

Mr. McCURDY: It is rented, but it would be cheaper for the Government to purchase the building.

Mr. COPP: I should like a statement from the minister, giving the names and the locations of the various government buildings rented in Ottawa, together with the rentals. If it is not convenient, I do not insist on having it to-night, but if the list is not too long, he might put it on Hansard.

Mr. McCURDY: I shall be pleased to send it to my hon. friend; the list is rather long.

Mr. COPP: There should be some definite policy as to procuring public buildings required for governmental offices. It is safe to say that the Hunter building, at the present rate of building costs, could be put up at \$1,000,000, and if you could get ten such buildings constructed and centralized for government offices, it would be a very great convenience to members who have any departmental work to do. At present, one needs a guide to lead him around the city of Ottawa. The vast majority of members have departmental business to do, and the experience is that when you begin at one end of the city, in the Daly building, for instance, you are next sent to some building behind the Dominion theatre, or some other place in an equally remote locality, so that it takes two or three days to do the little work one has with the departmental offices. Of course, if the present system is economical, I must support the minister in it, but I should like to get the list for which I have asked in order to come to some conclusion as to what savings could be effected in regard to the rental of buildings throughout Ottawa. In the last two or three years, I have seen vans moving office effects from one place to another, and it would be well to have a number of government buildings to house all the departments. I can understand that during the war extra space was required for the Militia Department to carry on their work, but now that the war is over the Government should embark without delay upon a definite policy in regard to the public buildings, to house the officials required for the various branches of the public service.

My hon. friend spoke of renting good buildings at a cheaper rate than he could build them for. Doubtless there are such buildings that afford proper accommodation

and are very well arranged for departmental purposes; but from my experience in going into a number of these buildings I should say they are not so arranged that business can be efficiently carried on in them, neither is it conducive to economy to rent such buildings. I would suggest to my hon. friend therefore that he take this matter up very earnestly and next year when his Estimates are under review give the committee a full review of the subject dealing especially with the whole matter of the erection or rental of buildings for public offices.

Mr. FIELDING: Many of these buildings, as my hon. friend from Westmoreland has said, are so located or arranged as to occasion very real inconvenience not only to members but to those who desire to know where the various departments are to be found. I should think that a little guide book indicating where each department can be found would really be a very useful thing at the present time.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): I understand this item covers the rental for buildings all over the Dominion. Now it was drawn to my attention not long since that the Customs House in Toronto was torn down some years ago and no person up there appears to understand why it was done. It would really seem as though the Government are looking for ways of wasting money. I understand the old Custom House served the required purpose very well. True it was considered a little small for a city like Toronto and it was expected that ere long a new Custom House would be built. However the Government tore down the old building and did not replace it, and they are now paying a high rental to somebody for the building that is at present being used for customs purposes. A few days ago I asked a question on the subject in the House, and I was told that \$53,000 had been paid for rental since the demolition of the old Custom House. My information is that no steps have been taken to erect a new building and that the structure that was torn down was quite as convenient in every way as the present building for which a high rental is being paid. I would like to get an explanation from the minister, if he is able to give it, as to why the Government gave the P. Lyall Company a contract to demolish the Toronto Custom House and then rented another building for which they have paid \$53,000 up to date, and why they have