

Mr. MONTAGUE. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Mulock) will have it done.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I will have it done.

Post Office—Miscellaneous expenses.... \$212,120

Mr. TAYLOR. Before this item is adopted I wish to draw to the attention of the Postmaster General to a matter which has arisen in connection with the dismissal of a postmaster. I refer to Mr. Williams, of Seeley's Bay. The question of his dismissal has been thoroughly threshed out in the House but since the discussion I have received a letter from one of the most prominent Liberals in my county, namely, Mr. McCutcheon, from Seeley's Bay, which I propose to read. When this matter was up before I submitted the following question to the Postmaster General:—

Was a petition, signed by nearly all the residents of the surrounding district, presented to the Postmaster General protesting against any change being made?

I do not know whether a petition was signed by nearly all of the residents or not.

Mr. TAYLOR. It is immaterial.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. On that point, I would say that, though a petition was presented, it was never brought to my knowledge until to-day.

Mr. McCutcheon, of Seeley's Bay, writes as follows:—

Seeley's Bay, April 28th, 1898.

Mr. Geo. Taylor, M.P., Ottawa.

Dear Sir,—I was very much pained on reading Mr. Mulock's answer to your question, "Was a petition, signed by nearly all the residents of the surrounding district presented to the Postmaster General protesting against any change being made?" And his answer was that although a petition was received it was never brought to his knowledge until that day, April 14th, 1898. Now, sir, I hold an acknowledgment from the Postmaster General of said petition by him, dated December 17th, 1897, which I inclose you. That there has been underhand work in this matter is very evident, and that Mr. Williams was wrongfully dismissed from the office. I trust this thing will be thoroughly investigated and justice done all concerned. It is not true that Mr. Williams removed himself to Smith's Falls, that his daughter carried on the business of the post office in his absence in a very satisfactory manner to all concerned is a fact. It is also true that Mr. Williams has an interest in a branch store at Smith's Falls, that he spends his time between the two places. But that he did supervise the post office at Seeley's Bay as well, as when his time was given to Seeley's Bay alone, it is also true that the public in general was well satisfied with Mr. Williams as postmaster, when there was over 100 genuine signatures on the petition sent by me to the Postmaster General, praying that there be no change made, given by Reformers and Conservatives alike, all getting their mail at said office, and none outside. I would address the Postmaster General on this matter, but fearing he might never see my missive I refrain for the present, seeing you have taken the matter in hand, I will leave it with you. Hoping Mr.

Williams may be reinstated postmaster at Seeley's Bay.

I am, yours,  
(Sgd.) F. MCCUTCHEON.

I may say that Mr. McCutcheon has been the standard bearer of the Reform party in that section. He is one of the most respectable and prosperous farmers of the neighbourhood, living within a mile of Seeley's Bay. He incloses to me a letter which I will now read. Having been the first signer of the petition to the Post Office Department, the answer was directed to him. It is as follows:

Post Office Dept., Can.,  
Ottawa, 17th Dec., 1897.

Messrs. Jas. McCutcheon, Geo. Collis and others,  
Seeley's, Bay, Ont.

Gentlemen,—I am directed by the Postmaster General to acknowledge the receipt of your communication praying that the present postmaster of Seeley's Bay may be retained in office, and representing that the situation to which it is proposed to remove the post office would be an extremely inconvenient one, and, in reply, to inform you that the subject to which you refer will receive due inquiry and consideration.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,

W. D. LESUEUR,  
Secretary.

This proves conclusively that the petition came to the department on the 17th of December, although when the Postmaster General answered the question in the House as to whether a petition had been presented to him, he said it had never been brought to his attention until that day. I may say that Mr. Williams, the postmaster who was dismissed without cause, is one of the most respectable men in this or any other section of the country—a gentleman occupying a high position, a member of the Methodist Church, a class leader in the church, an advocate of temperance, and in every way one of the best living men in the country. Yet this gentleman is thrown out, though his family are living there and attending to the telegraph office and the telephone office, and carrying on a store—his wife and daughter being there, and he devoting his time between Seeley's Bay and Smith's Falls. Every Conservative and every Reformer in the neighbourhood signed the petition. The office has been removed to an inconvenient place at the west side of the village, and a gentleman who has had no experience in handling letters or dealing with post office orders has been appointed postmaster. I believe that when the next election comes round, if for no other reason than the injustice that has been meted out by the Postmaster General to Mr. Williams, every Reformer in that section of the country will resent it, whether the candidate be myself or somebody else. Notwithstanding that, I would like to see Mr. Williams reinstated, and the people left to vote as they