

Supply—Public Works

making these promises for about ten years. In 1949 it was hung out before the electors in grand style. Plans were prepared for a great building that was to be built down there to handle all the different federal departments. Cuts of this great building appeared in the local newspapers and I am sure had an influence upon the public before the election.

They showed a wonderful building occupying a whole square and we were told we would have back again the Bank of Canada and some of the other things that had been taken away from us because there was not room. We were also to have recognition from the Post Office Department once this building was built and were to be given a zone of our own instead of being tacked on to New Brunswick because of there not being enough space in Charlottetown. I assume that that is one reason why we did not have a post office zone of our own.

After having bought a site for this immense building which they have promised over and over again, the government has gone into the retail renting business. Perhaps we can leave out the word "retail" and say that they have gone into the rental business. We find now that they have fifteen or twenty properties that they are renting. According to the terms of doing business with the federal government those cheques should be made payable to the department direct at Ottawa. I should like to know from the minister who is the collector of rentals and who is in charge of the properties at Charlottetown. I should like to know also the terms of the rentals of those properties.

Perhaps if we had this information we would have some idea when they expect to build this glorious building that they have been promising so long. I know that there may be an election within a year's time and they will want to hang this up again. They will want to act as Santa Claus for the election. However, I think this has been promised for so long that it has lost some of the glamour that it might otherwise have held for the electors of Queens.

There are other questions I want to ask but I shall wait until the proper items are before us. I should like to know from the minister how they are running this rental business down there and I should like to know just what moneys they receive from the rentals. If they are renting the properties according to what they paid for them they must be receiving a good deal in the way of rentals. I should like to know also how much they expended last year on repairs on this vast property that they bought.

I will leave it at that for the time being until I get answers to my questions.

Hon. Alphonse Fournier (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, I am always pleased to listen to the hon. member for Queens. He said that I had promised a public building for Charlottetown ten years ago, but I will refresh his memory by telling him that it was only about eight years ago. When the hon. member came here in 1945 we both joined in making a dual promise to the people of the island. I made that in good faith and I am still acting in good faith. Then in 1949 we did promise that building again, but we were not able to put it up. The results were not very good.

I ask my hon. friend not to press it at this time if this is an election year. We do not want to make the people believe that they should vote for us because we are going to put up a building. I can give the hon. member some good news right now. Pending the construction of the building we do rent these properties, some to the provincial government. The architectural plans for this building are 80 per cent completed. The other plans are not quite so advanced, but we are starting to see the light. Along with my hon. friend, I hope that we will be able to get this building for these people. I feel that I have a certain responsibility seeing that I joined with the hon. member in making that promise to the people of Charlottetown. I would not want to let them down. When the plans are completed I shall recommend that there be the necessary item to cover the building. I hope my hon. friend will be satisfied. He can go back to Charlottetown, as I would myself, and say the same thing to the people there. I would hesitate to put in an amount of money right now when I know that I would not be able to expend it during this fiscal year.

Mr. Coldwell: The hon. member for Charlottetown has been given an answer in connection with a building promised some ten years ago.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Eight years.

Mr. Coldwell: I am thinking of a case in my constituency where the site was bought in 1938, which I believe is fifteen years ago.

Mr. Rowe: It is outlawed now.

Mr. Coldwell: The amount has been in the estimates every year since 1938 but I am happy about it this year because in former years, I will not say in recent years but in former years, there was only \$50,000 provided. This year there is \$75,000 in the estimates and that gives me great hope. I do not know how far plans are advanced in