

may have been hasty. I do not say it was. But what I want to call attention to is that whether his judgment was right or wrong, there was nothing to show that he had been influenced by political considerations in this matter.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. I wish to say, on the line of my leader, that if cases of this kind where the facts have been clearly proven, are to be brought up in this House on the allegation that political considerations have influenced the action of the Minister, it will be impossible to go on with the public business. Is no attention to be paid to complaints, which, in this case, were made by opponents of the Government, without charges been made against friends of the Government of partisanship in trying to secure dismissals. I do not believe there is a person in this House listening to this discussion but must have honestly come to the conclusion that the people who asked for the change in this post office were Conservatives, and Conservatives of the clearest stripe. These people were dissatisfied with the management of this post office and asked to have a change made. The hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Prior) says that this man was a very active opponent of his, an active Liberal who not only talked against the late Government, but being a man who could wield his pen and wrote able articles in condemnation of that Government. It must appear strange to any honest man that charges of political influence in the action of the department should be based upon such a case. I think that when the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Osler) looks at these facts his indignation will seem somewhat amusing to himself. If complaints such as were made in this case, when taken notice of by the department, were always to give rise to charges of political partisanship in the administration, the work of the department could not be carried on at all. I think it is to the injury of all the departments of the civil service that the time of the House should be taken up by such trivial and ridiculous nonsense as we have heard in regard to this case. Who are most to be considered in cases of this kind? Surely the people. Does my hon. friend who brought up this matter say that the friends of his party living in that district are not respectable people, or that when they sent this petition to the Postmaster General they did not wish that petition to be granted? The small revenue derived from this office could not make it an object to any person to receive the appointment. It is perfectly clear that this change was made out of regard to the petition of respectable citizens living in that district, and for no other reason; and I am surprised to hear the hon. member for Toronto, after hearing the discussion here to-day, making the statement he did with regard to the action of the Administration. Every fair-minded man on this side of the House, and

Mr. LAURIER.

Liberals not holding seats in the House, have been anxious that men holding positions in the service should not be interfered with without cause.

Mr. McCLEARY. Beamsville post office.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. I say that, and I say it without fear of contradiction. I say further, that we have reason to complain, from a party standpoint, of the administration of this Government, so anxious have they been to deal in the most liberal manner with the office holders of this country. But it is ridiculous to say that, when a charge of misconduct is brought against an official, the department is to take no notice of it under penalty of being misrepresented by statements such as that of the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) that insinuations were made that were never made or intended to be made. I think that fair-minded men on the other side of the House must say that the Postmaster General did perfectly right in listening to the petition of the people who asked them for a change in this post office.

Mr. McCLEARY. While the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sutherland) who has just taken his seat may charge that this matter which has been brought before the House is of no consequence, and to him it is of no consequence, but it is of consequence to the widow who has been deprived of that office. The hon. gentleman contends that no question should be raised in the House as to the action of the Postmaster General in dismissing this lady from office because charges had been submitted against her. But he failed to tell us that, though these charges were submitted, none of them were proven. Will he, as a fair-minded man, as a man who has a reputation in his own province for frankness, say that it is fair, honourable or decent for the Postmaster General to dismiss this lady from her position without charges made against her having been proven? But while we are on this question, before the resolution now before the House is voted upon, I have a matter in which the Postmaster General is interested, that I would like to bring before his notice and before the attention of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER. It will be necessary for all hon. gentlemen taking part in this debate to confine themselves to the question which is raised by the hon. member who moved the adjournment, that is to say, the dismissal of the postmaster at Northfield. It is impossible to go into a general discussion of dismissals.

Mr. McCLEARY. I was just going to give an illustration of the way the Postmaster General administers his department. I presumed, being a new member of the House, that I was within my right.

Mr. SPEAKER. The illustration should be very brief, indeed.