

I shall be called upon to make. The people in the west will want to know what principle is followed in these matters. The minister has told us that he has drawn the line sharply between those for which tenders had been called and those for which tenders had not been called. But, in the case of Vernon, he departed from that position. In my humble opinion—and I suppose I should speak with some diffidence as a new member—this part of our public affairs seems to be in great confusion. I must say I sympathize with the Minister of Public Works. It seems to me that, in a case of post office construction the Postmaster General should accept the responsibility, and the Minister of Public Works should not be constantly badgered and criticised and asked for information which he is not always in a position to give. The same is true in relation to the Minister of Militia. A short time ago a question came up concerning the construction of a public building, which, in the ordinary course of procedure was referred to the Minister of Public Works. But that hon. gentleman was not able to answer many of the questions, because the matter related to the Militia Department. It seems to me that, while the book-keeping could be arranged between the departments, the responsible minister of the department for which the building is to be constructed should answer the objections and meet the criticism arising in connection with the matter. The minister, when he was meeting the objections raised about enormous sums being expended in small constituencies, made the remark that sometimes a member representing that constituency would come up and urge very vigorously that this public work should be given, and so he got it.

Mr. PUGSLEY. Would my hon. friend pardon me? I think he is mistaken. When I used that expression it was in reference to some of the plans being prepared at an earlier stage than others, and sometimes the minister urged that those plans should be prepared somewhat more speedily.

Mr. BURRELL. I am glad to accept the minister's assurance. At all events, we know as a matter of fact that these things are very often done under our present political system. We know that the urgency of a member who has the ear of the government bears direct results by the construction of certain works in his constituency that he would not get otherwise. I submit that that principle is fundamentally vicious. If other things are equal, or nearly so, we can understand that under our present political system a government is naturally inclined to favour its political friends, I presume all governments would do that. But the indiscriminate—because there is no other word to be used—the indiscriminate

Mr. BURRELL.

expenditure for public buildings in small towns simply amounts to a waste of money, it is certainly a subversion of the public interest, it is a deplorable extravagance and absolutely destructive of good government. I think I appreciate as well as any one else the position of the minister, that is, I appreciate the fact that we have a stringency in our finances at the present time. I am aware that in the whole of the debate that took place a week or two ago there was a lot of thrust and parry, and sometimes the minister came out on top, and sometimes he came out second best. But what the people of this country want, I think, is that their legitimate needs should be attended to, whether in respect of the Post Office Department or of any other department. They want the legitimate needs of the country attended to. They want post offices where they are necessary, and then they chiefly want better mail facilities all over the scattered portions of the country, where, although the people are isolated, they are engaged in adding to the prosperity of the country. In my own riding there are districts where the people actually only get a mail four times a year, and they are pleading hard with the government to get at least a monthly mail. I think when these things can be said, when these things exist, there should be a recognition of legitimate needs before there is such a tremendous expenditure of money in places where the needs are very much less. Now take the case of my own town. I am making no clamour for a post office, because I am willing to admit this, that if the country is in straightened financial circumstances, the fact should be recognized, and I think Canadians as a whole are willing to recognize it. They may disagree as to the causes thereof, but they are willing to recognize the fact, and at all events are not disposed to urge upon the government the expenditure of money unnecessarily, we ought all to agree with that. But we do feel this, and feel it very strongly, I know the people feel it throughout my own constituency, they will feel a just resentment when they find that these large sums of money are spent in small places absolutely without necessity, and they have the mortification of seeing their own crying needs utterly neglected. I want to give an illustration. How can I explain to my constituents that their legitimate needs are turned down when I have at the same time to tell them that the government has spent \$7,000 on each one of a number of houses at Kingston for drill instructors and gunners, while the servants are getting about \$460 a year; and when I find that a million dollars is being expended on a canal which, if I am to believe some of my hon. friends, has not sufficient water to operate it. We had a little while ago a resolution proposed by the hon. member for Lincoln