

a caretaker will be required, and thus an expense lasting for all time will be entailed upon the revenue; whereas it is very rarely the case that a suitable building cannot be rented at a very much less cost to the Government. I feel that I cannot stultify myself as I would be doing if I were to vote in support of an appropriation of this kind.

Mr. WALLACE. I regret that the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) did not include in his amendment several other places where I think the argument is just as strong or stronger.

Mr. SPROULE. We can only deal with one item at a time.

Mr. WALLACE. Well, Kentville is included in the same item. Now, with regard to Kentville the facts brought out when we were discussing the matter the other day were these: For the post office and custom-house \$215 a year have been paid in rental for suitable accommodation for these two services, and a rough estimate was made of the interest on the cost of construction, of repairs, and of maintenance, which, for the first few years, I presume, would not be very much. Then there is the cost of a caretaker, the cost of heating, lighting and cleaning, and other services which are necessary in every public building, and which my hon. friend said might not be necessary. But you will particularly remember that of all the hundreds of public buildings in the country there was only one. I think, that at Orillia, where the Government dispensed with the services of a caretaker; and the hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) was unkind enough to say that that was done for political reasons, and was a political job. Well, I do not know whether that is the case or not, but we can assume that a caretaker will be appointed here, and that, as in all other places, his salary will be paid by the Dominion Government. An estimate has been made that these services will cost \$1,500. Now, in order to save \$215 of rental, the Government wants to incur an expenditure at Kentville amounting, according to a rough estimate, it is true, but one that is likely to be as well within the mark as over the mark, to an annual expenditure of about \$1,300, which will be incurred for all time in order to give a post office and a custom-house to one of those places. I need not go over any of the arguments that have been adduced here when these items were up before, but this House should consider the statements made by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), and I think it is a complete answer to the argument of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, that in the county of Grey, with its 75,000 inhabitants, with one town of 9,000 people, and with other towns of two or three thousand inhabitants each, they have not to-day a single public building within its borders.

Mr. SCRIVER.

Yet in this county and in this town it is proposed to give a public building though the revenue will not justify it. The argument used by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries was that they were entitled to a portion of the public expenditure of this Dominion. Sir, I do not believe a more corrupting argument could be used before this House or before the people of this country, than the proposition that each locality is entitled to an expenditure of public money without regard to the requirements of that county. If a harbour requires to be opened for the safety of the public or for the promotion of commerce, there is an argument there for the expenditure of public money. If rivers require to be dredged so as to promote navigation and promote the safety of lives of people who have to travel up and down them, there is an argument for the expenditure of public money. But in this case the argument, I consider, is one which is entirely untenable. Then, Sir, we come to the next point. As has been stated by the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), the hon. member for North Brant (Mr. Somerville) and the hon. member for Huntington (Mr. Scriver), they have been preaching this doctrine while they were in Opposition. A gentleman who preached one doctrine when he was in Opposition and preached another doctrine when he is in power, is the member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey) who, this afternoon, to the surprise, and, I may say, to the disgust of every one who has heard his utterances in this House for the last eighteen years, not only denouncing the very thing he is prepared to support to-day, but denouncing the whole principle of expenditures in this direction, supported this proposition. For the last six or seven years it has been conceded that, although the Conservative Government had gone too far in the direction of putting up these public buildings, in 1890 they stopped short. At that time there was a declaration by resolution for a new policy. The Government of that day supported it; they permitted the motion to pass and bound themselves to be guided by it, and I am told that since that policy was laid down it has been very fairly adhered to. The ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) has stated that there may have been one or two departures from that rule during the last half dozen years, but no more, so that the rule that was laid down in 1890, that the revenues and the importance of the place must be sufficient to justify the erection of these buildings, has practically been the policy of the Government of Canada for the last half dozen years. To-day this proposal entirely reversed that policy. We have not only Liverpool and Kentville, but there are other and more flagrant instances in the Estimates in our hands. I would like to ask whether the St. Martin's post office has been struck out? I think it is quite right to strike it out, and that the same argument would apply to