

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). I would call the attention of the hon. Minister to the extraordinary amount we pay annually for furniture, repairs, &c. We voted, last year, \$165,000; now the House is asked to vote \$10,000, or \$175,000, for furniture, repairs, &c., for Public Buildings at Ottawa. I fail to see where this annual expenditure goes. The offices seem to me, when I visit them, to be very comfortably furnished, and they have been so for years, yet every year we are asked to vote an increased sum for still further repairs. Then we have an extraordinary bill for heating; \$40,000 has already been voted, and now \$6,000 more are required. Then \$11,000, in another place, which no doubt occurred in last year's estimates in another form, making, in all, \$57,000 for heating these buildings. I think if the hon. gentleman would revise the system of heating, it is quite possible the expenditure might be reduced. Why have we increased expenditure now? Where is the increased necessity? Is there an increase in the price of fuel? Perhaps the hon. gentleman will tell us how the fuel is supplied. The gas bill is very large, \$20,000. I am quite satisfied the offices in the Departments do not use much, as they are not seldom opened after sundown. And these figures do not include fuel and light for Rideau Hall, amounting to \$8,000 more. I think we ought to get some details of this expenditure. Where are these buildings required? What is the report of the Architect thereupon? Then we have the Department of Indian Affairs, Wellington street, \$2,000. How is that going to be spent? It does not contain more than seven or eight rooms, and there is considerable furniture there at the present moment. We are coming near now to an expenditure of \$16,000 more on public buildings. If we are going to add, year after year, to expenditure for fuel, light, repairs, &c., it will cost us, in a short time, \$200,000, or \$250,000, to keep our public buildings in repair. I think the Minister ought carefully to scrutinize the expenditure on these points before he asks us to vote this large sum of money.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. As to the heating surely the hon. gentleman does not think for a moment that I would leave him in the cold. The heating is done by contract. We call for tenders for wood and for coal and we accept the lowest. As for the feeding of the furnaces, that is left entirely to the firemen. I can assure the hon. gentleman that item is as low as we can make it. Now, about the rents, repairs, furniture, &c.; the hon. gentleman must not think that this amount is for these buildings only—it is for all our public buildings from British Columbia to Prince Edward Island. We have new buildings every year that we have to heat, furnish and repair. I may say to the hon. gentleman that our expenditure for this item is not nearly as large as it has been. In 1877, it was \$182,000; in 1878, \$202,000; in 1879, \$226,000; in 1880, \$220,000; in 1881, \$149,000; in 1882, \$173,000; in 1883, we have expended \$165,000 up to the 1st of May, the balance for the remaining two months being for standing account, &c. This is for all our public buildings throughout the Dominion. The abolition of the workshops here reduced this expenditure, otherwise instead of \$175,000 we would be asking for \$250,000. As for the gas, the hon. gentleman knows there is a contract with the Gas Company, and the whole amount is in accordance with the contract, which I consider a very moderate one for all the public buildings in Ottawa. The water is provided by the city, and is of a very much better quality than that we formerly used. On Concurrence, if the hon. gentleman desires, I will bring down a statement of the contract rates paid for cordwood and coal.

Mr. BLAKE. I observe the hon. gentleman has taken into his own Department the supplying of fuel and the payment of furnacemen and others required in the public buildings throughout the Dominion. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will explain why the change is made?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The reason of the change is that formerly each Department had to pay its share of the cost, and difficulties arose with regard to amounts, and so forth. The whole of this grant has, therefore, been placed under the Public Works Department. I think economy will be secured in regard to fuel, as contracts may be let for large quantities.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). What is the mode of purchasing furniture and articles of that character?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. When only small quantities are required, the sub-head of the Department has an estimate made by the proper officer and sends a circular to ten, twelve, or fifteen firms in this city, calling on them to send in tenders, and the lowest is accepted. When we furnish a new building at Hamilton or elsewhere we call for tenders.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). I understand that the practice of sending out circulars is to send them only to those men whose politics are right, while those generally engaged in the trade know nothing about it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; that was done five years ago.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). Then the worst features of government five years ago are continued.

279. Harbors and Rivers—Quebec \$13,200.00

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. This is to meet payments due on timber contracted for continuing the works at Etang du Nord on the opening of navigation. The timber was contracted for during the winter, when it is better and cheaper. The \$4,000 for New Carlisle are to continue the pier contracted for there some two years ago. At Lake Megantic, the pier is to be completed.

Mr. CASGRAIN. Was the timber at New Carlisle furnished by contract?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. Yes.

280. Harbors and Rivers—Ontario \$1,781.79

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. \$784 for Cobourg are to make payments for materials used in the construction of works there. At Owen Sound \$1,776 are to pay the award of the Dominion Arbitrators, on a claim of \$2,967 preferred by Mr. Larkin, contractor for improvements there; and also to defray legal expenses connected with the arbitration. These works were contracted for on the 15th of June, 1881.

Mr. BLAKE. I would like the hon. gentleman to explain the understanding between the Government and the Corporation of Owen Sound with reference to the Owen Sound works, and as to the condition of the enterprise generally, and what is to be done upon it. There has been some misapprehension I am afraid, or misunderstanding, or at any rate, I know from some correspondence I have seen, that there is a feeling up there in this relation; and it is said an arrangement or understanding has been arrived at on which certain specified payments the Department has agreed to produce certain results in the harbor—I forget how much water; the result has not been produced as yet, and steps require to be taken, but we are really in suspense as to what the nature of the arrangement is.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I think an answer will be given to-morrow, while we are on the Supplementary Estimates.

281. Harbors and Rivers—British Columbia..... \$2,804.40

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. \$300 are to remove snags from Fraser River; the balance is as represented.

Mr. BAKER (Victoria, B.C.) I would like to know whether \$2,504.40 are the balance of the original contract, after deducting the amount expended in completing the