

missal of that man was justified by the government then in power. In the places of these men were put men who, they say, were as good as the officials who were dismissed. In 1896 they practically made a clean sweep. We are not after the spoils, we are not looking for vengeance in the matter, but we are asking—and we believe we will obtain what we ask—for a reconstruction of the public service by putting out of office the men who have been put in by the Liberal government simply and solely because they were Liberals and at the expense of Conservatives and their families against most of whom there was not a jot or tittle of objection. We say that there should be a reconstruction of the service upon a proper basis, and if it does happen that honest, able and intellectual persons who happen to belong to the Conservative party are put into office I am sure that there is no proper minded Liberal or any other person who can find fault with such appointment.

Hon. L. P. PELLETIER (Postmaster General). Mr. Speaker, as my department has been to a large extent the subject matter of the discussion which has taken place this afternoon, I wish just to say a few words, and to declare before this House the general line of policy I have adopted, and which I am going to continue in the future so that every member of this House will know exactly where I stand, and it will prevent probably many people from asking questions, except that in some cases what I may say will not be deemed to have answered them beforehand. I am doing this for the general advantage of every one concerned. But, before saying the very few words that I have to say, I would ask my friend the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) not to think for one moment that I meant not to be courteous to him in not answering further the letter which he wrote to me. I will give my reasons now which I think he will fully understand. He wrote me on the 28th November and I answered that very day by the general formal letter which is always sent in cases like that. It is practically an acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter. Then I said I would consider the matter, but when I came to consider the matter I found that the postmaster in question had been dismissed thirty days before, so that the consideration which I had said I would give could not be given then. I did not mean to be discourteous at all but the facts were as I have stated them, and it was then only a question of considering whether the postmaster had been rightly dismissed or not. Well, what are the facts? The gentleman who was postmaster in 1896 was dismissed without investigation. He is living to-day, and he has asked me to give him back his post-

Mr. LANCASTER.

mastership. I have done it, and I shall do it in every case of this nature. If there is one thing in regard to which I shall not hesitate it shall be that, the facts having been ascertained, if one of our political friends, whose head has been cut off by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, comes to me for relief he shall get it. I would be unworthy of the position which I occupy to-day if I did not do that.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax). Would the hon. gentleman restore the head if it should transpire that there was not a single resident in the vicinity where this postmaster lived?

Mr. PELLETIER. I am coming to that. But let us satisfy ourselves that I am right so far. This is a most interesting case and I am surprised that my hon. friends have taken it as a sample. This file is a very interesting one to read. What do we find in it? It goes back to the days of 1896 and what do we find in 1896? A gentleman by the name of Russell writes to Sir Wm. Mulock, then Postmaster-General, and what does he say? Now, let my hon. friends, who have such grand and lofty ideas to-day about what should be done by this government, listen:

Dear Mr. Mulock,—I enclose clipping from the 'Evening Mail' containing a list of the officers of a newly formed Tory association.

This was a short time after the election of 1896, and we see that these bad Tories were already forming an association for which I congratulate them heartily.

The councillor Henley—

Mark that name; that is the man I have appointed—

The councillor Henley, named as one of the vice-presidents, is your postmaster and Mr. Paterson's preventive officer, at Spry Bay. The people of the district cannot understand it. He tells them that he cannot be removed and they conclude that he cannot be or would have been long ago. They have dragged the life out of me—

The boys down there.

—about the matter and I have written you and Mr. Paterson till I am ashamed to say any more. Could you not appoint your commissioner and let us get some of these cases closed out? I do not see that this case needs the intervention of a commissioner at all.

Yours truly,

B. RUSSELL.

Now, this gentleman whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, was B. Russell. He says that people had been dragging the life out of him. But evidently Sir William Mulock was not of opinion that the case was as clear as Mr. Russell put it. What do we find? In March, 1897, three or four months afterwards, a telegram