

Mr. TAYLOR. I wish to correct the hon. gentleman when he states that the Government built a post office at Gananoque, and to inform him that such is not the case.

Mr. COOK. Before this debate closes, I would like to ask the Government if they are aware that the erection of a post office in the town of Barrie, in the county of Simcoe, has been made to do service in several election campaigns. I do not suppose for a moment that the Government would use the public money for the purpose of influencing an election; and I am sure that as soon as the attention of the Minister of Public Works is drawn to the fact, he will at once put his foot on it and crush out any movement on the part of any of his friends in any constituency to do that sort of thing. A post office was for many years promised to the town of Barrie; and just before the last Election the hon. gentleman representing the constituency in which that town is located succeeded in inducing the Government to put a sum in the Estimates for this purpose. Just before the Election of 1882, a piece of land was purchased for this post office, and the Government got a man with a wheelbarrow to commence digging a hole to show the people of Barrie that they were in earnest about building a post office. They also had a waggon load or two of brick brought and placed on the ground. They remained there until the next Election for the Local House. When that time arrived it was noised about that the building was going to be erected immediately, and the consequence was that there were a few more loads of brick brought to the ground, and this time they succeeded in getting a waggon instead of a wheelbarrow, and enlarged the hole. But they did not build the post office. Well, immediately after the election, a petition was filed against the member (Mr. Phelps), and he was eventually unseated. In the meantime, the proceedings stopped, and the second enlargement of the hole did not take place. But after he was unseated, and an Election was about to come on again, they immediately started another game on the people, to endeavour to make them believe that they were going to have the post office, and I believe that this time they got half-a-dozen waggons and went to work to make the hole larger still. But since the Election I believe nothing more has been done. Now I know that after the attention of the Minister of Public Works is drawn to this matter, he will not permit that to be done. He lives in the Lower Province. It is unfortunate for the people of Barrie that he does not live in Ontario, because if he did he would not have allowed that to take place. But the Ministers from Ontario are censurable for not having noticed it. But I am glad to say that the people were not hoodwinked the third time. Barrie being a Conservative town, at the last Election gave a majority of 6, whereas at a previous Election it gave a majority of 158. This shows with what success efforts are being made to convert it into a Reform town, and of course hon. gentlemen opposite would not like that.

Mr. SPEAKER. Before the debate proceeds any further I would ask the hon. member for North Essex to withdraw the statement he made with regard to the hon. member for West Lambton having taken the shilling to advocate anything in this House. I do not think he meant that.

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex). I did not mean that the hon. member took the shilling to advocate anything in this House. I think that the natural provocation which I have received from him all this Session, unnecessarily, and without any justifiable ground, is my excuse, and if I have transgressed the Rules of this House in any manner, I beg to apologize to you, Sir, and to the House.

Mr. PATTERSON (Brant). I desire to take this opportunity of saying a few words on this question which I intended addressing to the House on the bringing down of the Supplementary Estimates, but then they may be too late to have any effect. I do not want to raise an objection

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex).

or to find any fault in particular with buildings that have been erected in the constituencies of hon. gentlemen opposite. It is not pleasant, I know, to hon. members to have it cast in their teeth that certain things have been done in their favour, but I wish to call the attention of the Government to this one point. I myself, I think, first brought under the notice of the late Administration the necessity of giving increased post office accommodation, especially in towns where there was a large Customs and revenue service. I pointed out that in the large cities enormous sums of money were expended in the erection of very fine and costly buildings, and without attempting to detract from the architectural beauty which, I think, it is desirable that Government buildings in large cities should have, in order that they may challenge the admiration of strangers, I still hoped that some of the very great expenditure in those cities might be saved, and that the public interest might be served by the erection of public buildings, not so costly in their nature, in some of the other, not so large, but very important towns. The leader of the Government then, although the finances were not in the best condition possible, took the subject into consideration; and after I had brought it under his notice on one or two occasions, he announced to the House that he had a plan whereby he intended to give to four or five of the larger towns which have since become incorporated as cities the benefit of public buildings, and he mentioned the names of those towns. One was the city of Belleville which is in the county represented by the hon. Minister of Customs, and the others were the city of Guelph and the city of St. Catharines, and the city that is within the borders of my own county which I have the honour of representing here, and also the town of Stratford. I merely mention this point in order that the Government will notice that when my hon. friend (Mr. Mackenzie) who then led the Government, adopted that plan, the Government, in adopting it, was not influenced by any political considerations at all, and in saying that I desire to do so without seeming to impute to hon. gentlemen opposite that they act solely on such considerations; but it is an unfortunate fact in connection with public buildings erected under their Administration, that, if I remember aright, there has been no public buildings erected in a riding which happens for the time being to be represented by an hon. gentleman on this side. It is the more difficult for me to understand that they have given as full consideration and justice to the different municipalities as did my hon. friend (Mr. Mackenzie) when I note the fact—a fact upon which I do not wish to comment, but which has been alluded to by the hon. member for East Lambton—that many of the towns which have got these public buildings—and I am not finding fault with that for the present—have not the amount of public business transacted in them to anything like the extent that have other important towns which were passed over. That is the point I wish to bring before the Government. It does seem to me that while there are legitimate means which the Government may use to strengthen themselves and the hands of their friends, it is not a legitimate weapon to use against their opponents that public moneys contributed by all the people of the country should be spent for the benefit of particular localities, unless such expenditure be in the public interest; and again I repeat, without saying that the buildings erected have not been in the public interest, that the only way to avoid feelings of—might I say jealousy?—I may, perhaps, use that expression—however, I will only say that if any regard is to be had for public feeling with respect to the equitable and fair distribution of public money in that direction, the public interest would have been served better if the public had been led to expect that the towns having the most business, the towns contributing most to the revenue,