

they went. Does my hon. friend (Mr. Sifton) think that these two departments, with the multiplicity of work there is in them will not be overburdened with only one Deputy Minister ?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Not under the organization we have.

Mr. FOSTER. Now, will my hon. friend tell us why he added \$200 to Mr. McLean's salary ?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I will answer my hon. friend's question with pleasure. I have asked the committee of the House to add \$200 to Mr. McLean's salary, because I think his capacity and his experience and ability in the department warranted it, and because I think that when a man shows capacity and ability in a most important department, as Mr. McLean does, the service will not suffer, but will rather profit by a recognition of it. The hon. gentleman will understand, of course, that the discussion of personal matters in which the reputation and character of men are involved is a delicate matter. He will understand also, of course, that in speaking as the responsible head of the department, I express myself upon subjects of this kind with a great deal of diffidence. I prefer to err upon the side of prudence in avoiding saying anything that would injure anybody's reputation. I may say, however, in this connection, that the somewhat perfunctory way in which the hon. ex-Minister of Finance has given the explanation why Mr. Reed and Mr. McGirr were brought down from Regina to take places in the Indian Department shows pretty conclusively that he is repeating the explanation that was prepared for public use at the time the change was made, an explanation which, I can tell the hon. gentleman, is only a subject of merriment in the North-west where these gentlemen are known. For reasons which never were made perfectly clear to the public, the late Minister of Interior saw fit to make certain changes. I do not propose to discuss the capacity of Mr. Vankoughnet as compared with the capacity of Mr. Reed. Suffice it to say that the opinion has hardly ever been contradicted—I do not think the hon. gentleman contradicted it himself this evening—that Mr. Vankoughnet was quite as competent to discharge the duties of deputy superintendent as was Mr. Reed ; and it was not hinted at the time the change was made, so far as I can remember, that there was any lack of capacity on the part of Mr. Vankoughnet. But the explanation which was generally conceived at the time, and which I apprehend was the true explanation, was that it was desired to give these gentlemen positions here, and this means was taken of making room. There is a marked difference between the proposition I make and the proposition the hon. gentleman and his friends endorsed as regards this office. They removed a man who was

promoted by themselves. If he was not fit for the place, he should not have been promoted. He had received their official recognition as one well qualified to discharge these duties. But I have done nothing of that kind. I have not removed a man who had received my endorsement or the endorsement of my colleagues. There is this radical difference between the hon. gentleman's position and mine. I can quite understand that the hon. gentleman should say there is no parallel ; there is no parallel in one sense of the word. There is a parallel in the sense the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) indicated when he said that if there was anything open to criticism in this matter, the transaction carried out by the hon. gentlemen opposite when in office was much more open to criticism upon the same ground. Now, I do not know that there is anything further I can say in regard to the observations of the hon. gentleman except this:—That the Department of Indian Affairs is a complicated department, and that its efficiency is largely a question of organization. I wish the committee to understand, Mr. Chairman, that I fully realize the responsibility it involved in recommending changes of this kind. And, if the Department of Indian Affairs is not more efficiently conducted hereafter than it has been in the past, I shall be quite prepared to have the House condemn me, and through me the Government, for the changes made. But I would ask the House to remember that it has been somewhat notorious that the Department of the Interior and the Department of Indian Affairs have not been conducted in all cases in the past with the degree of efficiency that the people of Canada have a right to expect in view of the large amount of money that has been annually expended. All I ask is to be judged by the results of the changes I have made and not by the doleful prognostication made by my hon. friend while the Estimates are going through the House.

Mr. BENNETT. I think the hon. Minister of the Interior is unfair to Mr. Hayter Reed in remarks he has made.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I did not say anything very uncomplimentary of Mr. Reed.

Mr. BENNETT. If he is to be superannuated on the ground of unfitness, let it be so stated and understood. If, on the contrary, he is to be displaced by reason of his political affinities, let that be known, because the inference then can be drawn and from what has been said is that and that alone. I have a word to say in defence of Mr. Reed. I met him in the department during the last Parliament, and I have had a good deal to do in the Department of Indian Affairs. His conduct, as compared with that of his predecessor, was altogether in his favour. There was a