

that case, and the building had finally been erected as part of a different scheme from that contemplated by Mr. Sandfield Macdonald. They had based their calculation upon the cubic space of the building to be erected, and they had placed the cost per foot of this cubic space at 15 cents per foot. The buildings that were projected in 1853 were estimated at about three pence one farthing per foot, but in 1856-7, when that came to be revised by architects of the Public Works Department, the estimate was doubled and made equal to about 13 cents. In placing the estimate at 15 cents they had made comparison with the cost of several public buildings, which had lately been erected in the city. He had taken the trouble to ascertain the cost of some of those buildings, and while they were much more ornate and costly than the style of building proposed to be erected for the Province, they were found in almost every case to have cost less than the Government estimated. The building lately erected on the corner of Toronto and Court streets cost only 13 cents per foot. The new building on the corner of Scott and Front streets had two fronts of cut stone, and it only cost 10½ cents per foot. The Dominion Bank also, with all its ornamentation, only cost 10½ cents. The building on the corner of Wellington and Scott streets, supposed to be the handsomest in the city, only cost, with its brown stone front, 16 cents. The Hamilton Court House, a new building recently put up, and a building much more expensive than the one proposed, cost only 14 cents, and the Mail building only cost 6 cents. The Government did not intend to exceed to any appreciable extent the expenditure of \$500,000, and if they found that the buildings would cost anything like \$50,000 more they did not intend to go beyond the sanction of the House and make the additional outlay without authority. The Government proposed to erect the new buildings without requiring that the Province would have one dollar more invested in Provincial buildings than it had at present. As to the value of the block of land upon which the buildings are at present situated, the Public Works Department in 1873 valued the land at \$300,000. Then he had the opinion of the Assessment Commissioner of the city, a gentleman whose large experience would entitle his opinion to great weight. Mr. Maughan valued the 957 feet on Front-street, running back to the middle of the block, at \$150 per foot, and the same frontage on Wellington-street at \$100 per foot, making in all \$239,250 as its value, and he said in his letter "this is a moderate valuation." He had the opinion of another gentleman, whose name he was not permitted to give, to the effect that if the Government cared to hold to the land they would realize not less than \$500,000 for it. (Applause.) His hon. friend would probably not dispute the opinion of Ald. Close, one of the largest speculators in the city. He placed the present value of the front at \$175 per foot, and that on Wellington-street at \$125, making in all \$237,000 for the block, and he said, "Of course, if laid out in small lots it would realize much more." The opinion of Mr. McMurray had also been obtained, to the effect that the land would bring at present \$263,175. The opinions of these three independent gentlemen of the city, all of them gentlemen of experience and judgment, were entitled to be believed by the House. Supposing that the present value of the land were placed at \$200,000, then add to that the value of the eighty acres in the western part of the city at \$2,000 per acre, there would be \$360,000, and the position would be that the Province would only be asked to pay out of its exchequer the sum of \$140,000 for these new Departmental buildings. (Applause.) In view of these facts, the Government might well ask the House—when it had become necessary that one of two things had to be done—to assent to a proposition that would involve at the very worst a no larger expenditure than that. It had been said by an eminent writer that this action would tend to perpetuate in this country Federal union as against legislative union. He had only to add that if that were to be the

result, that the erection of new Provincial buildings would have this tendency, he thought the money would be well expended, even if it should cost the whole of the half million of dollars. (Applause and cheers.)

Mr. MEREDITH regretted that the Government had not brought the matter before the House at an earlier stage of the session. When the subject was brought before the House in 1873 by the then member for West Elgin, it was found that a number of gentlemen, including the Attorney-General, were opposed to any action at that time. He believed that if the Government had told the country in the last election of their purpose in reference to the new buildings they would not have received the support of the country. As to the financial position of the country, he claimed that almost the whole amount which was claimed as surplus was pledged on account of railways. For the past three years there had been annual deficits, and the deficit this year over the expenditure asked for public buildings cannot be less than \$125,000. In view of these facts, in view of the large sum to be taken out of the surplus for the purpose of satisfying its liability to railways, and the fact that grants would have to be given to other railways, he contended that the financial position of the Province was not such as to warrant the expenditure asked for unless it was absolutely necessary and in the public interest. In reference to the arguments adduced by the Commissioner of Public Works he was glad that they had not heard the argument that the health of the members absolutely required the erection of the buildings. The hon. gentleman's statements as to the expenditures for repairs on the Government buildings last year was entirely misleading. In the Accounts it would be seen that the expenditures for repairs in 1876 amounted to \$3,343 21. In 1877, \$3,139 14; 1879, \$22,536 01, or three times in the last year what it actually was. Then with the Government House. It was a well-built house, but the expenditure for repairs had been in 1876 \$7,444 16; in 1877, \$3,830 05; in 1878, \$2,777 85; and in 1879, \$3,841 33. Now, any argument attempted to be drawn from such a comparison would certainly fail to have any effect. Such a statement should not have been allowed in the Public Accounts. In 1867, the system of the Provincial Government under Mr. Sandfield Macdonald had been one of economy. They had expended large sums in repairs, and certainly the parallel was not a fair one. In 1873 the House had come to the conclusion that the buildings were not unfit for the keeping of the public documents; \$125,000 had been asked for in 1873 for the building of a wing. This had been reduced to \$25,000 for the building of a fire-proof vault. The position taken then favoured the position taken by the Opposition. The sum was thought sufficient to build a fire-proof wing in the western town line limits, and he was quite certain that it was sufficient now. The hon. gentlemen seemed to think that the present buildings were entirely unfit for the use of the legislators. He ventured to say that the electors, if they had an opportunity to express an opinion, would not endorse that. They might say that if the buildings were needed, and could be erected for a reasonable sum, that it would not be a disadvantage. The position taken by the hon. gentleman that the present buildings were not convenient to one another, and that they were isolated, would go to the country and would mislead. The buildings were just as convenient as those now in use in Ottawa. (Cheers.) The argument had been used that it was necessary to erect new buildings to protect the documents of the Crown Lands Department. He did not for a moment contend that there were no valuable documents, but he did contend that there were a large number of documents in the vaults which were rubbish, and that much more had been made of the argument than there was really in it. (Cheers.) Under the position taken by the Government, there was either one of two things. Either they were magnifying the dangers greatly, or the Government had been guilty of doing that for seven long years