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REPORT

ON THE

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AT OTTAWA.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS, OTTAWA,
29th August, 1867.

F. BRAUN, Esquire, Sec'y Dept. Public Works, Ottawa.

SIR,—Agreeably to instructions conveyed in your letter of the 3rd July last, and its enclosures; I have the honor to submit the following General Report on the Public Buildings at Ottawa; but before attempting to describe the Structures themselves, it is deemed proper to give, as requested, a "brief notice of the principal events connected with their construction."

The first direct action which appears to have been taken towards fixing on a place for the permanent Seat of Government, was on the 24th March, 1857, when resolutions were passed by the House of Assembly to the following effect:—

That the sum of two hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds be appropriated for the purpose of providing for the necessary Buildings; and that an Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to select "some one place as the permanent Seat of Government in Canada."

A despatch from the Colonial Secretary, dated 31st December, 1857, conveying Her Majesty's selection of Ottawa as the Seat of Government, was communicated to both branches of the Legislature, on the 16th March, 1858.

The place having been thus chosen, and the site of the Buildings fixed upon, the Department of Public Works issued a notice, dated 17th May, 1859, inviting architects to prepare and submit designs for Parliament Buildings, and for the Public Departments, by the 1st day of August following, and stating that the Structures "are proposed to be built in a plain substantial style of architecture, of coursed hammer-dressed masonry, &c."

"All information as to the sites of the Buildings, their size, number of rooms, &c., necessary for the preparation of the plans, can be obtained at the office of the Department."

This notice resulted in sixteen designs for Parliament Buildings being submitted, by fourteen different competitors; and seven designs for Departmental Buildings by six different competitors; the whole of which were exhibited, and afterwards examined by gentlemen deemed competent to judge of their comparative merits.

The first premium for the Parliament Buildings was awarded to Messrs. Fuller & Jones, and that for the Departmental Buildings, to Messrs. Stent & Laver.

These gentlemen were subsequently instructed by the Department to make certain alterations in their plans, with a view to their better adaptation to the purposes contemplated; they were also requested to have these changes made, and specifications of the works prepared, by the 15th of October following.

On the 8th of September, public notice was given, that tenders for the construction of the Buildings would be received until the 1st day of November, and that the plans and specifications could be seen at Quebec, Ottawa, and Toronto, on and after the 15th October. The time, however, was extended to the 15th November, when twenty-one tenders were received for the Parliament Buildings, and twenty-nine for the Departmental Buildings.

The tender of Thomas McGreevy was accepted, for the bulk sum of \$348,500 for the construction of the Parliament Buildings; and a contract was entered into with him on the 7th December, 1859, for their completion by the 1st day of July, 1862.

About the same time the construction of the Departmental Buildings was awarded to Messrs. Jones, Haycock, & Clarke, at the bulk sum of \$278,810, and the time fixed by the contract for their completion, was the 1st February, 1862.