

mous river, I understand. In election contests we often have to do that, as the counties and federal and provincial districts are not bounded by river lines. I know that they are disregarded in my own province, where we adhere to county lines. To do the leader of the Opposition justice, I do not think he put that forward as an argument that an injustice was done, but only to meet a statement of the hon. Minister of Public Works on another matter. If a wrong is being done I hope that further explanation may be made, so that we may understand what the grievance is. I assure my hon. friend from York (Mr. Mulock) that I supposed the discussion was being carried forward by gentlemen who were acquainted with the local circumstances, and that they were appealing to each other's knowledge of local circumstances, and no facts were stated which would call for an investigation.

Mr. LAURIER. At present, Verchères is dismembered. The county is a peninsula included between the River St. Lawrence to the north and the River Richelieu to the south, which join at the end of the County of Verchères, and to the west is the County of Chambly. I do not suppose that the people from Verchères have any actual knowledge of the County of Richelieu as they have no connection whatever with it. The Richelieu River is a large navigable river, and at Belœil, where it is proposed to join it to the County of Rouville, the river must be at least over 1,000 feet in width. There is not a single bridge from the mouth of the Chambly River up to St. John's, a distance of 45 miles. That is the best evidence that the stream is a wide one. It is the discharge of Lake Champlain, and it is navigated as such. If the hon. gentleman will look at the map, he will see that Verchères and Chambly are close together, and can be easily united, but if you dismember Verchères and annex it to the adjoining county, you are violating all principle. The people of Verchères have no connection with the people of Richelieu, or with the people of St. Hyacinthe, or with the people of Rouville, and you are throwing the whole of Verchères into these three counties. You want to have one county disappear. Very well; I say that the most natural way of attaining that object is to unite these two counties, instead of throwing people into new constituencies with which they have no connection whatever. The hon. Minister of Justice has appealed with much reason that the question had better be discussed by people who have a local knowledge of the geography. I pretend to be familiar with it, but I appeal to any hon. gentleman on the floor of this House to say, if he can see the slightest connection whatever between the parish of Verchères and the town of Sorel, which is the *chef-lieu* of Richelieu?

Mr. CHOQUETTE. I have also some local knowledge of the constituency, as I was born in Belœil; and my family and my brothers live there now. They all say, and I say myself, that it is most absurd to join Belœil to Rouville. We know that a candidate has very often to cross a river, but suppose on nomination day the people have to go to Marieville, which is the *chef-lieu* of Rouville, and supposing it is a windy day the people could not cross because they have only small boats.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. They hold no meetings on nomination day.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. Oh, yes, we have large meetings on nomination day, and it is on that very day we convert the most Tories. We have no money on our side, and we want to convert them by speaking. We call meetings on nomination day and by telling them about what ought to be good government we bring the Tories to our side. The people of Belœil are very intelligent and they do not require much speaking, but they like to hear what the other side has to say. If these people from Belœil want to go to Marieville, they cannot cross the river. There is a Grand Trunk bridge at Belœil station, but there is a notice put up that no one is allowed to cross on foot, so it is impossible for them to go to the other side of the river unless they wait till winter, after the ice has taken. The leader of the House said he wanted to hear somebody speak about facts; I know the facts, and I now draw his attention to them. I was at Belœil two weeks ago and heard the people talk about it. The Liberals do not care much about the proposed change, politically speaking, because they are sure to win in Verchères, as they are sure to win in Rouville. But the Tories are altogether dissatisfied. They say it is absurd to put them into Rouville when the Government could put them into Chambly, uniting Verchères and Chambly. There is no reason, except a prospective political advantage, that can induce the Government to put Belœil in Rouville.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. The river has been spoken of as making it inconvenient to have parishes within the same electoral district on either side of the river.

Mr. OUIMET. We never heard any complaint from the people of St. Roch and St. Joseph that it was a great inconvenience for them to belong to the County of Richelieu.

Mr. LAURIER. They do not complain, but they feel it nevertheless.

Mr. OUIMET. This is not the only instance where counties are divided by a river. Take the County of Champlain and St. Maurice.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). The hon. gentleman himself yesterday made it an objection.

Mr. OUIMET. No, I never complained of that. I only said that if there was a reason for leaving Laval alone, it was the fact that it stood a county by itself, being an island surrounded by two rivers. The reason I gave why Laval should not be united to Two Mountains was that the two counties have no community of interest. But the main reason was this: I explained that Pontiac, Ottawa, Argenteuil and Two Mountains have a population entitling them to five members, and we gave an additional member to Ottawa. I said if we were to equalize the population so as to have every county represent an average of 23,000, we would have to cut up Argenteuil; that was the main reason why I said that Two Mountains ought not to be added to any other county, because it would break up that group. I say that the representation by groups is much more important than representation by united counties. In no one instance of these divisions are the municipal boundaries broken. I still maintain, after listening to all objections raised, that the present division is by far the best. I do not think we could gain anything by yielding to the suggestions of the hon. gentleman, although I may say that they will be