

Mr. *Holton*—Would you not, as an engineer of long experience, infer from the facts of dismissal or withdrawal of an engineer, that his successor was expected by the parties having the power of dismissal or withdrawal in their hands, to pursue a line different from that pursued by the gentleman who had been, in consequence of these complaints, so withdrawn or dismissed?

Mr. *Fleming*—I do not think it is advisable to dismiss an engineer unless there is some really good reason for it. There is no denying the fact that an unpleasant feeling on the part of some of the contractors towards Mr. Smith existed for a long time, and the Commissioners and the Government, and everybody, were very anxious to avoid anything of the kind. Mr. Smith was a man who did his duty well, but it is quite possible for a man to do his duty without making himself obnoxious to the contractors. It was first proposed that a general change should be made. It was proposed that Mr. Hazlewood, the present engineer of the St. Lawrence district, should be removed to Mr. Light's place, and that Mr. Light should be removed to Mr. Smith's place, and that Mr. Smith should take Mr. Hazlewood's place. I objected to this on account of the difficulties that would result therefrom. It would lead to a great deal of confusion, inasmuch as each of these engineers was perfectly familiar with every portion of the district over which he had been. I had for some time before been very much in want of an engineer of Mr. Smith's high standing to conduct the surveys of the Pacific Railway in British Columbia, and I suggested that Mr. Smith should be asked to go there, and have another man as good as Mr. Smith appointed in his place. That was done.

Mr. *Langevin*—What was the character of the man appointed in Mr. Smith's place? Was he strict?

Mr. *Fleming*—Yes.

Mr. *Walsh*—Do you think he at all answers the description given here as a pliant engineer?

Mr. *Fleming*—The very opposite.

Mr. *Holton*—Is there not a field for a display of temper, if a man has infirmity of temper, in the conduct of a survey of the western wilderness stretching over some 1,500 or 3,000 miles, far away from his superiors?

Mr. *Fleming*—The case is quite different.

Mr. *Mackenzie*—He is on the Pacific side (Laughter.)

Mr. *Fleming*—He is chief there, and there are no contractors there.

Mr. *Holton*—But there are subordinates. Do men, endowed with the peculiar temperament attributed to Mr. Smith, reserve their manifestations of temper exclusively for the class contractors, or do they sometimes let it appear in their intercourse with subordinates and other men? Or is it a special *scunner* at contractors? (Laughter)

Mr. *Fleming*—Not at all. I am satisfied that if the contractors had borne with Mr. Smith a little longer they would have found him as good as any other engineer, and they probably would not have had so much objection to him.

Mr. *Holton*—Had you any correspondence with Mr. Smith on this matter?

Mr. *Fleming* handed the Chairman certain correspondence between himself and Mr. Smith.

Mr. *Mackenzie*—Did you ever find any difficulty with Mr. Smith on account of his alleged infirmity of temper?

Mr. *Fleming*—I never saw Mr. Smith show bad temper but once, and that was for some trifling reason—because his man had not brought his horse early in the morning, (Laughter). I think it is due to Mr. Smith that I should explain that he is a very earnest man, and takes a deep interest in everything he has on hand, and sometimes gets out of temper with those who do not see things as he does.

Mr. *Holton*—Perhaps the Chairman will read those papers handed in by Mr. Fleming in the order of their dates.

The Chairman said the first letter was one from Mr. Fleming to Mr. Smith, dated 30th March—offering Mr. Smith a position on the Pacific Survey.