

Ottawa, March, 10th, 1898.

Dear Mulock,—Our friends from Bonaventure strongly insist that the Oak Bay post office be abolished. They state that it is only maintained for the benefit of one offensive partisan. I think you had better comply with the request made by our friends and, in the interest of economy, abolish that post office.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) J. ISRAEL TARTE.

Hon. William Mulock,
Postmaster General,
Ottawa.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. BERGERON. Who signed that letter ?

Mr. McALISTER. It is signed, J. I. Tarte, who I presume is the Minister of Public Works. I asked for all the correspondence, telegrams, and so forth, referring to the closing of this post office, and that is all I have received. I asked later for the telegram, and the Postmaster General told me he could not find it, and of course I accept his word for that. It is very singular that there is no report of the inspector or of any officer in that district, stating that this post office was kept for the benefit of an offensive partisan, as the Minister of Public Works calls him, or recommending that the post office be closed. Further than that, one of the questions I asked in April was : What was the revenue from the Oak Bay Mills post office, and the revenue from the Oak Point post office ? And the answer I received was :

The revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1895, from Oak Bay Mills post office was \$75 ; for the year ending 30th June, 1896, it was \$71 ; and for the half year ending 31st December, 1896, it was \$41.

The revenue from the Oak Point post office for the same dates was for the first year, \$39.69, for the second year \$39.27, and for the half year \$22.25.

Mr. BERGERON. And yet it has not been abolished.

Mr. McALISTER. The revenue from the Oak Point post office was little more than half the revenue derived from the Oak Bay Mills post office which the Minister of Public Works says was only kept open for the convenience of one offensive partisan. That of itself is sufficient evidence to show that the Oak Bay Mills office should not be closed. Now, the fact is that the postmaster at Oak Point was a partisan. He was not what the Minister of Public Works would call an offensive partisan, because he was a supporter of the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Guite), whom I am glad to see in his seat now. The hon. member (Mr. Guite) who says that the Oak Bay Mills office was kept open for an offensive partisan and that it was in the public interest it should be closed, would be nearer the truth if he had said, that it was in the interest of party and in the interest of party heelers who supported the hon. gentleman (Mr. Guite) that it

should be closed. I do not wish to say anything harsh against the hon. member for Bonaventure, but when he recommends that this post office at Oak Bay Mills should be closed, I think he is ignorant of the wants of the people in that locality, or otherwise he is guilty of wilfully doing an unjust act to that portion of his constituents. I do not think the hon. member (Mr. Guite) ever was at Oak Bay Mills before the election when he went seeking votes, and I do not think he has ever been there since, and further, I question very much if he knew that that district was in his county at all. The distance between the Cross Point office and the Oak Point office is seven miles which distance is without an office at all, and around Oak Bay Mills, there were 22 families served by that office all the year round, and in addition there were 40 transient men working there who received their mails at that office. When that is taken into consideration I do not think it can be said that that office was kept open for the benefit of one offensive partisan. It was kept open for the benefit of a large community there, the largest community between Cross Point and Carleton, a distance of forty miles. If the postmaster at Oak Bay Mills had been a supporter of the hon. gentleman from Bonaventure (Mr. Guite) that office would never have been closed. The mails at the present time are carried by the Baie de Chaleur Railway and Oak Bay Mills is only about 100 feet away from the station so that no expense would be incurred in conveying the mails to the post office, whereas at the present time the mails have to be carried a distance of a mile and a half to the Oak Point post office. That is of itself a strong reason why the Oak Bay Mills post office should be opened, and if it were in the public interest or in the interest of economy to have any office closed it would be the one at Oak Point. I do not say that the Oak Point office should be closed, for I know nothing about it, but I do know that the office at Oak Bay Mills should be kept open. If it is necessary for the people in any community to support the Government in order to receive what is due to them from the postal service, then the sooner the people of this Dominion know it the better. I do not think the Postmaster General wishes to be unfair, but I do say that the manner in which that post office was closed was arbitrary and unprecedented. I do not think that in the history of the Dominion you can find another instance where a post office was closed on the strength of a telegram or recommendation from "our friends" as the Minister of Public Works called them. A report should have been had from the inspector before any action was taken. If the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Guite) persists in refusing to recommend that this office be open and that justice be done to an important part of his constituency, I think the Postmaster General should have