

offered for sale a couple of years ago for \$250,000; we have an extra sum of \$100,000 for Rideau Hall above the \$60,000 that has been voted in the last two years for improvements and maintenance and furnishings, and we have an extra sum of \$150,000 above what we were asked to vote last year for the citadel in Quebec for gubernatorial purposes—a total of \$4,800,000. Unquestionably this huge total will be added to by other votes similar to what we are now considering for the purpose—well, some say, of beautifying Ottawa, but I think, Mr. Chairman, it is simply to cater to the extravagant social spirit of this city.

I hold in my hand the plan. It shows a green plot with trees on it in the very area for which the minister is asking a vote of \$30,000 for paving. Why in the name of common sense should we pave this area and later break it up and plant trees there if we conform to this plan? The whole proposal seems to me preposterous. I wholly agree with what my friend from Kingston (Mr. Ross) said a moment ago, that by our vote in relation to the Ottawa improvement scheme we are driving a wedge through the very heart of this city and dividing it into two sections, and in this way actually destroying its symmetry. We find that for years the drift of business has been towards Bank street, and now the Prime Minister comes along with this scheme. It is not the town planning scheme which was prepared by experts a few years ago at an expense of sixty or seventy thousand dollars. It is a scheme that the Prime Minister has taken into his particular care and presented to parliament. I repeat, the scheme is not in harmony with the natural growth of this city. It is going to divide the city into two sections. It was bad enough before when business was carried through by the Russell block and the buildings on the other side of the street; but now business will go down the Bank street section, and the Rideau street section will be neglected and depreciated in value. I am confident that the taxpayers of Ottawa as yet do not quite understand just what the effect will be when the Russell block is cleared away.

I am opposed to this vote of \$30,000 as an attempt to extract from the exchequer under—I will not say false pretenses; perhaps that would be too strong a term—under a misapprehension by parliament and the people, because we fully understood that the three million dollars vote the other day, which we thought excessive, was to cover all the necessary expenses of this scheme. Let me recapitulate. In addition to that parliament is voting at least six hundred thousand dollars for this property which, mark you, is the offer

[Mr. Stevens.]

by the government, but experience justifies us in asserting that the cost will be in excess of this figure by at least ten or twenty per cent; five hundred thousand dollars or more for the New Edinburgh mills, and the minister is coming to parliament in his supplementaries for an additional sum to remodel the saw mill for the purpose of turning it into an office for the statistical branch. In addition to that we have these extra sums for Rideau Hall. Surely, Mr. Chairman, it is time that parliament seriously faced its duty here and insisted that the government should curtail these extravagances. If the Prime Minister had come to parliament this session and asked for half a million dollars to proceed with the general scheme of development of this capital city, I do not think there would have been any very great objection; but he actually asks for four or five million dollars, with no assurance whatever that this will be the end of the expenditure. This, I submit, is carrying the matter altogether too far.

It may seem almost ridiculous to drop from four or five million dollars down to eight thousand dollars, but after all eight thousand dollars is a considerable sum. The minister gets eight thousand dollars for the buildings which are included in the purchase price of the property, and I have no doubt that they were valued at a hundred thousand dollars. Will the minister tell us? I venture to say that that is about the figure. He sells the buildings for eight thousand dollars. If I am wrong the minister will correct me, for undoubtedly he has the particulars. Not only is there this great sacrifice, but the contractor who clears away the buildings leaves hundreds of tons of debris on the site, and we are now paying seven hundred dollars to clear off that debris. Then he is going to spend thirty thousands dollars or thereabouts to improve the property.

Another complaint I have is that the vote as it appears in the estimates is entirely misleading. It reads:

Ottawa post office—addition.

Mr. ELLIOTT: My hon. friend is wrong. He is referring to the item above:

Ottawa—improvement of square west of post office.

Mr. STEVENS: That is right. But there is another item "Ottawa post office—addition—\$30,000" right below that. I forgot to include this vote. This too must go into the beautification scheme?

Mr. ELLIOTT: When we reach the item I will give the particulars.