

senators taken away nearly two years ago has not been filled by the government. The services of the late Senator Ferguson were of great value to the island, and the services of a worthy successor to him would also be of great value. The Prime Minister read his own condemnation when he said that the best reason that was given why the vacancy had not been filled was that important and weighty questions were before the government. That excuse might avail if he thinks that the government has to do altogether with legislation, and that the House of parliament have no part in it. But the greater the gravity of the questions before the government, and which must afterwards come before the House, the greater the reason why the provinces should not be shorn of their rightful representation. That was a very suggestive paragraph in the extracts read by my hon. friend (Mr. Fraser) which stated that in the days of Rome seats in the Senate were put up at auction, and the question was asked how much better is it to-day? Has the Prime Minister given any good reason why the senatorship has not been filled in the province of Prince Edward Island? If for instance you have a battalion, and a certain part of it is for any reason shorn of a portion of its strength, and there are vacancies in another part of the battalion is not the weakness in one part an added reason why the vacancies in the other part should be filled. So it is with this present case. Prince Edward Island is vitally interested in the question of the fisheries and vitally interested in the question of our trade policy, and yet its representation in parliament is depleted. The Prime Minister was appealed to by my hon. friend and no answer has been given by the Prime Minister for neglect of his constitutional duty. He has a little more reason in the matter of the judgeship because the resignation of Justice Hodgson is recent, but in the matter of the senatorship, is there any other reason at all than that the warring elements in Prince Edward Island have not yet come to a conclusion as to whom the spoil should be given. Is not that the reason, and is there any other reason at all?

Mr. FRASER. I wish to ask the Prime Minister if it is the intention of the government to also appoint the senator in a very short time?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes.

NEW DEPARTMENTAL BUILDINGS.

Mr. R. S. LAKE (Qu'Appelle). The following item appeared in the Ottawa 'Citizen' of yesterday which I think is worthy of consideration, and as to which I wish to ask for some information :

Mr. FOSTER.

The work of demolishing the buildings on Sussex street where the new departmental block is to be located is progressing. It was stated at the Department of Public Works to-day that the new plans are practically finished and at present the specifications are in course of preparation. It is intended to call for bids within a few weeks or in good time to allow for the commencement of operations in the spring. A substantial vote for the purpose appears in the main estimates. The plan has been altered materially through a story being taken off the building, while it has also been made narrower. The tower and top ornamentation has also been changed. The total cost will likely be about three and a half millions and big contractors from all over the Dominion have been making inquiries with a view of submitting tenders.

This indicates most important alterations in the new plans for the new departmental buildings. I do not profess to have any particular knowledge on a question of this kind, but I think we all look upon these public buildings in Ottawa as a national asset, and desire to see them worthy of this great Dominion. We are very proud of the buildings in which we sit at the present moment; they constitute a beautiful block, and are well worthy their position as the seat of legislation for this Dominion. But, since the days in which these buildings were erected it appears to me there has been a gradual deterioration. The Langevin block is a dignified structure although it is not in harmony with the other buildings on these grounds, but from the parliamentary block down to the mint, and the archives buildings there is a very great descent indeed. The archives building with its cardboard battlements, and its altogether flimsy appearance is in no way worthy of the Dominion. Even the Victoria museum, although it has considerable dignity on account of its size, appears to lack many details which might have been supplied had competent expert architects passed upon the designs. I consider that the architects of the present day, generally speaking, are on just as high a level as those of the past, and we have a pretty good example of modern architecture in the splendid building which is being erected by the Grand Trunk Railway Company in Ottawa. I cannot help but think that with a proper effort the new departmental buildings could be made just as well suited to occupy the position they will hold in the Capital of the Dominion, as are the parliamentary buildings. Some years ago when this question was first brought up the House understood that following the precedent adopted elsewhere a competition was to be held for the purpose of obtaining the best designs possible from architects all over the world, but the prizes offered were hardly large enough to bring out the very best efforts of able architects. A year or two ago when the Lon-