

tend the mail service. I would certainly select one who has been in the service from the beginning. I have pointed out these objections, and would ask the hon. gentleman to hold his Bill over until next session.

Mr. CLANCY. We have learned to-night for the first time that the Postmaster General has appointed a controller and has all his staff in operation without any authority from Parliament. That simply means that he matures his plans and appoints his officers, and then comes down at the last hours of the session and asks the authority to do what he has already done. I asked the hon. gentleman to show us what reductions took place, and he disdained to answer that very plain question.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I did answer it.

Mr. CLANCY. How many reductions?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The system has been tried for nearly six months, and we have been able to allow vacancies to occur without filling them up. There will be at least thirty-four mail clerks less under this system, whose salaries will aggregate \$20,400, but I cannot contemplate dismissing them at once. I want to deal with them as gently as the hon. gentleman desired, and I propose just to allow vacancies to occur without filling them until the service gets down to its proper level. We are working with nineteen less now than under the old system.

Mr. CLANCY. How many transfer agents will there be in the future, and how many has he reduced?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I have only reduced the number of transfer agents by one at present. I found a transfer agent at Brockville, by the name of Kavanagh, whom I dismissed for reasons the hon. gentleman can easily ascertain. He had a contract for performing some service, and this man was appointed transfer agent while a contractor. I am not able to say anything with regard to the transfer agents further than this, that I have opened negotiations with the railway companies to see whether at certain points we could utilize, to some extent, the station staff of the railway companies and divide the expense. That, however, is a thing that could be done quite as well, whether this passes or not.

Mr. CLANCY. The hon. gentleman tells us that this system has been in force nearly six months and that he hopes to make a reduction amounting to something like \$20,000 by the reduction of mail clerks. I did not understand him to say that that has all taken place, but that that was what he hoped to do in the future.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. What has taken place?

Mr. CLANCY. What I mean is, that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Mulock) has said that he is going to deal gently with the mail clerks. I understand that he will not make sweeping changes, that he does not mean to cut off all the heads at once, but that he will remove them by a slower and less painful process. I did not quite understand whether the hon. gentleman had saved \$20,000 in the six months in which the system has been in force, or whether he hopes to make this reduction with regard to the mail clerks alone. He does not propose to make reduction in reference to the transfer agents. Does he mean to make a reduction in the superintendents?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The old officers known as the chief railway mail clerks, disappear as such, and will be available either to be made superintendents or employed as mail clerks. I have stated that there will be no addition to the staff under these arrangements. I cannot make it any clearer than the Bill makes it.

Mr. CLANCY. Now we are getting this matter much more clearly before us. There is to be no reduction in the transfer agents, and practically none in the superintendents, so that the whole reduction is to be made in the mail clerks. All this makes it perfectly clear that there is no necessity for this Bill at present. The hon. gentleman has seen carrying out the new system, and the service has gone on without a single jar. Surely, there is no need for this Bill at present until a more perfect measure can be submitted to Parliament when there is a larger attendance. The hon. Minister of Marine, who is usually very fair, has addressed the Committee, intimating that time is being wasted. I can fairly say that on this side there has been a disposition, personally, I may say the strongest disposition, to facilitate the closing of the session. The hon. gentleman (Sir Louis Davies) himself will admit that the Opposition has shown its willingness to curtail the discussion of Bills, even of the most vital importance, in order to hasten the close of the session. This Bill before us might easily be postponed. It is a contentious Bill and involves new questions—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I am sorry to be obliged to tell the hon. gentleman that he is not speaking to the question.

Mr. CLANCY. I am speaking now of the importance of the controller. I think, Mr. Chairman, you will see that I am perfectly in order. The duties of the controller are very important. I am sure that there is the desire on this side to facilitate business as much as possible and reach the close of the session as soon as we can. Personally, my only desire is that this should be made a good Bill, and I say that the Postmaster General should have the assistance of the House—not of a part of the House, but of