

and is willing to advocate it now as he was then. I can support this motion all the more freely because I myself have never advocated the building of post offices in small places. I take the post office returns, and I find that in that village—

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** Do you call Liverpool a village?

Mr. SPROULE. We would call it a village in our part of the country. I find that the gross postal revenues of that place last year was \$2,085. Now, compare that with a village in my own locality which I know very well, in which there is only about a thousand people, and a gross postal revenue of \$1,705.

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding).** The population of Liverpool is about 2,500.

Mr. SPROULE. But in these matters it should be judged by its postal revenue, which is only \$2,085, and this cannot justify the expenditure necessary for the construction of a post office building. If it did justify it, I could pick out places by the dozen in the province of Ontario which have not asked for a post office building, but which would be equally entitled to it. I say that I support this resolution all the more freely because I never advocated the principle of putting up post offices in small places when my friends were in power. I have always said that there may be exceptional instances in which a Government is justified in putting up a post office in a small place, that is where they may be unable to get a suitable building to rent at a moderate figure. But where a building can be got for anything like a reasonable rent, a building that will serve the convenience of the public, the Government is not justified in undertaking a heavy outlay to construct another building. The rent paid for the building is comparatively a trifling item as against the expense involved in the construction of a Government building. Not only must the country suffer the loss of interest on the sum invested, but there must be a caretaker and all the paraphernalia of expense, which would be enough to pay the rent of a suitable building three or four times over. If we can save money for the country and at the same time meet the public convenience, why should we spend money in putting up new buildings? In our part of the country we have never urged the Government to put up new buildings in small places. When we were on this item I mentioned that in our county we had a population of about 75,000, and that it contained several towns that have an equal or greater claim to a public building than Liverpool. For instances, we have Owen Sound, the county town, with about 9,000 inhabitants; Durham, with about 3,000; Meaford, with between 2,000 and 3,000, and

Mr. SPROULE.

Thornbury with close upon 2,000, besides two or three villages, every one of which is nearly as large as Liverpool. Yet in the whole county there is not a building for post office or custom-house purposes, and there is not a proposition in these whole Estimates to build one in the county. And our county in this respect is an example of what may be found in almost every portion of the province of Ontario. The Government say: Let this pass, and we will see to it that in future the principle will be adopted in regard to these matters recommended a few years ago by this House. But we had better adopt that principle now. They may feel that they do not want to offend their friends. Their friends should not be offended at the striking off of an item that should never have appeared in the Estimates.

Mr. MACLEAN. I hope the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) will stand to his guns and that the hon. member for Wentworth (Mr. Bain) and the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Somerville) will support him. I am prepared to back him up to the fullest extent of my ability. I do admire independence in this House; I do admire men standing by their principles even in the face of their party. We have seen too many independent movements go to pieces in this House. We have seen the Patron movement go to pieces; are we to see the independent movement party in favour of economy now deserted? I hope not. I hope the hon. member for North Wellington will continue to advocate the same principles in power that he advocated in Opposition, and that the other gentlemen I have named will take the same position and assist him in the work he is doing, and I am sure that in doing so they will be upheld by the country.

Mr. CASEY. We have heard a good deal about consistency and independence, but it strikes me that the speeches of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) and the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean) would have been much more in place, would have shown much more consideration for the public purse, if they had been made when their friends were in power and we were objecting to expenditures which we sometimes thought extravagant. Apart from that very obvious reflection, which must have occurred to the hon. gentlemen themselves I am sure, I want to say one or two words on the question at issue. I believe that when the House of Commons unanimously adopted the resolution already more than once alluded to, to the effect that public buildings should be distributed without regard to the political complexion of the constituency, the House did the right thing. But the glaring fact remains that for a number of years that have passed since that time, that resolution was not carried out by the party that was in power.