

office building, etc., at Arnprior, and the Dominion Reformatory at Alexandria; one in Manitoba, a post office, etc., at Portage la Prairie, and one in British Columbia—the drill hall at New Westminster.

All the contracts for the above were awarded to the lowest tenderer after a public call for tenders had been made.

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, HEATING, ETC.

The work of maintenance of the several public buildings under the charge of this department, which number about 175, has been well carried on during the past fiscal year. Several important repairs have been executed to those structures, as mentioned in the appendices attached to this report and the various water, gas and heating services have been kept in good repair. The usual quantity of coal was purchased for the heating of the buildings outside of Ottawa, while 5,000 tons were purchased for the Ottawa buildings. The price of coal is being gradually reduced, the rates for 1895-96 being the same as for 1894-95 and somewhat below those of 1893-94. This will explain how the appropriation for heating public buildings has remained at the same amount for the years 1894-95 and 1895-96, although the number of buildings has gradually increased.

An increase in the cost of lighting the public buildings may, however, be noticed, this being due to the general demand for electric light and its consequent introduction in buildings where coal oil was hitherto used, as well as the substitution in a large number of places of electric light for gas, although in many instances this latter mode of illumination is cheaper but presents more difficulties as regards the proper ventilation of offices, where a large number of clerks are working together, such as the post offices in large cities.

The total expenditure on buildings for construction, repairs and maintenance, was \$735,757.83.

TELEGRAPHS.

There are two thousand six hundred and fifty-eight miles of telegraph lines under the control of the department, subdivided into two thousand four hundred and eighty-seven miles of land lines and two hundred and six miles of cables, as follows:—

	Land Lines.	Cables.
	Miles.	Miles.
In Newfoundland.....	14	
In Nova Scotia.....	238	21
In New Brunswick.....	76	12
In Quebec.....	932	164
In Ontario.....	24	9
In British Columbia.....	505	
In North-west Territories.....	698	
	2,487	206