

who to-day oppose this work, are too late, for another reason also ; for the work is now under contract, and is half done. I again notice that in the speeches of some hon. members of the left, the principle in question is not at all condemned, but they complain of not being given as much. The hon. member for Napierville (Mr. Monet), if I understood him well, approves of the vote, and expresses a wish, which is that of having as much for the village of Napierville. The hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Delisle), as well as the hon. member for Lévis (Mr. Guay), expressed the same regret, as well as the same desire. In 1890, the hon. member for Lévis, while speaking on the same question, gave expression to the same sentiment. He regretted that the town of Lévis was not equally favoured. I say that this is far from the arguments which other members of the Opposition are urging against the building of this post office. The latter gentlemen are in contradiction with themselves, since they made no objection to this vote in 1889 and 1890. It is exceedingly strange, now that the work is under contract and half done, to see them rise one after the other and enter such strong protests against this expenditure, which they first approved by their silence in 1890. In 1889, this item was voted unanimously. Another charge has been made, that of the work being granted with the object of exercising an undue influence on the Laprairie electors. I may say that the vote at Laprairie was at last election what it was about ten years ago. Laprairie was always a strong Conservative parish, and has not changed. I may, therefore, say that the granting of the post office has not had the effect of changing two votes in that parish. At the election of 1891, so little was expected from that to affect the result, that the thing was not mentioned once, neither by myself nor by the friends who came to help me. In granting the money for this post office, the Government have only yielded to their sense of the justice and desirability of that course ; and so well warranted was that course that it met from the first with the complete and unanimous concurrence of the hon. members of the left in 1889, when the first vote was asked for and granted for this object.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. (Translation.) I very much regret, Mr. Chairman, that I failed to be convinced by the remarks of the hon. member for Laprairie, as to the propriety of the action of the Government in this matter. One word pronounced by the hon. member did more than anything else that was said to impress me that Laprairie must be a very poor village indeed. In order to show us the importance of his village the hon. member told us that several railways came to it, that it had a line of steamboat to Montreal, that it was the ground chosen for the military parades ; and yet, notwithstanding all this, the fact cannot be gainsaid that the gross revenue from the post office of this important business centre reaches only \$433.16. Of two things one, Mr. Chairman, either what the hon. member said is true or it is not. If it is, we have to come to the conclusion that the people of Laprairie must be a very ignorant community, seeing that the postal revenue is no larger, for if they wrote the post office revenue would not be so small. It seems clear to me that the remarks of the hon. member will convince nobody that the

Government did well in deciding upon the building of a post office at Laprairie. My hon. friend has also mentioned the votes of 1889 and 1890, hoping thereby to show that since he was not in the House at the time, the Opposition should not argue that in putting this vote in the Estimates the Government did so in his interest. Well, I mean to prove that this was really done in order to facilitate the election of my hon. friend. Indeed the only reason why this vote was put in the Estimates is that Laprairie is what is called an exceedingly close county ; the majorities there, either one side or the other, are always very small, within the score. Now, the Government goes on with this work with a political object. As soon as my hon. friend saw his seat in danger, and found that he could not be re-elected, he hastened to urge this work upon the Government. The Government yielded to his request, and the vote was put in the Estimates with the object of securing the re-election of my hon. friend. If the Government did not use this official corruption, if the Government did not make it a system of burdening the Estimates with such votes and for such purposes, there would not be ten Conservatives returned from the Province of Quebec. If the hon. member for Laprairie goes again before the electors, he will never come back to this House, although personally I would be sorry not to see him again among us. A proof that it is not necessary in the public interest to build a post office at Laprairie is that the hon. member for Lévis and myself have asked for much more needed public works for our counties, and that the Government have not allowed them. And why, Mr. Chairman, have not the Government done justice to our claims ; why have they always refused justice to the Counties of Lévis and Montmagny ? The reason is very easy to point out. They knew that our electors could not be bought. We find no fault when the money asked is for necessary works. I myself intend to ask for some very shortly, for works which not only are necessary, but have been promised. It is, therefore, evident that the vote of money for Laprairie cannot be considered otherwise than as an official bribe from the Government to secure the re-election of the member for that county. The hon. Minister of Public Works said that the Government were committed to the carrying out of this work, and that they were bound in honour to have this sum voted. Very well, I accept the statement. But if the Government consider themselves bound to the member for Laprairie, if they consider themselves obliged in honour to fulfil their engagements, it must be the same thing as to redeeming a formal promise made by a member of the Government. I now hold in my hand a letter from Mr. Smith, in which that gentleman declared that he is to ask for a vote of \$3,500 for certain improvements on the South River, in the County of Montmagny, as he admits that the Government is responsible for the damages caused by the Intercolonial Railway. It is evident, then, that this sum should have been put in the Estimates in accordance with the statement of the Minister of Public Works. Now, how is it that the Government are so scrupulous in redeeming their promises when the County of Laprairie is in question and that they take no such care or concern when the County of Montmagny is interested ? It is easy to say why. The County of Laprairie is a doubtful county, while Montmagny gives an aver-