

year the Magdalen islands are frequented by a large fleet of schooners and other vessels. In the winter months however, the islanders are deprived of all communication with business firms on the mainland. I, therefore, made arrangements that they could wire their letters at a low rate to the Meat cove cable office, and the operator would mail them from that point. Each time, however, the breakage occurred, the Tyrian, which is the repairing vessel in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, could at once find out the break and make repairs; but I never heard that the cable had been out of business for such a long period as this.

Mr. REID: That is a surprise to me too.

Mr. LEMIEUX: If that is the case, it is bad for the department, and I would urge the minister to see to it that this cable is put into proper order.

Mr. REID: It is a surprise to me, too, that the cable should be out of order for a year. I cannot understand it because the officials of the Department of Public Works, with whom I have come in contact during the different times that I have been acting as minister of that department, have, always, in my judgment, been very capable men and very attentive to their duties, and unless there was some reason why that vessel could not be got, I cannot understand how the break could have been left for a year. During the war the Tyrian might have been employed on some other work from which it was hard to take her away. I have no explanation to offer why that break was not repaired within a year, but I will certainly make inquiries.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It would be better to let the item stand until the minister gets the information.

Mr. REID: There is no item in connection with the Magdalen islands.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Will the minister see that the news service is re-established; that the cable is repaired, and that the same system is maintained as regards the mailing of letters from the cable office?

Mr. REID: Yes, but the deputy has no information to show that the cable has not been repaired.

Mr. McKENZIE: I think it is repaired now.

Mr. REID: The hon. member has just asked if I will see that it is repaired, but I understand that it is repaired. I understand also the news service is going on.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Who recommended the dismissal of Mrs. Theriault and the appointment of McNeil and McDonald as operators of this station?

Mr. REID: I have not that information.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I think the minister ought to give that information to the committee. It is rather a serious matter if, at an important station like that, we have incompetent men appointed by some political influence, although unable to send a message. It looks like a very foolish thing for us to vote money to maintain a cable line if the people at the station are unable to send the message. What does the minister say to that?

Mr. REID: I do not know whether I can get the information as to who recommended the dismissal and the appointments. Those recommendations, of course—

Mr. CARVELL: I guess it is Mr. Douglas all right. He does all that work down there.

Mr. REID: If that answer is satisfactory to the hon. member, of course, I am willing to let it go. I do not know whether I can get that information or not. I can ascertain whether this man is really capable to fill the position. I shall have to take the opinion of the officer in charge.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Will the minister bring down all the correspondence and papers in connection with the dismissal and appointment of these parties?

Mr. REID: I have told the deputy minister that, if there is any correspondence in the department, to bring it to me, and I will bring it down or send it to the hon. member.

Mr. McKENZIE: That matter was in charge of Mr. A. B. McDonald, who is now chief electrician of the Government on board of the Tyrian, a most capable man who was operator at that station for many years, and who, no doubt, was receiving and sending those cable letters. When he was appointed as inspector by the former Government—and Mr. Macdonald was a friend of the present Administration, having been there long before the change in 1896—he left the office and moved away with his family. Mr. Theriault, a former resident of the Magdalen islands, was appointed in his place. Mr. Theriault was not much of an operator himself, but his wife was a most capable operator. She taught her sons to send the messages, and she and her children took charge of the