

Mr. COPP: This is a pretty large item, covering suggested improvements in the different branch experimental farms as well as the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa. Building operations will be very expensive during the present and the coming year, and these experimental farms and stations all constitute a very large bill of expense to the country without considering the cost of erection of new buildings. If you go through the Auditor General's Report, you will find that these branch experimental stations cost from \$40,000 to \$75,000 a year without any returns coming in. Therefore, under present conditions when the department has to refuse requests for the erection, in many places throughout the Dominion, of public buildings such as post offices and so forth, that are required to give ordinary and proper facilities, the minister might well pause when he is requested to spend \$200,000 for the erection of buildings in experimental stations throughout the country. I understand that last year a barn and a new cellar were constructed at one of the experimental stations at fairly heavy expense. When the roots were gathered from this magnificent farm, costing the public something like \$50,000 with returns amounting to something like \$3,000 a year, the roots were placed in the cellar and when the first touch of frost came, they were all frozen and destroyed. If that is the way in which the business of experimental farms is to be carried on, and year after year we are to be asked to vote these large sums of money, I would draw the minister's attention to the fact that the people are not looking for the expenditure of money along these lines at the present time. The word "economize" has been suggested to the country and particularly to hon. gentlemen on this side of the House as regards all things. If the Government is going to economize, the acting Minister of Public Works might very well cut this item from the Estimates. I am sure there is no very great demand nor need for the expenditure of \$200,000 on experimental stations throughout the Dominion, and this is simply piling up a very much heavier loss to the country than we would otherwise have. Let the minister visit the different experimental stations and compare the buildings and barns used there for experimental purposes with the buildings the ordinary farmer has to use on his farm. Yet the minister is asking these farmers to pay exorbitant taxation on their farms to keep up beautiful exhibits here and there throughout the Dominion like the Central

Experimental Farm which is used as a pleasure resort for certain individuals, and which is a very pleasant place in which to spend a holiday. This is a time when the Government is asking the people of the Dominion to delve down deep into their pockets, and deeper this year than ever before, for carrying on the operations of the Dominion and paying the interest on the enormous war debt that has been rolled up, whether rightly or wrongly, by extravagance or otherwise. This debt confronts us; the people have to pay it; they cannot build these fine showhouses; they cannot have conservatories filled with flowers for their enjoyment; and it is playing a little too much on the patience of the people of the Dominion to ask them to pay \$200,000 so that few individuals may be able to visit these magnificent spots that are costing so much without a corresponding return to the revenues of the country.

Mr. J. D. REID: Requisitions were sent in to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture showing what it was considered was actually required for repairs and necessary works in connection with carrying on these farms. The Deputy Minister of Public Works and his staff took the matter up with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the purpose of trying to cut these items down to the very smallest possible amount. This is what the Deputy Minister of Agriculture stated in reply to a letter from the Deputy Minister of Public Works:

In reply I would say that these Public Works' estimates, as originally sent in by the Director of Experimental Farms, amounted to nearly \$700,000, but I cut down this sum to \$200,000, and do not think I can possibly ask for less.

And so on. As regards the statement of the hon. member that the experimental farms are really of no benefit to the people of Canada, for that is really what his statement means—

Mr. COPP: I mean the benefit to the country does not correspond to the expenditure.

Mr. J. D. REID: There is quite a difference of opinion as far as that is concerned. I believe these farms are of great value and that they are appreciated by the people. Some, if not all, of the Provincial Governments are undertaking this kind of work, although probably not on as large a scale. My experience has been that the farms have been of great benefit, and we must certainly keep them in repair. I think when the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture are before the committee that