

Parliament. Surely this House when asked to sanction the expenditure of money should be informed of the reasons why they were so asked, or otherwise they should withhold that sanction. I have listened to the remarks of the Minister of Public Works and the other gentlemen supporting him, but I have not heard one of them attempt to justify this expenditure in any way. The fact of the matter is, that it is simply scandalous and indefensible. Just look at the nature of this proposition. Here is the small town of Laprairie, a place which I know well as I have walked its streets and have noticed the absence of all business there; it is a small place which the report of the Postmaster General shows returns a revenue of only \$433.16 a year, and yet the Government of Canada propose to erect public buildings there costing \$16,000. It does not matter to me whether this vote was proposed yesterday or three or four years ago. It is sufficient for me to know that it was proposed by this Government, and that this House is now asked to sanction the expenditure. I would ask what evidence is there here that the Government is going to reform in that respect? Why, Sir, for the last few days, we have been considering item after item, in the same line of extravagance and waste of money. There was an appropriation passed here for a public building at Dartmouth, a small place with a revenue of \$2,000, and yet \$20,000 is to be expended on buildings there. In Lunenburg, a place which is equalled in size and importance by at least forty places in Ontario which have no public buildings, the Government propose to erect buildings costing \$16,000. If we look down through the estimates which have yet to be considered, we further find that the confidence expressed by the hon. member from Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) is not well founded. Let us examine upon what principle \$16,000 is to be expended in the small town of Laprairie, an old town which has really no future before it, and even if it were likely to develop, this money should not be asked for until it was required. Let us take the County of Essex, the south riding of which I have the honour to represent, and we have there ten or eleven towns with four or five times the revenue of Laprairie, and yet they have no public buildings. Here are some of them:

	Postal Revenue.
Kingsville	\$1,554 40
Leamington	2,612 18
Sandwich	723 65
Walkerville.....	2,217 20
Essex Centre.....	2,936 12
Cumher	1,106 46
Tilbury	1,568 42
Bell River	495 54
Amherstburg	2,001 02

Amherstburg has been supplied with a post office, but Essex Centre, with an annual postal revenue of nearly \$3,000, has been left without accommodation. We in Essex County have not complained very much, and we are not disposed to clamour very much for Government favours, except upon an equitable basis, but I would like to know upon what principles these appropriations are made? What we ask is, that some general well-defined rule should be established in this matter, or rather that the rule which has been adopted by the House should be faithfully carried out. By what sort of influence was this vote obtained by the town of Laprairie? Clearly

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it was done for the purpose of securing a Government supporter for that county; and if we look from one end of this country to the other we see that this Government is abusing its power and its patronage in the same way to further its own ends. It is a post office here or a railway there. What were the influences against which I had to contend at the last election in the south riding of Essex? The Government had erected, as I stated, a post office at the town of Amherstburg, and the candidate who was then opposing me claimed that as a reason for returning him, and he shouted at the top of his voice at one of the public meetings: "Vote for the party that gave you a post office." But that was not sufficient, and again before the people of Amherstburg was dangled the promise of their obtaining a dry dock at a cost of an immense sum of money. The whole town was decorated with streamers, and the fences and buildings were placarded with the motto "Vote for Wigle and a Dry Dock at Amherstburg." What was the cry raised in the town of Essex Centre in which I live? On the very same platform with myself, for we held joint meetings, Mr. Wigle stated to the electors of Essex: "Return me to Parliament, and I will guarantee to secure an appropriation that will get you the Canadian Pacific Railway to Essex Centre." What was the case in the town of Leamington, where Mr. Wigle lives? Why, Sir, he stated on the platform that he would secure the building of a breakwater there, and he pledged himself to do it if he were returned to Parliament. It may be true that the Government is not responsible for all these promises. At the opening of the first session of this Parliament I took occasion to enquire what there was in the dry dock scheme, and I found that it was a local matter, boomed by local parties solely for political purposes; but what I want to point out is that this system of distributing patronage is debauching the public mind in this country. If we figure up the promises made by the Government, some of them fulfilled and others unfulfilled, and the promises made by their supporters throughout the different constituencies, we would find that, to carry them into effect, it would cost an enormous amount of money. In addition to all these promises of public works in the south riding of Essex we had the influences of the Red Parlour brought to bear at the last moment, and my hon. friend the Minister of Militia will recollect a little by-play in Pelee Island in which he figured so illustriously. These were the influences that were at work in my constituency, and these are the influences at work in nearly every constituency in Canada. Hon. gentlemen can rise in their places and speak about how the patronage of this country has been distributed, but, Sir, in the recent election in Welland, as well as in West Northumberland, what was the cry raised by hon. gentlemen opposite, as I can show by reading an extract from a Cobourg paper? The only hope they had of carrying the county was by appealing to the personal interests of the people in that town. After referring to the merits of the present member for West Northumberland (Mr. Guillet), the paper says:

"But in view of the present strong position of the Government we are more concerned about the future of our own locality, and the effect which the result of the present contest will have upon our town in particular. This being the county town and the largest centre of population in the riding, it is but natural to assume that what will benefit