

than that of the United States in the worst stage of the American republic. I feel humiliated that any member of the civil service should be dismissed on the evidence presented to us in this case.

Mr. PRIOR. As I have known for a number of years the parties interested in this case, I think I may be allowed to say a word. I may say, in the first place, that it seems to me we have at last found a case of offensive partisanship—not by the poor woman who held the position of postmistress at Wellington but by some parties through whose influence she lost her means of livelihood. I think I can speak in quite an unbiassed manner, because Mr. McManus, the husband of this woman, took a lively interest in myself at all elections by assisting the Opposition members to do their best to keep me out of my seat in the House. But for all that, I know that he was a man among men. He was a fine specimen of manhood. He belonged to the Imperial army for many years and afterwards to the Canadian militia, he had fought and bled for his country, and although he had his faults, that is no more than the majority of us have. But whatever might be the faults of the husband, that had nothing to do with the wife. The husband is dead, let him rest. But judging by the report which the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster) read to the House, we must all be convinced that it is certainly from no shortcoming of this poor woman that she had lost her situation. I quite agree with the speakers who have said that all public servants may, at one time or another, appear to be a little overbearing, but surely that is not sufficient to deprive a poor woman of her livelihood, and especially the wife of an old soldier. The hon. member for Vancouver certainly surprised me in unfolding to us the picture of one lone woman holding up a mining camp with a six-shooter. I have lived a number of years in British Columbia, in the vicinity where this post office is situated, and I know pretty well all those miners who live there, and I cannot for a moment believe that there should be a feeling of unrest amongst those stalwart sons of toil because one woman happens to brandish a six-shooter. Surely, Sir, they have not come down to the condition of hon. gentlemen who live in the effete east. We thought they were manly men; but it is evident that one woman has frightened not only the hon. member but all his constituents. But, joking apart, I do sincerely trust that justice will be done in this case. Mr. McManus was no friend of mine, still I am always ready to raise my voice for the assistance of anybody in distress, whether friend or foe, and I am sure that if the Postmaster General (Mr. Mulock) thinks the matter over, he will let politics go altogether and will see that it is his duty, and I am sure it will be his pleasure to reinstate this poor woman in her situation.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). Whatever may have been the motives which induced my hon. friend to dismiss the postmaster, it is quite evident from the discussion that has taken place that politics had nothing to do with it. The speech just delivered by my hon. friend from Victoria (Mr. Prior) makes this still more apparent. We have the fact that the complaints made against the postmaster were not made by the political friends of the present Government, but by the political opponents of the hon. member who represents the riding in this House. This fact is established in the speech of my hon. friend from Vancouver (Mr. McInnes). Now, we have the further statement of my hon. friend from Victoria that the husband of the postmaster was not a Conservative but a Liberal.

Mr. PRIOR. He was a Conservative, but was paid by the Liberal press.

The PRIME MINISTER. The hon. gentleman himself has just said that the dead should be respected. And now he says that this man was paid. That is the way he respects the dead. That is quite in keeping with what we have heard from the other side of the House.

Mr. PRIOR. I say he was paid for letters written—

The PRIME MINISTER. But he was paid—the hon. gentleman says he was paid, and that is the way he respects this man's grave. I will leave that with himself and with the House. I am not going into the inquiry whether he was paid or was not paid. But from all that has taken place up to the present time, what inducements could my hon. friend the Postmaster General have had to bring politics into this matter? The hon. gentleman from Victoria says that this man's character was so low that he accepted money for political purposes.

Mr. PRIOR. No, I did not say so.

The PRIME MINISTER. My hon. friend from Vancouver says that this complaint was made, not by Liberals, but by Conservatives. What were the complaints? One was that the postmaster was overbearing in her office. There were some charges besides that, but they were not proven. But what was proven by the report of the inspector, was that the postmaster was overbearing in her dealings with her customers. I do not know whether she used a six-shooter in her dealings with them or not, but the evidence is sufficient without that. We know a little of what takes place in country villages. Whatever may have been the cause, it is evident that the postmaster had made herself objectionable and obnoxious to the people. The office is a trivial one. I have not gone into the case; this is the first intimation I have had of it, and I do not know the particulars. It may be that my hon. friend's (Mr. Mulock's) judgment in the case