

eral, or any one else in his position, in dismissing the person against whom these charges were made. But whether the report justified the dismissal or not, I know as a matter of fact, and every person within a reasonable distance of that post office knows, that that dismissal was wholly justifiable.

Mr. QUINN. That is the trouble: the members were made the judges.

Mr. McINNES. That is a fact which is incontrovertible. The overbearing character of that late postmistress and her husband caused a condition of unrest among the people with whom they had to deal that was very far from satisfactory. Let me give you an illustration. It may seem almost incredible to hon. gentlemen, but I know it is an absolute fact. People have gone to the office to complain against the conduct of the postmistress in not handing out the mail to them which was in their boxes. Instead of giving them their mail or giving any satisfactory explanations why it was not delivered, she has actually walked up and down behind her wicket with a six-shooter in her fist. Hon. gentlemen may laugh, but I am not overstating the facts. They have laid stress on the fact that Mr. McManus lost his life while in the service of his country. I know as a fact that he was not engaged in carrying the mail when he met the accident which brought about his death. On the contrary, he was in a condition which coincides very much with the reputation the hon. gentleman behind me (Mr. Davis) gave of him when he was cut in the Territories. If he had not been in that condition, that unfortunate man would probably to-day be in the land of the living. As to the dismissal of Mrs. McManus, it took place before the death of her husband. I have got a certain amount of sympathy in my disposition, and if that poor man had died and no dismissal had taken place, I would have strained a point to retain to the postmistress this partial means of livelihood. But the dismissal took place weeks before her husband died, and when, as a matter of fact, he was on a fair way to recovery. Under these circumstances, knowing as I do, the uneasiness and unrest which existed, and, in some cases, the acts of violence which took place in and about that post office, I think the hon. Postmaster General was absolutely justified in making this dismissal, and if the dismissal had not been made, there would have been ample occasion for alarm at his retaining such an official in a Government office.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. What seems to strike me as an important feature in this case is that charges having been made and an investigation ordered, the charges were practically dismissed. We

Mr. McINNES.

have had statements made here in support of the action of the department which indicate the very unfair treatment of which the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) very properly complained, because these are statements of a nature which have never been made, much less on oath, in the presence of the late postmistress. The conduct of the Postmaster General must strike every lover of fair-play as very extraordinary indeed. He would not even read the report of the commissioner on the charges, no doubt because he felt it could not justify his action, but he simply gave in his defence some observations made by the commissioner, which are wholly unsupported by the evidence taken. The commissioner does not pretend that he went into any inquiry as to whether this woman was unpopular or overbearing. The charges were serious enough, if proved, but they were wholly disproved, and under the circumstances it seems to me that a very strong case has been made out for reconsideration by the Postmaster General. It is to be hoped that the case of this woman will in no way be prejudiced by the ex parte statements which have been made in this debate. If the hon. gentleman wishes to establish a new rule, that postmasters or postmistresses must not, unless at the peril of their lives, be overbearing—whatever the inspector meant by that particular term—let that be understood and that charge be investigated. Let the inspector take fresh evidence and make a fresh report before condemnation is passed. Moderate men on both sides will agree with me that the Postmaster General, having undertaken to make a thorough inquiry into the matter, should follow that fairly out and not act without evidence. Certainly, so far as the documents go, there is not a tittle of evidence to support the impression which, no doubt, the inspector gathered in that district. We do not know whom he consulted in order to find out whether this woman was overbearing or otherwise, and the hon. Postmaster General ought to be in possession of that information before finally dismissing this postmistress.

Mr. OSLER. I know nothing about this case at all except what I have heard in the House about it. I should feel humiliated, as a member of this House and a citizen of Canada, to think that our politics have come to this condition that a dismissal should take place on the evidence which has been read to us. I will undertake to procure stronger evidence against any postmaster or postmistress in the county of North York than has been presented in this case. I live in the summer time in the county of York, and I know that in every little town there are jealousies and bickerings; and if these are taken notice of and if on evidence as slight as that given in this case, a dismissal is to take place, I say that our civil service is in a condition worse