention of the Minister of Justice to them, and he told me that he certainly will take care in the future that these accounts are revised and such sums not paid. In regard to the certificate of the registrar, it must be remembered that the lawyer is responsible for examining the title. Of course, I have not gone into the matter closely, but I may assure hon. gentlemen that I think the accounts rendered were rather high, and I have called the attention of the Minister of Justice to the matter.

Mr. MULOCK. I am glad to hear from the Minister of Public Works that he intends to prevent the repetition of such charges as these being sanctioned and paid out of the public moneys. I am sorry the attention of the Minister of Justice was not called to these circumstances before the public moneys were expended, as I submit, to a large extent, improperly, in the payment of these bills. They are not mere trifles, for I have before me a list, of which I shall give some of the items, though I have not added the total. There are, amongst others, the following items:—The Leamington lighthouse, $169.89; Toronto observatory, $401.39; St. Thomas public buildings, $145.76; Hamilton public buildings, $603 90; Chatham public buildings, $106 78. These are the bills of costs rendered by a professional gentleman practising in Toronto, Mr. J. A. Macdonell, to this Government. I find that these bills were rendered to the Government, and a letter was written by the Deputy Minister of Justice, a part of which I will read. This letter was written to Mr. F. D. Barwick, barrister, Toronto, and sent along with the bills, asking that the bills should be taxed. The letter states:

"It has been arranged with Mr. Macdonell that these bills should be taxed by Mr. Thom, the taxing officer of the Chancery Division, and the Minister has directed me to forward them to you with the request that you will procure an appointment for this purpose and attend the taxation on his behalf. Will you be good enough to do so and to report the result to me as soon as possible."

That letter is dated on the 18th November, 1881. There is another letter dated on the 27th of December, of the same year, from the Deputy Minister of Justice, referring to these bills, with some particulars, and some special instructions. Having set forth the bills at the head of the letter, we find that the meaning of item No. 4, *re* St. Thomas buildings, is that this charge is made for investigating the title to certain lands, in the city of St. Thomas, and the charge made in the account rendered for searching that title is $145.79. Then he goes to No. 5, which is an item for searching title to a piece of land for the purpose of a lighthouse at Leamington. He says:

"I would request you to procure an appointment with Mr. Thom, and have them taxed by that officer. To enable you rightly to represent to the Department the taxation I make the following explanation respecting the several cases referred to in the bills."

Then he goes on to No. 1. I may say that No. 1 is a number of bills against five different persons. I will not mention the names, because I do not desire to draw the names of suitors into the case:

"No instructions were ever given to commence proceedings, as it was known that the gentlemen would pay upon being written to. This they did do. I observe that Mr. Macdonell has made out five separate bills, charging instructions and attendances, &c., in last bill, though the matter was really but one transaction. The Department objects to the charges being multiplied by five."

Well, according to the instruction of the Department, Mr. Macdonell was instructed to write five separate letters to five different persons, and he made out five separate bills for which of course the Government was not to blame, and the bills were paid at $37.61, said to have been the result of the taxation. The letter goes on: