

the ground floor if they could have got that position. I may say that the revenue from the post office and customs amounts to about \$13,000 a year.

Mr. LENNOX. I desire to congratulate the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Holmes) upon his elevation to the position of deputy Postmaster General. He tells us that he has recently appointed some person to the position of postmaster, and that he appointed a lawyer because he could not get any one better. Well, I myself would be at a loss to ascertain where you could get a better man than a lawyer. Doubtless since the hon. gentleman was promoted to the position of deputy Postmaster General he has been doing valiant service in several ridings, and he has left his trail in proof of his devotion to the present government. The Minister of Public Works says there is ground for congratulation in respect to the Clinton post office in the fact that the contract price of the building is only \$9,500. The estimates so far show that we voted \$7,500 last year, and we are asked to vote \$8,000 additional this year, making \$15,500. Even if we stopped at this point I do not think there is ground for congratulation. The minister tells us that the total amount will be at least \$18,000, and when we get this \$18,000, I suppose, having regard to the history of the past, we will be requested to make a still further appropriation. So there is no reasonable hope that even \$18,000 will finish the Clinton post office. There is no reason to believe that economy is being practised in this case, any more than in many other cases that have been before the committee. The hon. member for Halton tells us that he has been pressing the Minister of Public Works to do justice to the smaller towns and villages. There is every reason why this matter should be taken into consideration with a view of doing justice to the rural municipalities by giving them public buildings at a moderate cost. The suggestion made by my hon. friend from Halton that the residences of the postmasters should be combined with the post offices so as to dispense with the expense of caretakers, is, I think, a proper one.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I think in this connection it would be fair to call the attention of the government to the policy of the Public Works Department in expending large sums of money in small towns just emerging from the condition of villages, on buildings altogether too ornate, too expensive for the purpose for which they are designed, and which, in fact, are more ornamental than useful. In this way a gross injustice is done to the agricultural portion of the community, many of whom have to travel two, three or four miles to get their mail matter when a large amount of expenditure is made in erecting these monumental

and expensive buildings in little towns, merely emerging from the state of villagehood. If favours are intended for towns of 2,000 or more, I put in a claim for a town in my own constituency, the town of Durham; yet, I am strongly in favour of some move being made in the direction of the motion made by the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean) looking to the establishment of a rural mail delivery system. This, I believe, would probably be a very expensive undertaking and one that the department could not enter upon completely at the beginning; yet, some experimental steps might be taken in order to find out what the cost would be in extending it over the whole country. I believe that at any rate we should take some measures to show our disapprobation of the practice of erecting these costly structures, far more costly than the requirements warrant.

Mr. INGRAM. As I understand it, there was \$5,000 voted for this building in the first place. Now, there is a contract let for \$9,500 and the total cost will be about \$18,000. Last year I drew the attention of the Department of Public Works to this kind of thing going on in respect to erecting public buildings. I asked then if there were any architects employed outside to prepare estimates, plans and specifications for these buildings. If there are surely the architect could come to some nearer figure than \$5,000 or \$6,000 for a building which we are subsequently told is going to cost \$18,000. No private citizen would think of doing business in that way and no wonder that hon. gentlemen on this side of the House criticise items of this kind when they find these items growing to treble the amount at which they were placed when first introduced. I say it is high time that something should be done in the direction of putting a stop to this growing evil, for it is a growing evil. If the town of Clinton is entitled to a public building, one that will meet the requirements of the town, has not the department an architect who has brains enough to say whether a building proper for such a town shall cost \$5,000 or \$10,000? Instead of coming down with figures of this kind, the minister ought to be prepared to state exactly, or within a few hundred dollars, what a public building in a town of this kind should cost. I object very strongly to this kind of thing occurring year after year in this House. The time of this House has been taken up in discussing items of this kind more than with the discussion of any other subject in the House. I am not blaming the hon. Minister of Public Works; this is an old, crying evil. He is not the father of this evil by any means, but I hope our good-natured minister will use his best efforts to have this kind of thing stopped and if he does I am sure he will deserve great credit and he will be commended on this side of the House.