

would cause inquiry to be made in every case, and in the event of such inquiry proving anything of the kind, just retribution would follow. In pursuance of that policy, he found a grievous complaint against the appointment of the postmaster at Cobourg, a Mr. Guillet, and a commissioner was appointed to inquire into that appointment. If my recollection serves me, it was proved that the predecessor of Mr. Guillet, for a consideration, had entered into an arrangement by which he resigned his office, and Mr. Guillet was appointed. On the finding of the commission, Mr. Guillet was dismissed from the office. Now, here is a case of which the Postmaster General had full notice. He could have found from the reports what was the age of Mr. J. P. Cockburn. The town of Gravenhurst is a considerable town. The office is not an unimportant one; the salary, I assume, reaches about \$1,000 a year; and the Postmaster General, before making a change, involving the retirement of a man in the prime of life and the appointment of his son, must have had fair notice; and he should be in a position to state, for the information of the House, and more particularly for the information of the people of Gravenhurst, whether this was done under any arrangement between Mr. Cockburn and his son. I know that the protests on the part of the people of Gravenhurst against the change, are very deep—not from Conservatives, because it is not a matter in which they are interested, for no Conservative would have obtained the position; but I have had remonstrances made to me by prominent Liberals in the riding, who believed that the Postmaster General would conduct matters in his department fairly and above-board. They complain bitterly that an arrangement of this kind should have been made between the two Cockburns without any reference to the Liberals of the riding. Although the appointment was made on the recommendation of Mr. H. H. Cook, who has the patronage of the county, I think it is only fair to the Liberals of the town that the Postmaster General should state to the House what the circumstances of the arrangement were; and if the facts are not known to him, then I say, that following the precedent laid down by him in the Cobourg case, he is in honour bound to institute an inquiry by a commission and ascertain what reasons existed between the two Cockburns for the change. I may say that surmises are on foot in the town of Gravenhurst. It is said that Mr. J. P. Cockburn claimed the appointment for his son as a recompense for his resigning in his favour. Whether that is true or not I do not know; it can only be ascertained by a full and searching inquiry. But I say that the Postmaster General, having had notice of the facts, was put upon his guard that there was something, to put it in the mildest terms, at least, in the nature of a colourable transaction between the two Cockburns.

What explanation has the Postmaster General to make of the changes made.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL. I am not aware of having made any such declaration as my hon. friend mentions. With regard to the Cobourg case, it was stated by reliable persons that a consideration had been given in order to procure the resignation of Mr. Robertson, the then postmaster. A very positive statement was made, accompanied by detailed particulars as to the transaction. It was not mere suspicion, but the evidence of those who declared that they knew all the facts. Upon that statement a commission was issued and an inquiry was made, and the result my hon. friend knows. My only duty is, in all cases, to carry out the law; and though I do not profess to be always equal to the task, I always endeavoured to do so. With regard to the Gravenhurst case, I know nothing whatever of the transaction, except what appears in the department. I never saw the former or the present postmaster, and have no recollection of having ever had a word of communication with them, directly or indirectly, and I know nothing about the reason that led to the resignation of the father and the appointment of the son.

MR. BENNETT. About a year ago certain charges were preferred against Mr. Goffett, who was then postmaster at Orillia. The result was that it became regarded a very well authenticated fact that Mr. Goffett had been dismissed. Mr. Melville Miller was openly spoken of as his probable successor, and it was admitted by Miller that he had as good as received the appointment. It was stated in the local papers that Mr. Miller would be installed in office in a few days. I am now referring to the year 1897. At that time a special remonstrance was made to the Postmaster General by a gentleman very prominent in Liberal circles in Orillia, who came to Ottawa and protested against the appointment of Mr. Miller. This I know to be the fact from having been told so by that gentleman himself. Owing to that remonstrance, the Postmaster General, fearing that the dismissal of Mr. Goffett and the appointment of Mr. Miller would have a very detrimental effect on the approaching elections, which were anticipated at an earlier day than they were held, the appointment of Mr. Miller did not go into effect. The old postmaster was continued in office until 1898, when, owing to some happenings which I need not detail, his services were dispensed with. Then Mr. Miller was appointed, and I wish to ask if in 1897 he had been recommended for this position, in or about the month of April, by Mr. Cook. I would also ask if the appointment was not made then owing to the remonstrance that it would affect the election, then anticipated. The appointment was therefore postponed