

upon them conditions which are onerous and, in fact, unnecessary, and I would simply counsel in this matter the consideration of all the circumstances attending this fire, and a recognition of the fact that the fire did not originate in the lumber district, that the lumber interests were in no wise responsible for it, that it originated in a town of board houses and shanties and had made the progress of over a mile before it reached a single lumber establishment. The primary cause of the difficulty is the character of the buildings erected, and if we are to have adequate protection against fire, we need regulation of building.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (East York). It seems to have come to a question whether the parliament of Canada shall have its seat here or whether this city shall be the seat of a great lumber industry. This parliament House and the departmental buildings have been jeopardized several times by these fires. I cordially agree with what has been said by previous speakers as to the necessity of the twin cities changing their by-laws with regard to the character of buildings to be constructed. If a change is not made, if these lumber piles are restored and these small pine houses rebuilt, this capital is liable almost any time to a disaster similar to that which has occurred. I think it is the duty of parliament, and I think it is well within our power, to intimate to these cities that they must adopt building laws such as prevail in the other cities of Canada. And, as to the leases in connection with the water privileges, a clause could well be inserted, that there must be no piling grounds within the city. While it is true that the power must be generated at the river side, the saw-mills and piling grounds might as well be several miles away. In that way we should, probably, be saved a repetition of this disaster. I hope that the House will see to it that Hull and Ottawa shall adopt such a system as is in use in other cities.

The PRIME MINISTER. My hon. friend from York, N.B., (Mr. Foster) has brought to the attention of the House a subject which may well engage its attention, and in the remarks he has made has strongly voiced the thought which must have occurred to every man resident in the city of Ottawa. I am sorry to say, however, that, in my judgment, we have not all the powers that my hon. friend seems to think we have. But, in the first place, even if we had these powers, the object of the vote we are asking parliament now to make is to afford immediate relief to the sufferers. That is the point to be attended to. There are men, women and children to be fed and clothed, and this ought to be done without any condition whatever. But, when we have done so, it will be only proper that we should call the attention of the municipal authorities to what comes within their domain

Mr. CHARLTON.

rather than ours. With regard to the character of the houses built in the cities of Hull and Ottawa, my hon. friend knows that we have no power over this subject, it is altogether in the power of the municipalities. We can make remonstrances, we can call the attention of the municipal authorities to the fact that they should take extra precautions in this city. We can do this, because we, representing the capital of the nation, have the right to speak not only for the citizens of Ottawa, but for the citizens of Canada, and to ask that extra precautions be taken in order to preserve the cities from a repetition of the calamities to which they have been subjected in the past, an example of which we have just had, and from the danger of which we are not altogether free. I do not think that we have the power which my hon. friend from York seemed to think resided in the government with regard to the leases. If we have any leases to make, we can impose such conditions as we choose: but, with regard to the existing leases, they are not put an end to by the calamity which has taken place, or by the fact that the buildings which were constructed to carry into effect the powers given by the leases have been destroyed. The owners can build again and build under the same conditions under which the leases were granted. In that case also, we can only make remonstrances. But, I believe my hon. friend from York has voiced the sentiment of the people of Ottawa and of the nation at large, that we ought to make the use of these fine water powers as free from danger as possible. I agree in this respect with every word he has spoken. These lumber piles must, of necessity, be a source of continual danger to the city, and if it be possible to induce the lumbermen, who are just as much interested as we are, to remove their lumber piles to a distance from the city, I think we shall have done a good act. This great calamity will have one redeeming feature if our people learn from it the lesson of protecting the city against the danger which has threatened us in the past. But, so far as my information goes, we have only the power to remonstrate, we cannot demand; but we shall not fail to call the attention of all parties interested to this important subject.

Mr. MACLEAN. If the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) will pardon me, he may go a great deal further. He can intimate that this House of parliament will not be justified in expending further sums for public buildings here unless there are reasonable laws regulating building within the city limits. An intimation of that kind given to the city of Ottawa would bear good fruit.

Public buildings, Quebec—Hull P.O. to be rebuilt \$20,000

Mr. FOSTER. May I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), or the acting Min-