

my riding, and I glory in the fact, the average family boasts of from eight to ten children. You often meet with families of 12, 15 and 18 children and only a short time back a woman gave birth to her 23rd child, and 18 of her children are still living. I can go still further: in the neighbouring parish, that of the former member for Chicoutimi, Saint-Gédéon du Lac Saint-Jean, one woman has brought into this world 26 children. Do you believe, Sir, that in the circumstances, a woman has any time to meddle in politics? I take it, the simple mention of that fact is sufficient to show the absurdity of the Government's proposal.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to say a word about patronage. I can prove that certain political influences are still at work in the matter of appointments, especially as regards postmasters.

In the parish of Saint-Gédéon du Lac Saint-Jean, the parish which has the honour of being the home of the former member (Mr. Girard), the postmaster gave up his position last Spring. Immediately a petition signed by three-quarters of the ratepayers was sent to the Postmaster General asking that a certain citizen be appointed to succeed the retiring postmaster. The petition was forwarded to the Postmaster General through me, and as the position in question does not command a high salary, I was under the impression that the appointments were still made by the Department. A few days later I was informed that the post-office had been moved to the house of Mr. Girard's son, Mr. Eméride Girard. Then I received a new petition signed by a great many more people and asking the Postmaster General to appoint anybody in the parish except Mr. Eméride Girard; no name was put forth for appointment. I forwarded this second petition to the Postmaster General; listen to the reply:

Ottawa, July 18, 1918.

Dear Sir,

I am instructed to acknowledge your favour of the 14th inst. enclosing a petition signed by the prominent citizens of St. Gédéon (Mr. J. E. Ludger Fortin) and by a great number of the taxpayers, protesting against the appointment of Mr. Eméride Girard to the position of postmaster at St. Gédéon Station and asking that Mr. Joseph Morissette be appointed in his stead; your letter also expressed the hope that the petitioners' request would be granted.

In reply I must inform you that no appointment has been made as yet to this postmastership, the matter still being in the hands of the Civil Service Commission; but since the retiring postmaster (Mr. Arthur Couture) had to be replaced by the 1st of July we allowed him to move the post-office temporarily to the premises of his next-door neighbour, Mr. Eméride Girard.

[Mr. Savard.]

I may add that a copy of your letter, as also a copy of the petition submitted, will be sent to the Civil Service Commission which is now in charge of all these appointments.

Very truly yours,

Robert Fowler,

Assistant Deputy Minister.

Mr. E. Savard, M.P.,  
Chicoutimi, P.Q.

With their petitions before the Postmaster General and the Civil Service Commission the citizens of Saint-Gédéon naturally believed that their wishes would be respected and that the only individual they objected to would not be appointed. It was not, Sir, on account of Mr. Eméride Girard being the son of the former member that the people of Saint-Gédéon were opposed to his appointment, but solely because they knew he was not qualified for the position although the postmastership in those small municipalities does not require a great amount of learning. Anyway, he was the only citizen whose appointment would be frowned on by everybody in the district; consequently we had a right to expect that he would not be appointed. Well, in spite of all our petitions and in spite of all we could do, Mr. Girard was named postmaster, and not, mind you, by the Civil Service Commission but by the assistant inspector at Quebec, Mr. Larue. Mr. Larue himself told me of it; and he informed me that he had made this appointment some time in October and that he had never been apprised of the petition that the citizens of Saint-Gédéon had sent to Ottawa.

How did that happen, Mr. Speaker? What influence is behind Mr. Girard's appointment to the postmastership of Saint-Gédéon? The appointment was not made by the Postmaster General who has left all these affairs in the hands of the Civil Service Commission; and the Civil Service Commission did not have anything to do with it, according to Mr. Larue himself who made the appointment.

I claim that patronage is still as rampant as ever and that the influence of Mr. Girard, the former member for Chicoutimi, is directly responsible for the appointment of his son to the postmastership at Saint-Gédéon.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words about our returned soldiers. Everybody is agreed that these men must be treated in the very best way. Is that being done? I claim it is not, Sir.

I have not a great many of them in my riding, but I wish to mention the case of a young sub-lieutenant named Lachance who was invalided home from the firing-line over a year ago and who since then has tried in