

from Longueuil, opposite Montreal, and has nothing to do with it. As to railway communication: the railway, unfortunately, is in very bad order and is not running. But even if there is a railway, the argument that a railway is a proper bond of union between the County of Verchères and Richelieu, especially when we shall have to depend upon a railway bridge, which is not and is not likely to be built, to cross the river at certain seasons, to reach Sorel, is a very poor argument, and the Administration must be cornered to be compelled to use it.

Mr. LAURIER. Is there a bridge at Sorel?

Mr. GEOFFRION. There is not; but there will be if the Government will give the money. We cross the river on a scow. I call the attention of the Administration to this fact. It is well known that Verchères was represented for several years by Sir George E. Cartier. He was born and brought up there, and his family resided there. But it was never proposed to take Verchères into Sorel. When Montreal district was divided for the purpose of creating divisions for the Upper House, Verchères was joined with Chambly and Laprairie, not with Sorel. I would be willing to submit this matter to a vote of the Conservatives in Verchères, for I am satisfied that a majority would vote against the proposal contained in this Bill. It may be favoured by some people who would say: "We will get rid of Geoffrion." I have heard this remark, and even some gentlemen here have told me of it. If this change is proposed to get rid of me, I am quite willing to save my constituents from that injustice by retiring from public life and allow the people of Verchères to elect a successor. I cannot understand what excuse can be offered for the proposed change, and on what principle it is done, for it is truly without reason.

Mr. BRODEUR. Rouville is now surrounded by five counties: Chambly, St. Hyacinthe, Bagot, Verchères and Iberville. Those five constituencies with Rouville are represented on the floor of this House by five Liberals and one Conservative. It is proposed, without any reason, to wipe out two Liberal constituencies, and with the four others to make three Conservative and one Liberal. I ask if that is a fair redistribution scheme? I understand that the object of the Government is to find one constituency which is to be given to Montreal. By the proposition made by the leader of the Opposition, we might arrive at that, because by uniting Verchères and Chambly we would have the extra constituency required for Montreal. Why does not the Government accept that proposition? It is true that the Liberals will lose one member by the union of these two constituencies, but we are ready to lose him because the Government will not give us fair and equitable justice. I will go further than that, and I will prove that the object of the Government by that gerrymander of Rouville is to make three or four more seats for themselves. I say further to the Minister of Public Works, that the object of gerrymandering Chambly is to give to his partner a constituency which he cannot get otherwise. In order to have his partner a member of this House, that is the only reason why Chambly will have to go to Rouville to get some Conservative parishes. I think, however, that these Conservative parishes which they will take from Rouville will not allow themselves to be treated in that way,

and I have many complaints from them against that proposition.

Mr. OUMET. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to tell him that what he is saying now is certainly a mistake? Not that I say that he willingly states what is untrue. I say that if my partner had been willing to enter into public life, he would be to-day a member in the Local Legislature, but my hon. friend knows that my partner has more sense than that. It is enough for one partner in the firm to be in public life, and if we want to get anything in the world, we must preserve our office as it is. I tell the hon. gentleman that it is not correct to state that the division was for my partner or for anybody else.

Mr. BRODEUR. Then for what reason is Chambly gerrymandered, and why do you propose to make it a Conservative constituency, if it is not for that reason? We propose to give you the extra seat for Montreal by uniting Verchères and Chambly, and I do not see why you should go across the river to take Conservative parishes from Rouville unless you want to make Chambly a safe Conservative constituency. I believe that there is another reason for this gerrymander. The hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont) is not satisfied with his county as it is now. He knows that the sentiment of his county for the last two years is against the political opinions which he has expressed on the floor of this House, and one of the objects of the gerrymander is to increase the majority of the hon. member for Bagot. Is it fair or just to make three Conservative constituencies and one Liberal constituency out of five Liberal constituencies as they are at present? The Government must know that there is no communication at all between Chambly and the other part of Rouville. Until some years ago there was a bridge over the rapid—because the river at that place is a rapid—but that bridge has been burned and now there is no connection at all between the two counties. If the Government were ready to give some money for building a bridge there I suppose there would be a reason in favour of the proposition, but as the Government does not propose such a thing I understand that the change is made only in order to give the Conservative party three or four more members than they could otherwise get.

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) The Liberals, who were sent here by a minority of the popular vote in the Province of Quebec, Mr. Chairman, would like the privilege of dictating what shall be done in this House. It is a thing that has already happened to them to govern with a minority in the country and a majority in the House. The Chambly River is spoken of as an insuperable obstacle. I cannot understand the horror of my hon. friends of the left for water and rivers in general. It has just been shown to the House that the present County of Richelieu is crossed by a river, and nobody that I know complained of that; nobody found fault with the fact that Richelieu is crossed by a river. It is said that at Belœil there is only the railroad bridge which affords any communication with the opposite shore. Then, how is it that every day the Belœil people go to St. Hilaire? If you go there, Mr. Chairman, you will any day see the citizens of St. Hilaire and Belœil together talking over their interests, in fact having constant and regular