

is Parliament reduced to to-day? Are we sitting here for three months simply to be told by the political head of a department that in his wisdom he has decided to do so and so, and has called us together simply to inform us that it was his sweet will to do what he has done? If the hon. gentleman has been able by some process of which I am ignorant to appoint his controller and superintendents, as he said he had done, why pass the Bill? Why not save time, and go on appointing controllers and superintendents without troubling Parliament? Why not follow the rule, which is new to us and new to any Parliament where constitutional government exists, and new to any man who has been following the precedents of this Parliament? If the hon. gentleman has been able to appoint a controller from the Toronto Post Office, and superintendents all over the Dominion, without a Bill, why should he keep us here in the last days of the session to pass a Bill which is incomplete, and which requires to be reconsidered before it can contribute to the efficiency of one of the most important branches of the service. The hon. gentleman has stated that he appointed the controller on the recommendation of his chief inspector. The chief inspector is an officer of great experience, an officer whose conduct has been everything that could be desired, and who has rendered great service to the department; but the chief inspector wishes to take a controller from the post office in Toronto, and to make him the head of a service of which he is completely ignorant, as the Postmaster General admits. I know not who that controller is; but the fact is admitted by the hon. Postmaster General that he is a man who knows nothing at all about the railway mail service.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I admitted nothing of the kind.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. The hon. gentleman, I thought, stated that the controller had never been connected with the railway mail service, and, no matter how large and important may be the post office of which he has been an official, he is not a gentleman who should be selected for the office of controller. These are points which I submit are of some importance and which must be discussed, however disagreeable it may be in the last hours of the session to discuss a measure which should not have been brought up at this late period, but which should have been brought forward at the beginning of the session when it could have been carefully examined and when its details could have been compared with the existing law, in order to see how the changes contemplated would affect the efficiency of the service. I venture to express the opinion that no one but a railway mail clerk should be placed at the head of that branch. It is a specialty

Sir ADOLPHE CARON.

in itself, it is different from any other branch of the service, and it is impossible for me to understand that one who is not familiar with that branch is fit to take control of the whole service. I also venture to express the opinion that instead of simplifying the service and making it more efficient, the present measure will complicate it and very much impair its efficiency; and I point out the reason. If you centralize everything at headquarters in Ottawa, if complaints must be sent from every part of the Dominion to Ottawa, and if the men who are to report to the controller have to be sent from headquarters to examine into these complaints, it will complicate the service and impair its efficiency.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. The inspectors at present do all this work. How much experience had they in the Post Office Department when they were appointed?

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. They were trained to that special service, and a good many of them had been railway mail clerks.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I should like to know whether Mr. Hawkins was ever a railway mail clerk.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I think he was.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. And Mr. Merrick, at Kingston, appointed two or three years ago? He was never a mail clerk, nor was Mr. Bolduc, of Quebec.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Yes, he was.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The inspector in Toronto, Mr. Barwick, was not a mail clerk? Mr. Barwick, whom the hon. gentleman appointed a few years ago as inspector, was practising law in Toronto. Mr. Bain, of Montreal, was a member of this House, and was appointed inspector a couple of years ago. Was he ever a railway mail clerk?

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I am not able, from memory, to give the whole history of every inspector in the Dominion, but from the very fact of their being inspectors they acquired experience, which the new man, the controller, whom the hon. gentleman asks power to appoint, could have had no chance of picking up.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. You made your inspectors before they were in the service.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. But the hon. gentleman is trying to improve the law. He wants to improve the service, and yet he is going to appoint a man as controller who knows nothing about the service. He tells us that he is going to select a man as head of the service who has never been connected with it and can know nothing about it. The inspectors, however, from the fact that they have been in charge of the service, must have gained experience and knowledge, and I tell the hon. gentleman that if I were going to appoint a man specially to superin-