

between \$1,200 and \$2,000 a year, why should you expend this amount for maintenance in addition to having a large debt hanging over you for the erection of a building? It is not good business to do this. In most of these places there is no provision to prevent the destruction by fire of everything belonging to the service. There is no safe, or vault or anything but the plain building. Yet, we go to the expense of erecting a building and saddling upon the country a permanent debt involving an annual charge for maintenance of three times that which would be incurred by renting a building. We have this expense imposed upon us from year to year, because the government thought fit, either to strengthen the position of their friends, or for some other purpose that we do not know, perhaps for the purpose of carrying elections, to saddle the country with a heavy permanent expense without receiving anything in return. The government ought to consider this, and I think the country ought to know what an expenditure of this kind involves. It is not a good business transaction. I am sure every one will agree with that. I can go into Ontario towns by the dozen that are larger than Alexandria, that do more business, that have a larger gross revenue from the post office and that have never yet asked to have a post office built. I think that when a principle is adopted it should be applied to the whole country instead of picking out a favoured locality here and there, a small town here and another there, and let places twice or three times as large go without the advantage of an expenditure of this kind. I do not think this is right. The government, when it puts up a large and costly building and saddles the country with a permanent expense as well as a permanent debt, when the same conveniences could be supplied by renting a building for less than one quarter the money required for erecting a building, is not doing the best that could be done for the country.

Mr. LENNOX. Mr. Chairman, before we leave this interesting subject of establishing post offices in the Dominion, I desire to call the hon. minister's attention to another deserving town. I hope I shall be able to get the minister's attention, because if I succeed in getting his attention for a few minutes, I have no doubt I will be rewarded by having an appropriation made for this town which is very much a parallel case to the case of Alexandria.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. What is the population?

Mr. LENNOX. The population is not over 1,500 or 1,600, and in this respect I regret to say that it has not increased with the rapidity of the town of Alexandria. It is a steadily growing town. They have the average number of births from time to time,

Mr. SPROULE.

but I do not think there has been such a rapid increase in the population as in the case of Alexandria. I refer, of course, to the town of Alliston, in the south riding of Simcoe. I want to be perfectly fair with the government and not take away from them any credit they are fairly entitled to. I will admit at the outset that the government have done pretty fairly for Alliston already. It is true that we have never had, in the south riding of Simcoe to my knowledge, one dollar expended on any public work. It is quite true, too, that we have never asked for the expenditure of one dollar on any public work, but the government have done something for the residents of South Simcoe and particularly of Alliston. In the neighbourhood of Alliston there resided Mr. Joseph Whitesides, a very respectable farmer and a candidate in the last election, who has been appointed postmaster of the town of Alliston, and it is on this account that I am so anxious to secure for the town of Alliston a post office. It is pretty nearly a parallel case with Alexandria. The net revenue for Alexandria is \$1,595.78 and the net revenue for Alliston is \$1,437.98. In urging this matter with all due earnestness, I call the minister's attention to the fact that this is the only way in which you can get public money into the riding of South Simcoe as far as I know. Almost any where else there are a variety of things on which you can spend public money, whether it is in the interest of the country or not, but in the riding of South Simcoe there is nothing on which you can expend public treasure except to build a post office in Alliston. It is true we have harbours; we have a little spot—I do not know if it has a name—on the south shore of Kempenfeldt Bay, which closely resembles the port of Hawkestone, on the other side, in which the government has built a dock. I have not seen my way clear to ask the government to expend any money upon a dock on the south shore, although I have been urged to do so by the way of equalizing the expenditure on the Hawkestone dock. I hope the minister will pardon me for urging this, perhaps too persistently, but having regard to the fact that the postmaster, who has been to some extent rewarded, has not all the accommodation he is entitled to; having regard to the fact—I know the minister will not overlook this—that South Simcoe has always returned a Conservative; having regard more particularly to the fact that there is no other means of expending public money in the riding; I hope the minister and the Cabinet will take this matter into their serious consideration, and will in the supplementary estimates put in an appropriation for a post office in the town of Alliston.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Before the item is adopted I hope the Minister of Public Works will state in reply to the hon. mem-