

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) The Government never does anything out of consideration for a member. That is well known.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. (Translation.) Then you do not claim any merit in the matter?

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) I never said that it was owing only to my intervention that the town of St. Hyacinthe was endowed with public buildings. It is true that I made efforts in that direction, but it was because I was one of the members for the district of St. Hyacinthe.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. (Translation.) Then you claim no more merit about it than the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe?

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) It is not my habit to boast of what I do for the country. My electors understand what the Government do for their county.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. (Translation.) In that case it is to be supposed that the electors were not intelligent enough to understand, for the hon. member for Bagot thought himself obliged to state repeatedly in public that it was thanks to him that the town of St. Hyacinthe had had public buildings, and that it would never have had them without him. I am very happy to hear him state that he has no more merit than another about it.

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) I have stated in public what I have said to-night, and not what the hon. member pretends.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. (Translation.) Very well; I accept your retraction.

Mr. LEGRIS. (Translation.) The hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont) just said that the Government's ground for the granting of public buildings was the importance of the localities. Of course it must be that. It is the only plausible reason offered by the hon. member for Bagot. Apart from that he read a lecture to the members of the Opposition, but he did not give a single reason to justify such a large expenditure as the Government propose to incur for the building of that post office at Laprairie. The hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) condemned this expenditure. We occasionally hear the hon. gentleman express views contrary to those of the Government and to their measures. We know that his views well belong to him, but we know also that his vote belongs to his party. The hon. Minister of Public Works gave us a few words this evening, but he failed to give any reason to justify such an expenditure as that which is required for Laprairie. The hon. member for Laprairie in his turn sang the praises of his village, but he, also, failed to justify such an expenditure. He tried to make us believe that the population of Laprairie is great. He quoted figures, but those figures are not correct. He told us that the population was 4,000; now, I find in the census that the population of the village and the parish of Laprairie is 2,820 souls.

Mr. OUMET. (Translation.) Does this include the parish?

Mr. LEGRIS. (Translation.) The parish has a population of 1,574, and the village 1,246, which gives a total of 2,820. The hon. member also spoke of the railways which cross the locality. He spoke of educational establishments, of the

great military displays which take place there in summer time. Well, with all these advantages, it is really surprising that the village of Laprairie has not progressed. On the contrary it has decreased. Here is the proof: The census of 1881 gave the parish and village of Laprairie a population of 3,181 souls. The decrease has therefore been 361 souls during the decade. Such figures are not such as to warrant the Government incurring an expenditure of \$16,000 for a public building at the place. The revenue of the Laprairie post office, which amounts to \$433.16, has been spoken of several times this evening. Of this sum the postmaster receives \$215, and there is left a net receipt of \$218 for the department. A very large number of post offices give a larger revenue than this in the Province of Quebec. It seems to me that the Government would be much more justifiable in establishing post offices where business warranted. I could mention, for instance, Louiseville, a village where I live, and where the post office revenue is \$1,300. I could still mention many other places which could justify such an expenditure much better than Laprairie. An amount of \$3,000 has been mentioned as voted for the plans and specification. This seems to me rather extraordinary. An attempt to justify this vote of \$16,000 is made by saying that \$3,000 had been voted for the preparation of the plans. It is impossible that such an item as this be allowed to pass without our raising our voices against it. It is impossible to believe that the Government on this occasion is acting in view of the general interests of the Province of Quebec. On the contrary it is evident that the Government has acted in this way towards Laprairie with the view of making secure the popularity of the present member. It is not warranted for the Government to ask the House such a large sum for the building of a post office in a small village, which notwithstanding all the advantages which the hon. member has been pleased to enumerate is decreasing in business, since it is decreasing in population. It seems to me that the Government would have acted more wisely in endowing with public buildings places where business required and warranted them. I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that Louiseville is a much more important locality than Laprairie, and if he wanted to act fairly Louiseville would get a post office before one is built at Laprairie.

Mr. ALLAN. I desire to say a few words before this item is passed. It is true, as stated by the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien), that a great deal of time has been spent on this subject, and in my judgment, Sir, the discussion that has taken place, and which should take place on such a proposal as this, ought to be of the widest possible character. The hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) states that it is the intention of the Government to reform in matters of this kind.

Mr. O'BRIEN. I made no such statement. I am not responsible for the Government.

Mr. ALLAN. I was very glad to hear that the hon. gentleman expressed such confidence in the Administration. He also stated that this was an old matter and that it had been arranged some three or four years ago, but I think that the new members of this House should be informed why this scandalous proposition was ever made to