

see fit. But I can tell the Postmaster General that if this state of affairs continues, the hon. gentleman and his friends will hear from the people there the next time they have an opportunity to cast their ballots.

Mr. BERGERON. Will the hon. Postmaster General tell me who is the mail carrier at Valleyfield at present?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I cannot tell the hon. gentleman that just now.

Mr. BERGERON. The contractor who used to carry the mails between the post office and the stations—the St. Lawrence and Adirondack station on the south side and the Canada Atlantic on the north side—was a man named Leduc, and he did the work to the satisfaction of the public and the department. When my hon. friend came into office, he cancelled that contract, and I want to know from him the names of the contractors who are carrying the mails now. There are two, and they do not do their work properly. If my hon. friend does not know their names, I will tell him. The man who carries the mails between the post office and the Canada Atlantic station on the north side is named Rapin. He does the work for a very small price, and does it very badly. The other contractor for carrying the mails between the post office and the St. Lawrence and Adirondack station on the south side, is a man named Laniel. He took the contract at such a small price that he completely abandoned it a year ago, and the mail is now carried by a carter, who goes to the station every day for his own purpose, and who carries the bags just when it suits him. He throws them into his carriage, and after driving his passengers around the town, and after finishing his own work, he condescends to bring the mail bags to the post office. I want to tell my hon. friend, as he will be interested in knowing it, that the service, though done very cheaply, is done very badly. In fact, it is looked upon there as a perfect scandal—the way the mails of Her Majesty are dragged about, and only brought to the post office when the carrier has finished his own work. I am surprised that my hon. friend has not these names. He should have them.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I have no doubt the facts are as my hon. friend says; but the people apparently have not found fault with the service, for I have not heard of any complaint from them yet. I suppose they have left my hon. friend to take this opportunity to call my attention to it; and as he has done so, I will look into the matter. As to the remarks of my hon. friend from South Leeds (Mr. Taylor), on the Seeley's Bay transaction, which does not come up as altogether a novel circumstance, I would say, with regard to this letter of acknowledgment of the petition, that I am sure that no one who is familiar

Mr. TAYLOR.

with the departmental routine would assume that because of the phraseology of this communication, I had any knowledge of the receipt of the petition. This document is a receipt filled up in a printed form, commencing with the words in print, "I am directed by the Postmaster General to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the." That is an ordinary printed form, and one of the staff has filled it up as a matter of course. There are thousands of communications coming to the department, directed to the Postmaster General, which he personally never sees; and that was the case with the petition in question. I can only repeat what I said before, that the change of postmaster at Seeley's Bay was made because the postmaster had ceased to reside in the town.

Mr. TAYLOR. No, he resides there yet.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The evidence before the department showed that he was living at Smith's Falls, forty miles away.

Mr. TAYLOR. Does not a man live where his family is?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The postmaster is supposed to personally perform the duties of the office or to personally supervise them, and he could not supervise the duties of the office at Seeley's Bay while living at Smith's Falls. The evidence shows that occasionally on Saturday night he returned to Seeley's Bay; but he was certainly not carrying on the work himself or supervising it. That is a rule that I did not originate. It was a rule I found in the department, made by my predecessors; I recognized it as a wholesome rule, and applied it in this instance. I regret that a good Liberal should have taken offence, but our loss is my hon. friend's gain, and therefore personally and politically he can only rejoice at my having made what he conceived to be a mistake.

Mr. DAVIN. I should like to ask the hon. Postmaster General what is his course of procedure when instituting inquiries into the conduct of postmasters in the west. I understand that when complaints were sent in to him, he would write back to the complainants stating either that he would send on somebody to investigate or else ask them to send in statutory declarations, and decided the cases on these declarations.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. There was no regular course, but every effort was made to get at the truth. In some cases where charges were made, copies of statutory declarations were sent to the postmasters, accompanied by copies of charges, and they were required to return answers under statutory declaration: in other cases, I sent out Mr. McLeod, of Winnipeg, to investigate.