

A GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON A BETTER SCALE

Official Tells How Original Estimate Was Just Doubled

Giving evidence before the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislature yesterday, Mr. R. P. Fairbairn, Deputy Minister of Public Works, in answer to Mr. C. M. Bowman and Mr. H. Hartley Dewart regarding the greatly exceeded cost of Government House over the estimate of \$400,000 for building and site in 1912, stated that there was no material change in the plans so far as construction was concerned, but the details of construction had been carried out in a better way than contemplated. The details were not worked out at the time the estimate was given in 1912.

Mr. Dewart—Well, was it a guess?

Mr. Fairbairn—It was not a guess. It was an estimate prepared to answer a question in the House in a reasonable time, based on the architect's knowledge of what buildings of that character usually cost. The detail was not worked out.

Mr. Dewart—The expenditure has doubled.

Mr. Fairbairn—It is a common experience in undertaking buildings. (Laughter.)

Government House Phones.

Coming to the matter of telephones at Government House, Mr. Dewart asked if it cost \$1,839 to install a switchboard for fourteen telephones.

Mr. Fairbairn—The switchboard and the wiring and everything that goes into the construction of the telephone equipment in Government House.

Mr. Dewart—By fourteen telephones do you mean separate lines or just fourteen receivers?

Mr. Fairbairn—There will be fourteen instruments in use in the house, the greenhouse, the garage, and lodge. All that is a capital expenditure, and in that way the cost of the instruments themselves is small. The annual maintenance is small.

Mr. Dewart—What is the service charge made by the Bell Telephone Company for the fourteen telephones annually?

Mr. Fairbairn—\$320.

For what Mr. Dewart called the "electrical display," and which Mr. Fairbairn said included wiring and fixtures, it was brought out the items totalled \$15,000.

In reply to Mr. Sinclair (South Oxford), who asked the question in justice to the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Fairbairn stated that the item of \$684 for cut flowers in the Public Accounts had nothing to do with cut flowers. The entry was there on account of an error made by one of the clerks in the Treasury Department. The item referred to was for bulbs, shrubs, grass seed, etc.

Mr. Bowman—How would he get "cut flowers" into his mind?

Mr. Fairbairn—I don't know. There has not been a single cut flower paid for at Government House.

COMPENSATION ACT BURDEN TO HOSPITALS

Delegation to Government Asking Increased Assistance Points This Out

A representative deputation from the hospitals of the Province yesterday asked the Provincial Government for increased assistance. Dr. Langrell, Hamilton, presented a resolution which had been passed asking the Government to increase its grant for free patients from 20 cents a day to 40 cents and that the hospitals should be empowered to collect from the municipalities by way of a debt of \$1.50 a day for indigent patients instead of \$1 a day as at present.

Mr. W. E. Rundle, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Toronto General Hospital, gave statistics to show that Government grants in the Province had not increased in the last 21 years. On the other hand the cost of maintaining patients had risen from 72 cents a day to between \$1.70 and \$1.80 a day. The number of "hospital days" in the Province had increased from half a million to two and a half millions in that time. The increase in expenditures was more than fourfold.

Workmen's Compensation a Hardship

Mr. J. L. Chabot, Ottawa, representing the Ottawa General Hospital, said the workmen's compensation act worked a real hardship on the hospitals. The loss in this way had been serious.

Mr. Goodwin, New Liskeard, and Mr. P. J. Mugan, London, also spoke.

Premier Hearst promised careful consideration of the representations made by the deputation. With reference to Mr. Goodwin's plea for special consideration for the northern hospitals, he thought that justice demanded that the Government should step in and do something. The matter of added burden under the workmen's compensation act was being taken up on the application of the doctors with regard to first aid legislation.