

Works Department. I call the attention of the Minister of Public Works to this fact. I am ready to accept his word before this House that when Mr. Perley was writing "I am directed, &c.," he was not authorized as he pretended to be. I am ready to accept the word of the Minister of Public Works should it be given before this House. But until we get a candid and clear explanation on this matter I think the hon. Minister himself should not insist upon having the House vote a salary for a man who is just now under the most serious charges.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN (Translation). In answer to the hon. member I may say that the amount put in the Estimates for specified officers, such as deputy heads, chief clerks, accountants, chief engineers, &c., are not amounts to be voted especially for the persons now occupying such positions, but rather for the offices themselves. Thus, if an officer should die before the 1st July the salary voted for him would be paid to his successor. Therefore, the vote is not especially for the officer but for the office he holds.

Mr. TARTE (Translation). I understand that, but on the other hand I call the attention of the hon. Minister of Public Works to this fact: I declare, under my own responsibility, that I have in my possession letters from this engineer—for whom we are now called upon to vote a salary—giving information on what transpired in the Minister's office; and I say that as long as this man is maintained in the office which he holds the Minister himself cannot be justified in asking the House to vote that salary. So that I believe it would be as well perhaps—if the public service would not thereby suffer—may, that it would be better, to say, stand.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN (Translation). No, it is out of the question to postpone this item; for if the amount put in the Estimates is not voted I shall not have the necessary money to pay this officer. Therefore, this item should be voted now.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). The hon. member for South Brant (Mr. Paterson) has made a complaint against the Government, that for about three years the people of his constituency have been waiting for the construction of a work which the Government have not been able to proceed with for lack of architects and draughtsmen. I do not think there is the slightest ground for complaint, for he has only waited three years. I remember the case of a small public work in my riding promised by the Minister over and over again, which was postponed over ten years, as I suppose, because the architects and draughtsmen were so busy they could not attend to it. The people chose, for reasons known perhaps to the Minister of Public Works, to change their representative, and the architect was there at once, and within six months the land was marked out, and within a year or a year and a half the building was commenced. Of what has my hon. friend to complain when he has only waited three years, and I waited ten years, and it was only when the people changed their representative that our little work was carried out. The people were then satisfied, and they again changed their representative. Let my hon. friend not complain now, but let him wait ten years, and then complain to the Minister, who no doubt does the best he can, but who apparently

has not a sufficient number of draughtsmen and architects to attend to all these works.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.). It is not to be wondered at that delays should occur in regard to such an important work as a drill shed in a large town such as the hon. member for South Brant (Mr. Paterson) represents. But, in the little matter of a fence running around post office grounds in Prince Edward Island, the Department have been four years in preparing plans before undertaking the construction of that work.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman does not usually take the fence.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.). It is quite evident I have not taken it. I have been using my powers of persuasion with the Minister of Public Works for a good many years in regard to that little two-penny-halfpenny matter, and I received the positive promise of the Minister last session, that he would personally see that the work was carried out, that his overworked men should attend to the matter at once, and that I need not trouble further about it. I knew the hon. Minister's character for veracity, and the care he has always shown in this House not to make any promises he could not fulfil to the letter, and, therefore, I at once wrote down to the people interested in this little work, told them it was going to be built at once, that few weeks would pass before a fence would be erected, and the boarding which had disfigured the grounds removed. I thought I could rely on the Minister; but the overworked officials could not overtake the work, and the whole summer went by and they were unable to determine the plans for the fence, and so the matter has remained. I hope, from indications I have seen lately, that we shall have this work of art erected and the promise of the Minister redeemed, and I have only to express the hope that the gentlemen charged with preparing the plans have not had their health seriously impaired.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I desire to bring the attention of the Committee back to the question of Mr. Perley's salary. The hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Tarte) stated that very serious charges had been made in the public press against that officer, and that very damaging correspondence, which was supposed to emanate from him, had been published. Mention was made of the fact that in some of the correspondence, which was so damaging to the party who wrote it, Mr. Perley wrote as if he had been directed by the Minister of Public Works to write as he was supposed to have done. The hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Tarte) asked whether Mr. Perley was warranted in stating in those letters that he was instructed to write, as he had written, by the Minister of Public Works. I noticed that no reply was given by the Minister to that question, which was a very important one. I wish to call the attention of the Minister to another point, and it is as to the course which the Government intend to pursue against that officer. If the charges which have been made against him were proved, will the Government retain Mr. Perley in his office? It appears there is some difference of opinion between the Minister and the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Tarte), who seems to be very well posted, as far as Mr. Perley is concerned. The hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Tarte) stated as a fact