

hundred thousand dollars. It is a very large site, because, as I have said, a post office requires plenty of floor space, having regard to the business transacted at that centre. The old building was removed and the cellar partly excavated. The \$250,000 that was in the estimates the year the war broke out was not revoted, and of course no one expected anything would be done until after the war. Since that time there have been repeated partial promises—I do not say undertakings in any sense—that this matter would be dealt with, and the board of trade and other public bodies had occasion to bring it to the attention not only of the Minister of Public Works but of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Railways when they visited the community. The location is on the principal thoroughfare of the city. While the government could not be expected to provide for the new building in a single year, because I dare say it will involve the expenditure of a million dollars, \$250,000 annually for four years would be sufficient to provide the accommodation. General plans were prepared, but nothing further was done. At present premises are occupied at a rent, mark you, that would more than pay interest and sinking fund upon the investment I have mentioned for putting up a new building that would house all the departments of the federal public service. That is a case which, I submit, should be dealt with. There are other similar cases throughout the Dominion.

I appreciate the difficulties of the minister. He has to make selections, and, being only human, he cannot resist the pressure of his political friends. But while I do not expect him to do that, I think it is not unreasonable to ask that the public service itself should be looked after. The other day the Postmaster General pointed out with respect to the situation at Le Pas that steps had been taken, very properly, to provide a public building because it was a new community transacting considerable business out of which the country was deriving substantial revenues. But surely the fact that communities which are supplying large customs and postal revenues do not for the moment return supporters of the administration, should not be a reason for their demands for public buildings being entirely overlooked. Now, if for ten long years since the war the community that I mention has been compelled to carry on under the conditions described, has not the time come when proper accommodation should be provided? What I have said of that community is true of some of the towns on the

Pacific slope, and in the interior. An extension to the post office at Edmonton was started last year. Tenders were called for public buildings at other places in the west, but since the war expenditures for this purpose have been very limited, and those new buildings that have been constructed have not always been needed to meet the demands of the public service, but rather have been provided for the reasons that I have mentioned. The minister, I know, may have the best intentions in the world, and it will may be that when his recommendations reach council those who look over them may say: Why should a public building be built in the constituency of A; why should that Conservative riding have any money spent in it? There are members of council who would look at it in that way. Then again there is a second difficulty to overcome, and that is the opposition of the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance says, "We cannot provide further moneys this year for this particular service". That being so, and since you have to cut down the amount that is to be expended, it is those communities that support the administration that are remembered, while the others are blotted out from the book of remembrance. That is the situation in relation to these matters. Certainly if you left the question to business men they would never think of leaving two or three communities I know of in western Canada in their present condition so far as public buildings are concerned.

In Ottawa you pay in rentals at the present time over \$700,000. That, I think, is approximately the amount. Then you pay for light and heat. That represents interest and at least a reasonable sinking fund, having regard to modern construction, of \$15,000,000. Why have we not spent \$15,000,000 and stopped paying rentals, so that at the end of twenty-five or thirty years we might own these buildings and be no longer under the necessity of paying further rent? Why not establish a policy in this regard? The same thing might be done in Calgary. If we borrowed under a special form of security this could be done. You might call it a public works four and a half per cent sinking bond, continue paying rents, as you are now doing, to be used to pay interest and sinking fund on the securities for the next twenty-five years or so, and at the end of that period you would have paid off the securities and would own the property. The country would then be free from rentals for the future. This should have been done long ago; everyone