

Mr. DAVIN. Did he conduct the investigation at Battleford? Mr. Mercer was the postmaster there.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. That was last year. My recollection is that the postmaster's wife had been postmistress during the absence of her husband. Was she a niece of the late Sir John Schultz?

Mr. DAVIN. My hon. friend is confusing Prince Albert with Battleford. What took place at Battleford was this. Complaints were sent down to my hon. friend against Mr. Mercer, and my hon. friend instituted an inquiry. He sent copies of affidavits to the postmaster at Battleford, and I would like to know if Mr. McLeod was also sent out.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I do not remember.

Mr. DAVIN. With regard to the Prince Albert case, I have in my hand a comment on that from the Prince Albert "Advocate," the organ of the present Government in Prince Albert. I know that when the hon. gentleman removed Mr. Way from the postmastership, the feeling among Liberals and Conservatives was that it was a very high-handed proceeding, and the Prince Albert "Advocate" thus comments on it:

THE POST OFFICE AFFAIR.

A general sensation was caused in Prince Albert last week when the rumour went abroad that R. B. Way had been dismissed from the position of postmaster, and Mrs. Charles Mair appointed to the office. Mr. Way says he has not, up to the present, received any official notification of the change, but the rumour may be taken as correct as Mr. Way, in a curt note from Chas. Mair, sr., was told to hold himself in readiness to relinquish his office on September 1st. There appears to be no charge against Mr. Way, the only grounds apparently for his removal being that as Mrs. Mair had held the office some four or five years ago, she should be reinstated. This is all the information that can be obtained regarding the matter at the present time.

Almost all citizens in the place are a unit in denouncing this high-handed proceeding, and whoever may be responsible for it. The position is one of importance and trust, and must not be interfered with unless on the grounds of grave irregularities, and under no consideration will the public suffer it to be bandied about at the will of politicians who may feel inclined to meddle with it for any reason. This smacks much too strongly of American jingo politics to suit our fair-minded, justice-loving Canadians.

If Mr. Way had been removed for cause, no one could reasonably have criticised the action, as it would have been the correct proceeding, but no cause is given. Let us look into the matter, go back into history a few years, and judge by matters of record whether his removal and this appointment is fair or just. Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, when Mr. Way became identified with the post office, Chas. Mair, sr., was postmaster. Mr. Way acting as assistant, which position he held creditably for a number of years, doing all the work in connection with the office, even when Mr. Mair had left the country and engaged in business in the United States.

Citizens after a season became clamorous for a resident postmaster, and Mr. Mair, being unable to hold the position longer, resigned, when influence was brought to bear with the result that his wife, who was yet a resident here, was appointed to the position. Mr. Way meanwhile discharged the whole duties of the office, the postmistress only appearing to sign the weekly report necessary to be forwarded to the department. After a time Mrs. Mair, finding she could not attend to the duties herself, and the office at that time being hardly self-sustaining, resigned, and Mr. Way was appointed to the vacancy.

Now the Mairs, after an absence of several years, turn up and usurp the office which they grossly neglected when it was placed under their charge. Will they do better by it now than they did previously? Why the change had been made, or what was the motive which prompted such action is a mystery to every one, and we voice the sentiment of the entire Liberal party in this district in entering a vigorous protest against turning out a faithful servant without cause, and placing a responsible trust in the hands of parties who utterly neglected it when they previously held it. Should the appointment be insisted on, the citizens are talking of drafting a memorial to Postmaster General Mulock, to be forwarded through our representative, Mr. T. O. Davis, M.P., against an appointment which is most obnoxious to them.

And the opinions and desires of a community must be respected. We belong to free Canada, but if this sort of work goes on, our vaunted superiority of public office over our neighbour to the south must disappear, and our institutions will sink to the lowest depths of degradation to which a power, wrongfully exerted, can drive them.

Of course, I am not endorsing the personal criticism in this article, but merely citing it as an instance of public opinion. I should like to ask the hon. gentleman whether the memorial was presented to him by Mr. T. O. Davis, and whether Mr. Davis urged the prayer of the memorial on him, and what decision he came to?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It is a year since this matter was brought to my notice, and therefore my hon. friend will excuse me if I should perhaps not remember all the details, but I think I remember with accuracy the case that was laid before me. Mr. Mair, the postmaster at Prince Albert, was obliged from ill-health or some misfortune, to move to California, and his wife was appointed in his place. She continued to hold the office for some time, but efforts were made to take it from her. I am not aware that there is anything of record showing that she did not give perfect satisfaction. But she alleged that she was induced to sign a resignation under coercion, that she was informed by a person whom she regarded as reliable that he had undoubted information that she would be dismissed, and that she had to choose between dismissal and resignation. She yielded to the coercion and resigned from office. She said she had been badly treated, and I thought she had been. As to what evidence I obtained in support of the case, I cannot say from memory, but I remember