

**Mr. OUMET.** He says further :—

The western sites have the best soil for foundation, and are somewhat drier soil. There is no drainage, and the nature of the ground is wet below about three feet from the surface. \* \* \* There are no available lots on the north side of the avenue except inner lots, and they are held at fancy prices.

As to prices, he was asked by telegram from Mr. Fuller :—

Are rates per foot frontage given in your report on Portage la Prairie fair and reasonable ?

The answer is :

Price reasonable, below current rates of adjoining property.

**Mr. MARTIN.** He did not refer to this side at all.

**Mr. OUMET.** His report is dated in August, and this telegram is dated 8th September. For these reasons, I think the department was justified in coming to the conclusion that the present site is the best, the most central, and that the price paid was reasonable. Now as to the character of the recommendations, I do not know these gentlemen, McClenagan & Newman, but I understand they are good friends of hon. gentlemen opposite, and that they are respectable citizens of the town. But surely, if their evidence is going to be discredited because they are interested, the hon. gentleman's evidence must be challenged in the same way, because he advocates the eastern site, and if I am not mistaken, he is largely interested in that part of the town.

**Mr. MARTIN.** I have large properties in the west of the city, perhaps as much as some of these gentlemen.

**Mr. OUMET.** There is another consideration. These gentlemen interested in that part of the city, were asking that their interests might be looked after simply because the hon. gentleman had espoused so strongly the interests of the eastern people. The western people had to be looked after by some one, because nobody else would have paid any attention to them. I think the hon. gentleman himself considered the people living in the western part of the town as men whose interests were not of much account. On the whole, I think the department has acted on the reports made by our officer, and has secured the best site, and at a reasonable price.

**Mr. MARTIN.** I do not blame the Minister of Public Works, because he has been misinformed, but the statements he has given to the House, are not accurate. I suppose he gives them on the authority of the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Boyd.) I have no hesitation in saying they are not accurate, because I know every foot of this town. It is not true that this site is anywhere near the centre of the population of Portage la Prairie. I have no hesitation in saying that the population east of this site

is very much greater indeed than the population west. So far as this business he referred to is concerned, there is nothing in that. Mr. T. A. Garland conducts a large business a quarter of a mile further west of this site, because years ago, in the boom days, he built a large warehouse upon his property in the west end hoping that business some day would go there, and rather than let the building go to ruin, he conducts the business in it. So far as the central school is concerned, it is very far from the centre of the town, and within a year or two they have been obliged to build ward schools in the eastern and northern part of the town. It is inaccurate to say that the town is growing more in the west than in the east. The town is growing far more in the east end than in the west end, and the population is increasing a great deal more east of this site than west of it. As for Lansdowne College, it was disbanded a year ago, and is now a boarding-house, and it throws no light upon the question. With regard to those gentlemen to whom the hon. gentleman has referred, whose testimony is given there, I drew attention to facts which nullify the testimony of those gentlemen. I would draw the Ministers attention to this fact with regard to Mr. Smith. I am sure Mr. Smith never intended to say that the price of this site was reasonable, because he has by his report practically put it out of the question.

**Mr. BOYD.** Since this question was before the House on a previous occasion, I cannot say that the hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Martin) has thrown any new light on the subject. There is no question that there is a good deal of feeling in that town between the east and the west end, and the hon. member for Winnipeg is to a great extent responsible for that feeling. Now, the old post office has stood for the last twelve years, and the site has only been removed 100 feet west. He says the centre of the population is considerably east of the present site. I have undoubted evidence that one block east of where the present post office has been selected, is the centre of the population. I have also undoubted evidence that 40 per cent of the business of Portage la Prairie is done west of the present post office site.

**Mr. MARTIN.** Pshaw !

**Mr. BOYD.** That is the hon. gentleman's opinion, but I do not think any evidence I could produce or that any one else could produce, would satisfy the hon. member for Winnipeg, unless the post office was removed down close to the east end where he used his influence to have all the other local buildings placed. The central school is one block west.

**Mr. MARTIN.** No, the central school is in the same block.