

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I have explained as fully as I could that this vote is supplementary to the vote given last session.

Mr. SPROULE. He must have some policy with regard to putting up these public buildings.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The policy of the government is to erect these buildings where they are required, having due regard to the public interest and the revenue received.

Mr. SPROULE. If these are the rules we can only turn up the Postmaster General's report and find that they are violated in a hundred instances. So that, he is either admitting his own act, or, otherwise, is dishonouring his own rule, because, when you take places like Owen Sound, where there is a revenue of \$14,000, you find there is no post office built there, but seven years ago I was there when the present Postmaster General was dangling that question before the people of North Grey, and saying that if they wanted, as the late Mr. Hardy said, 'warm justice,' they should send a supporter of the government to parliament. He said: 'Here is a thriving town and your friends have been in power for a number of years and they have not put a public building up.' He went around and looked at two or three sites that he said would be eligible sites for a post office, yet, that town which has a revenue of \$14,000 has no post office. The hon. Minister of Public Works said last year: 'Our principle is this: If we require a post office, a custom house and an inland revenue office, we make an effort to put up one building that will accommodate the three, as we think it is better that we should have all these buildings together.' There is at Owen Sound, a post office, a custom house and an inland revenue office, and the three of them are realizing a large revenue, but there is no post office building. What rule is the hon. gentleman going to apply? Now, he has a post office rented there from one of his friends at \$600 a year. However, I am not complaining if it appears that this plan has supplied the needs of the place, because, I hold that if the public needs can be supplied in this way for a small outlay, the government are not justified in making the large outlay necessary for the erection of public buildings. I ask the hon. gentleman what principle has he adopted, and if he has adopted the principle that was enunciated last year, why he does not follow it more closely, and why is it that we have such glaring examples of improper expenditures as the case that has been cited here to-night.

Bowmanville, public buildings, \$10,000.

Mr. BROCK. I would like to ask the hon. minister if he has bought a property in Bowmanville on which to put this post office,

Mr. SPROULE.

and if so, will he say from whom, and what figure has been paid for it?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. A site has not been purchased. There are some negotiations going on with the town, and I had an interview with members of the council. There has been a proposition made by the town to take some property they have, but the negotiation has not been completed. I hope that we will be able to come to some agreement that will be satisfactory, because this site will be more satisfactory perhaps than any other site we could obtain.

Mr. BROCK. Bowmanville is a very old town. It has been in existence and the post office has been there for about 100 years. I am not aware that the town has been increasing in population lately, and I have not heard that there has been any great fault found with the present post office arrangements there. Is there a demand from Bowmanville that \$15,000 should be spent there? The hon. minister must remember that they have done a large business in the post office there at an expense of about \$300 a year, and I do not think there has been such an expansion of trade in the town, or that there have been new factories established to an extent that would justify a very large expenditure at the present time. I say justify—I mean justify upon anything like business principles. I cannot attempt to enter into all the reasons that might induce the government to erect a post office in that town. But, I find that a new principle has been enunciated. We used to get most of our explanations in reference to expenditures from the minister himself, but I find that the hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. Schell) has spoken for his county and has given us some valuable information on some points, and I would suggest that the hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Beith) might probably give us a little information on this subject, together with the reasons why the important town of Bowmanville should have a \$15,000 expenditure for a post office. Now, Mr. Chairman, the government are supplying the House with a rod with which to beat the backs of the people of Canada for a great many years to come. We know how demoralizing the cry is in the United States 'to the victors belong the spoils,' but I can assure you that this is being taken note of in Canada to-day and that the honest, respectable Reformers are the people who are finding the most fault with it.

An hon. MEMBER. Oh, oh.

Mr. BROCK. There is one of them; he is endeavouring to hide his light. The government have been asked this evening upon what principle they are carrying out the erection of these public buildings. I do not think that is an unreasonable ques-