

invested would probably be \$100 besides what might, from time to time, be spent in repairs on the building.

Mr. HENDERSON. I remember when the debate took place on the construction of this building the then minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Tarte) informed us that the post office at Clinton was to be built upon a new plan which he had approved of—the plan of erecting cheaper buildings and more of them. Year after year I had advocated the idea that, instead of spending \$30,000 in one town in a county where there were four or five small towns, the sum should be divided up and cheaper buildings—yet quite sufficient for the purpose of post office and postmaster's residence—should be erected in each of these towns. I instanced the county of Halton, with five incorporated towns and villages. If \$5,000 were appropriated in each town or village, leaving \$1,000 to purchase the site—because I did not believe in the principle of the municipality buying the site for the government—the amount would provide a suitable building for each place. I instanced that county because, under the application of the rule that there must be a large revenue or a large population, it would never be entitled to a public building, as we have no town in that county—and not likely to have for many years to come—with a greater population than 1,700 or 1,800. I pressed this point upon the then Minister of Public Works year after year, and at last I believed I had made a convert of him. Not that he gave me any promise that he would fulfil what I required in the county of Halton, which is the county I have the honor to represent, but that he would adopt that principle generally. And he said across the floor of the House that, in the erection of a post office at Clinton that plan would be adopted, that building would be erected for a much smaller sum and the postmaster's residence would be provided for in the building and the postmaster would thus become caretaker of the building, and so the large expenditures which have been spoken of here for maintenance should be saved. I may say also that several years ago, not in the chamber, but outside of it in discussing the proposition with the present Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Sutherland), that gentleman expressed himself as favourable to the plan I had suggested. I think that hon. gentleman will recollect that he gave me to understand the proposition was a fair and reasonable one, and was the only plan by which certain ridings in the province could obtain a fair share of public money. I am sorry to find that although the Minister of Public Works started out well in the case of Clinton—started out to show us how a public building could be erected for a very moderate sum of money and yet fulfil all the requirements, furnishing not only a post office of sufficient size for a town of 2,000 or 2,500

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND.

population, but a residence for the postmaster, thus doing away with the caretaker—I am sorry, I say, to find out that, year after year, we are asked to grant additional sums to this Clinton post office and that we have simply got back to the old plan of a costly building in a small town, a plan which was condemned by the Liberal party when they were in opposition as has been so often shown to-night. I am sorry that the plan approved by the late Minister of Public Works has been departed from, and that we are not to see introduced the new system of supplying small towns and villages throughout the country with sufficient post offices. I am sorry that we have no more hopes now than we had five years ago of securing post offices or public buildings in these small towns. I would like the minister to tell us whether he intends to adhere to the policy that was laid down by the late Minister of Public Works, and why it has been departed from in this instance.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. My hon. friend will be pleased to know that the principle he has advocated so long has been carried out to a very large extent. He and I perhaps may be a little extreme in our views with regard to this question. My hon. friend knows that Clinton is a town of considerably over 2,000 population. The contract price for this post office is only \$9,500. He will remember that we advocated buildings costing \$5,000 for places of this size. Every business man in this committee knows that there has been a considerable increase in wages and in the cost of material during the last two or three years. The cost of heating, fittings and that sort of thing which will bring the total cost up to something like \$18,000. Now the hon. gentleman will hardly say that, beginning at the old figure of \$35,000, \$50,000, \$80,000, this case does not show considerable progress in the right direction. I have had several discussions with the chief architect with the view of adopting a policy of putting up public buildings in smaller places, and that policy is to be carried out. We should adopt a plan that will serve the purpose to the full extent, while costing less money than we have paid hitherto.

Mr. HOLMES. I would add for the information of the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Henderson) who has been fair in his remarks, and for the information of other members opposite, that the principle advocated so far as the caretaker is concerned is being rigidly carried out in the Clinton post office. I had the pleasure of appointing a new postmaster in my own town within the last few months, and my only regret was that I had to take a lawyer. I appointed a postmaster on the strict condition that there was to be no caretaker for the office, and the party was glad to accept the office under those conditions. In fact a number of men would have been willing to live on