

affording him relief if they were not told that a wrong had been done?

Mr. CLEMENTS. I believe Mr. Wilson has made no complaint to any minister of the Crown. He complained to me and asked me to bring the matter up.

Mr. FIELDING. I quite agree that it is open to any citizen to have a grievance brought up in this House. But I think that if a citizen has a grievance against the government he should first make it known to the minister and give him an opportunity to make the matter right. I think the hon. gentleman (Mr. Clements) will agree with me that it was Mr. Wilson's duty, the moment the error occurred, if it was an error, or the wrong was done, if it was a wrong, to make representation to the Minister of Trade and Commerce and demand an inquiry. If he could not do it at once for such reason as the hon. member has stated, he should have done it later. However, the matter is brought forward now, and I will see to it that the information is obtained.

Mr. CLEMENTS. The point is whether Mr. Alex. Smith was entitled to this \$245—

Mr. FIELDING. I think that most of us, if we had been, as we believed, wrongly deprived of \$200 or \$300 four years ago, would have found a way to bring the subject to the attention of the proper minister instead of waiting so long and then bringing it up in parliament. That would have been the businesslike way of doing it. Mr. Wilson may have a grievance but the marvel is that he has nursed it and kept it to himself instead of bringing it to the attention of the proper minister.

Mr. LALOR. But it has been explained to the minister that this firm is now out of business, and its members are no longer afraid of Mr. Smith. While they were in business they were afraid to make complaints. Now, they bring it to the representative of their riding in this House to have it investigated.

Mr. FIELDING. I am afraid that I cannot admit that that is a sufficient reason for this delay. The hon. member for West Kent (Mr. Clements) admits that he has had the case in his hands for over a year.

Mr. CLEMENTS. I may tell the hon. minister that this matter was to have been brought up in the Public Accounts Committee prior to the closing of last session. I had no thought of the session closing when it did, but as soon as the matter was brought to my attention I gave notice of it, and I have taken the first opportunity of bringing it up.

Mr. CLARKE. What is the first name of this Mr. Wilson?

Mr. CLEMENTS. M. J. Wilson.

Mr. BOYCE. It was somewhat interesting to hear the words that dropped from the lips of the hon. Minister of Finance in regard to the non-complaint to any department or any responsible minister of the Crown in reference to the misdoings of an official of this government. I presume the hon. gentleman must be joking, I presume he must have forgotten the history of the past year, that he must be making a play upon the history of the past, upon the history that has been set forth in this House—and this is a matter of record—because we know and we know from bitter experience how futile it is, how puerile it is, how silly it is for any hon. gentleman in this House to have the audacity to complain to any responsible minister of the Crown, aye, to complain in parliament itself, of the misdoings of any official of this government. Complaints were made in regard to the conduct of a responsible officer of the government in the district of East Algoma. I am speaking of a certain postmaster. So grievous were those complaints that the inspector of this government was sent up there, that inspector went into that office, investigated the state of things and recommended that man's instant dismissal.

Mr. BENNETT. What for?

Mr. BOYCE. For theft; for larceny. He did his duty. What became of the charge? The man was allowed to resign. He was begged and entreated to resign, and four months having elapsed between the issue of the fiat for his dismissal and the time of his resignation he was paid during all that time, petted, pampered and kept in office by this government. Being a thief, being a man who had been reported to be a thief by their own official, the inspector of the Post Office Department, what became of him? He began to be very useful to this government in elections. He was used by the candidate of this government in the election and in the provincial election in January, 1905, and on the following 25th January, 1905, and in February, 1905, the same gentleman applied to the Postmaster General for his reinstatement and he was reinstated. There is one instance of the futility of complaining to a responsible minister of the Crown in this government of the misconduct of an official. Does the hon. gentleman want another instance? He is more familiar with the records of parliament than I am. Another occurs to me and it is right up in the same district. It is the case of the postmaster at Copper Cliff. Complaints were made, and a petition signed by over 500 residents of the town of Copper Cliff was sent to this government asking for the removal of the postmaster. It was alleged on the floor of this House, on the 12th July, 1906, as an absolute fact and proved by