and are deprived of free delivery. I could name a number of such cities and towns. There is the city which the hon. Minister of Public Works represents, the city of Woodstock. There are also St. Catharines, Sault Ste. Marie, Peterborough, Brockville, Berlin, Guelph, Stratford, St. Thomas, Chatham and Windsor. These are all important cities, and it is well known that workingmen employed in the factories in these cities find it very inconvenient to go to the post office during post office hours. I trust therefore that when the government are considering the question of free rural delivery, they will also consider the question of free delivery in these small cities and large towns. So far as rural mail delivery is concerned, although you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have ruled the motion out of order, I wish to say that I am heartily in support of the proposition as being a step in the right direction. The hon. Minister of Finance has given great credit to the Postmaster General for his administration of the Post Office Department. Well, I think it would be well for the hon. gentleman to urge on his colleague the advisability of not looking at this question of rural mail delivery mainly from the point of revenue or expenditure. The thickly settled districts of this country should be well served with mail matter even if that service should cost a considerable sum. We have an intelligent class of people who would not object to a small deficit incurred for the purpose of providing them with this great advantage.

Mr. NORTHRUP. This debate has proceeded to the length it has on account of the point raised by the hon. leader of the opposition. It is all important that we should have a declaration from the government of the principle on which they propose to incur this class of expenditure. I venture to think that a very clear principle could be laid down which the government might adopt and which would command the approval of the people. It is a principle that would save them from great importunities on the part of their friends, and a principle so sound that any succeeding party coming into power in Canada would not dare to depart from it. The principle I submit is that the government, in handling public moneys should endeavour to act as a trustee handling private moneys would act under similar circumstances. Wherever the business is such that a private individual acting as trustee would be justified in erecting a building to carry on business, let the government erect a building. But if, as a matter of business, no private individual would think of investing trust funds in a building there, the government should equally abstain. The hon. gentlemen opposite should not lose sight of the fact that every time an item appears in the estimates for the construction of a building in a town of two or three thousand inhabitants, the minister calls down upon himself frantic appeals from dozens of his own followers who would not make such appeals but for the encouragement they receive from seeing such items in the estimates. The country looks to us to practice economy. While we on this side do not necessarily object to this, that or the other item for a post office here or there, we are unable, and hon. gentlemen opposite are equally unable, to give an intelligent vote on these matters, unless some principle can be applied. The moment they can lay down a principle, no matter what it may be, which can govern these questions, we can consider them intelligently; but until a principle is laid down, both sides must simply go it blind, for there is nothing to guide or govern us. When we look about this country and consider the amount of money that is being spent in these public buildings, much of it certainly unnecessary, and when we find that the expenditure has grown, and when we find that it is proposed to construct a public building in one place that will entail an annual cost for maintenance of $2,000, whereas the service as it is now performed, as stated to the House, costs only about $150, I venture to say there are very few of the hon. gentlemen opposite who can stand before their constitutents and justify such a vote. Hon. gentlemen opposite seem to think that the people before whom they must justify these expenditures are the people of Alexandria or the people of Bowmanville. But there are five millions of people in this country who are interested in every dollar that is spent, and it is to the great mass of the people that the representatives in this House must stand or fall upon, showing how they have appropriated or misappropriated the public funds. If hon. gentlemen would be good enough to lay down a principle—if a vicious principle so much the worse for them—but to lay down some principle to govern the disposition of public moneys and not merely throw it out haphazard here or there according to the personal influence or popularity of the individual members, it would be a great deal better for the country and better for hon. gentlemen opposite themselves.

Clinton—Post office, $8,000.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I would like to know what the present expenditure is for the service there, and what would be the increased cost entailed by the construction of this building.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The present rent for the post office is $200 per annum, and for the custom house $36, total $236. It is quite impossible for me to tell the committee what the increased expenditure will be. But, if the postmaster lives in the building, the highest allowance I have found in the department is $100. So, the difference between the present expenditure and the interest on the amount