

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. What quantity of land was purchased?

Mr. OUIMET. The lot is irregular in shape. On Notre Dame street it has a frontage of 77 feet 11 inches, but in the rear it is only 39 feet wide by a depth of 72 feet.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. That is a very small plot. What price was paid for it?

Mr. OUIMET. The price paid was \$4,000. It is in the centre of St. Henri, which is a place now numbering over 13,000 people. In fact it is a part of the city of Montreal, and this land, being situated on the main street, is worth a very high price.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Have you a post office there now, and if so, what rent do you pay for it?

Mr. OUIMET. There is post office accommodation there now, but I cannot say what is paid for it.

Mr. CAMPBELL. As the contractors have failed and the Government are under no engagement now, I would submit whether it is wise to spend this large sum of money in a place like that. The revenue is only \$2,054. It would require \$920 for interest alone, and then you would have to employ a man to take care of the building and pay him at least \$400 more, you have got to heat and light it, \$400 more; and your total revenue from that post office is gone in keeping up that building. Now, would it not be wiser for the Government to think twice before they enter into a new contract to erect a building? I presume some other building can be rented for a small amount that will afford all the accommodation required.

Mr. OUIMET. The argument of my hon. friend would carry him very far. I suppose we could get the accommodation that we have in this Chamber for very much less in rent than the interest on the capital we have invested in building this Chamber. And so with all the public buildings. For instance, the custom house in St. John, N.B., has just been burned; it cost over \$350,000, and we must suppose it was built with the greatest economy since it was built by the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite, when they were in power. Four per cent on \$350,000 would give you \$14,000 a year, and no doubt we could rent offices to accommodate the officials there for \$200 a year. Thus it would be a very good speculation for the country not to build any more custom houses in the city of St. John. If the Government were to rent shanties and not erect any more buildings anywhere, it would be a great saving for the country.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I point out this fact, that here is a revenue of only \$3,000 a year, and you propose to expend the whole of it in erecting a building. Now, if you can get a building that will answer the purposes there just as well as the new building you are putting up—

Mr. OUIMET. We cannot.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Why can you not? There are hundreds of places in this country where the revenue is more and where the postal facilities are not as good, but you do not propose to erect post offices at all these places. If you can get accommodation for \$2,000 in St. John, I think you are very foolish to go and spend \$300,000 in putting up a new custom house there. You want to afford the people accommodation, but you want

to afford it with the least possible expense to the ratepayers.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Is the Minister aware that there is a falling revenue in this office? In 1891 the revenue was \$2,235.74.

Mr. OUIMET. Perhaps it will increase when they have a better building.

Mr. LANDERKIN. When it was thought they were going to have a building, it appears to have had a depressing influence on the trade of that flourishing town, because the next year I find that the revenue fell to \$1,922.74. When Laprairie was threatened with a post office, there was a falling off of \$6 the first year after the post office was begun. If this policy is going to be pursued, you are going to drive the settlers away, you are going to lose your revenue, and how is the Minister of Finance going to meet the requirements of the Government and to put up offices when the people are going away and the revenue is falling off? I would ask the Minister if he would be kind enough to lay that report on the Table, that he has in reference to public works?

Mr. OUIMET. Yes. In answer to the hon. gentleman from Kent (Mr. Campbell), I may say that Chatham, which has a smaller population than St. Henri, has a post office costing \$58,904.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. What is the customs revenue of Chatham?

Mr. OUIMET. I do not know.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I think the hon. gentleman will find that the customs revenue of Chatham is three, four or five times as much.

Mr. CAMPBELL. It is \$13,406. I can tell the Minister of Public Works that if any good business man was to put up that post office in Chatham he could do it for just about two-thirds of what it cost the Government. The "boy" had to be paid out of that.

Mr. LISTER. I think the argument of the Minister of Public Works, carried to its logical conclusion, would lead to a queer condition of affairs. Because post offices are erected in large centres of population where an enormous amount of business is done, where a great many employes are engaged to carry on the business, he says it is necessary to erect public buildings in these smaller places in the country. Now, if it is necessary to erect a public building in this town where the post office revenue is only \$2,000 a year, it is equally necessary to put up public buildings in the very smallest places, irrespective altogether of the amount of revenue. We all know that these matters must be governed by some rule either as to the amount of income or as to the number of the population, and if the Minister of Public Works would base it upon either ground, then we could understand what he is doing. But when he puts up these buildings at the mere *ipse dixit* of the Government, or at the urgent request of supporters for the purpose of securing support for the Government candidate, he is wasting the funds of the people. He is using the funds entrusted to the Government as trustees, for the purpose of buying support. This book all through shows there has been a scandalous exercise of power by the Government.

Mr. OUIMET. Scandalous is an expression that we have heard pretty often.