

age majority of 400, and that were they to make \$10,000 worth of works in the county they would not change the result. This is the reason why the Government do not scruple breaking their word when Montmagny is concerned; that is the reason of their inaction in face of the most positive promises. There is no doubt that this policy of entering upon public works right and left without justification, is a deplorable one. Public money is put where it is not necessary, and when we apply to the Government for necessary works, instead of receiving satisfactory answer, we are dragged before courts of justice, and the poor farmers cannot get what is legitimately due them. It is what recently happened in Montmagny. Citizens of my county had perfectly well grounded claims against the Government, and when application was made for \$2,000 or \$3,000 to satisfy these claims, we were sent to the Court of Exchequer to meet there four or five lawyers royally paid out of the public treasury, and knowing not a word of French, while the witnesses knew no English. That is the treatment we get from the Government. No justice is done to us, however good may be our claims. We, the Liberals, are ill-treated. We are refused all justice in the matter of public works, and then we see such large sums, as that affected to such a useless purpose as a post office at Laprairie, expended for the purpose of securing the election of a Conservative member. Pointing out these facts is enough to show the injustice of such a policy. When I see the public money squandered in public buildings at places like Laprairie, where it is absolutely ridiculous to make such expenditures, I say that the Government act against the public interest. For, after all, it is established that the Laprairie post office gives no more than \$433 a year of gross revenue. And is it not ridiculous to put up a \$16,000 building for a post office where no more business is done? For ten years a post office building has been promised to the town of Montmagny. A promise is all we get. And yet the post office at this point gave last year a revenue of \$1,617, although the expenses of the office were only \$640, which leaves a net revenue of \$1,000. During election time in 1887, this building was promised on all the hustings. The Conservative candidate used that as a platform on which to do his fighting. The town of Montmagny had even promised the necessary site. Later I urged the Government to redeem their promise. I was met with a refusal, I was told the revenue of the post office was not large enough. What do we see to-day? We see the Government contradicting themselves in the most shameless way in granting a building for a post office, and where the public treasury will have to face a deficit of at least five or six hundred dollars a year. The only excuse given, the only genuine reason given, by the hon. Minister of Public Works for the action of the Government in putting up this building, is that they are bound in honour to have the work done. If such a reason is valid for Laprairie, it is equally valid and binding as to Montmagny. Ours is not a promise such as candidates will make in the course of a campaign, but it is a promise from the hand of a Minister of the Crown. I wish to believe, notwithstanding what happens, that this promise will yet be respected, for it would be shameful otherwise. I would be ashamed to come before this House as does the hon. member for Laprairie, and ask such a large sum as \$16,000 for

Mr. CHOQUETTE.

a post office building for a locality where the postal revenue is so small. It is true that we have no military displays such as mentioned by the hon. member, but I may say that our people is better educated and more intelligent than that of Laprairie, if I may judge by postal revenues. I repeat it, I would be ashamed to claim such a costly public building for a post office which must represent a burden on the public treasury of \$500 or \$600 a year. It will be in keeping with the Intercolonial Railway which is managed by the Government so as to give each year a deficit of \$500,000 or \$600,000. I protest with all my strength against the voting of this item, which can be supported by no serious reason. It only represents official bribery under the cover of good faith and fidelity to promises.

Mr. O'BRIEN. I have no right to offer advice to hon. gentlemen opposite, but it does seem to me that in fighting this question in the way they are doing they are taking very weak ground indeed. I trust this House and country too, have come to the conclusion that grants of this sort ought not to be made in future. I think many people have come to the conclusion that a grant such as this was originally should never have been made; and on that point I quite agree with hon. gentlemen opposite. But I understand this matter has been twice before the House. Votes have been made for this particular object on more than one occasion, and passed without any particular opposition. It is not, therefore, good tactics to continue the opposition on this item, especially when it is absolutely impossible that the Government can yield. It brings the matter down to a mere trial of strength, the Government having explained that they cannot recede from their position with respect to this particular grant. Therefore, it is a mere waste of strength, and of time which is now becoming so valuable, and it is certainly not good tactics to make this determined fight on a question which has been before the House on several occasions, and on which, I repeat, it is certainly impossible that the Government can yield. I have looked through the Estimates for this year, and I do not find for any province any new grant for an office of this kind. I trust we may understand from this fact, that it is not the intention of the Government to continue to spend money in this exceedingly unfair way, by giving grants to small places which are certainly not entitled to them, while if this system is to be pursued the claims of a great many other places, which are much better entitled to public buildings, should be recognized. The system is a very bad one in every respect. It is a bad one as a means of corrupting constituencies; it is a bad one as involving an absolute waste of public money, and it is a bad one as establishing very unfair principles between the different provinces of this country. It brings the legislation of this House into contempt, as does every species of legislation not founded on right. Therefore, as regards opposition to this grant as a matter of principle, hon. gentlemen opposite are right, and I trust this House will set its face against such grants in future; but I put it to hon. gentlemen opposite, whether it is reasonable for them to take up the time of the House with a continued contest on this item. If hon. gentlemen have some particular local object to serve, which I do not know, and which I