

tural community. It would have the effect of bringing them in daily contact with the outer world, and in that way counteract the desire on the part of the young people to leave the farm and seek their living in the cities, which is certainly one of the great drawbacks to our country's advancement. In this connection it seems to me that hon. gentlemen on this side are levelling their criticisms at the wrong man. The member of the government who should be taken to task is the Minister of Finance. I have had a little experience in these matters, and I know that the man you must go to, when you want a post office built, is the Minister of Finance. Go to the Department of Public Works and you will be sent to the Finance Minister to see if you cannot get his consent to the necessary expenditure. After you have procured that consent, the Minister of Public Works is always delighted to let you have the building. Therefore, I think that the hon. Minister of Public Works has been called upon to stand entirely too much this evening, and I am surprised that the man who is really responsible has not shown up and endeavoured to shield his colleague from what he has undoubtedly brought upon his head. I would ask my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Maclean) if he would not in his motion, reduce the population in towns in which post offices should be erected from 3,000 to 2,000?

Mr. MACLEAN. I am quite willing to accept that amendment.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I am delighted to learn that the Minister of Finance is all-powerful. We all like to have our offices magnified, and I have no desire to deny the soft impeachment. The question of rural mail delivery is a most important one, so important that it is a pity to see it treated in the way it is to-night. It does not seem to occur to my hon. friend from East York, that one might be strongly in favour of rural post office delivery without at all opposing the building of a post office at Bowmanville. The two questions do not hang together at all. The question of rural mail delivery is one involving a large expenditure of public money, which must be dealt with by the Postmaster General, who has administered so successfully the Post Office Department, and if my hon. colleague is able to take a step further and give us rural mail delivery we shall be very much pleased, but we would not be advancing that project by voting for any such motion as this. It is quite possible that some hon. members may be of the opinion that it is a good thing to give Bowmanville a post office, and if so why should they not support this item and still favour a rural mail delivery system. If rural mail delivery can be obtained for the money spent annually on the small class of public buildings provided for post offices, or if it could be accomplished for six times the money

Mr. BOYD.

these would cost, there would be no difficulty in the matter. But there can be no good purpose served by confounding two things which are entirely separate, and I hope the House will see the unwisdom of the course taken by my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Maclean), if the hon. gentleman does not see it himself.

Mr. BROCK. Hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches have themselves to blame for this debate. If the hon. Minister of Finance had devoted his great ability to answering the fair question put by the hon. leader of the opposition, as to what principle the government were going on in connection with the expenditure of public money in erecting post offices, we would not have had this discussion. What we want to know is what principle they are acting on, or if they are acting on any principle. As regards the spending of \$15,000 on a post office at Bowmanville, I am not opposing that particular vote.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. My hon. friend is opposing it in supporting this motion.

Mr. BROCK. I am speaking on the question of principle. I am not opposing the erection of a building, but I am insisting on our having a declaration as to the principle or policy upon which the government base this expenditure. No doubt the support of the hon. gentlemen sitting behind the Finance Minister is strong enough to vote down this proposition of rural mail delivery.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Mr. BROCK. But I tell the government that they are making a mistake in not acceding to the very reasonable request made by the hon. leader of the opposition that they should state to the House and the country upon what principle they are spending this money in erecting post offices here and there throughout the country.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I would call the attention of the Committee to the nature of the amendment. In my opinion it is not in order, because it asks the Committee to report upon a subject which has not been referred to it at all. Therefore it is quite irrelevant to the matter under discussion and in my opinion is out of order.

Mr. INGRAM. As other hon. gentlemen have been allowed to discuss the question, perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words. The hon. member for East York has made a motion dealing with rural mail delivery. While I am prepared to support that and believe it is a step in the right direction, yet there is another phase of free delivery which should not be overlooked. We have small cities and large towns in Ontario, which pay a good revenue to the Post Office Department. Many large manufacturing concerns are located in these places