

gan post office and which amounts to about \$2,000, the excise branch collects from this municipality many thousands of dollars yearly. I wish to further add that in this public building to be used as a post office, some space also will be occupied by the Customs and Excise department.

I may say that the revenue from this building for the government of Canada should be about \$10,000 or \$12,000 a year.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I did not ask the hon. gentleman what the revenue was, although he appears to know more about it than the minister. I should like to get a reply from the minister.

Mr. SEGUIN: There is an excise office in this same building; the revenue from the post office only has been given. The total revenue would come from both excise and post office.

Mr. CHAPLIN: In view of the report that was made by the customs commission regarding the desirability of doing away with customs houses in a great many outlying places, what does the minister say about this expenditure?

Mr. LAPOINTE: This is excise. It is in a tobacco district.

Mr. SEGUIN: This place produced more tobacco than the whole of the rest of the province of Quebec.

Mr. CHAPLIN: If the revenue is only \$12,000 and they produce more tobacco than all the rest of the province of Quebec, I ask the minister whether it is necessary to have a building of this extent and cost in a village of that kind?

Mr. ELLIOTT: In the opinion of the minister it is necessary or it would not be in the estimates. The item is not new. It was inserted in the estimates for 1914-15 and carried until 1917-18, when it was dropped on account of war conditions. Under both governments apparently it was thought to be necessary or it would not have been placed in the estimates.

Mr. CHAPLIN: There are hundreds of just such cases throughout the country.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Not where conditions are as they are in this case. The site was purchased years ago, the government committed to the work, and it was considered advisable and necessary to make the expenditure.

[Mr. Seguin.]

Mr. LUCAS: What are the conditions peculiar to this place, apart from the population and the revenue that have been given, that make a public building of this character necessary?

Mr. ELLIOTT: There is no other accommodation available that is suitable for the needs of the public. That is the main consideration, and apparently governments of both political complexions have for years thought it desirable to erect a building there. We could not get properly housed in anything that was available and we felt we should erect a building of our own.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): This building is evidently not being erected for post office purposes, because it is inconceivable that the government would spend money to put up a post office in a place where the post office revenue is only \$2,100, while there are throughout the country hundreds of places where the revenue is three, five and ten times that amount and there is no accommodation at all. Therefore we must consider that it is being erected on account of the excise collected on tobacco grown in that particular district. It seems to me that if we take the revenue into consideration the estimate is greater than is warranted. I believe millions upon millions of dollars of the money of Canada have been wrongfully expended on public buildings of this kind; scores and hundreds of buildings have been erected in this or that constituency at a cost of two, three, four, or five times the amount really required to meet the needs of the people concerned. Why? Because an individual has had sufficient pull with the government. For years the question has been not of what is required but of to what extent the political favourites of the government can pull the leg of the minister and for how much money. In many cases throughout Canada, therefore, we have post office buildings erected at a cost of \$50,000 or \$100,000 where one costing half that amount would amply fulfil the needs of the district. Since I have been in parliament there has not been any system based on population and revenue to guide governments in the erection of public buildings; consequently in many places buildings have been erected at entirely too high a cost, while in others the people have received no consideration whatever and cannot secure the much needed accommodation. The minister says that the site for this building was purchased years ago. There are many hon. members who can tell him a similar story and who can point to sites that were bought before the war. Nevertheless through