

low figures. But in order to provide for one case out of a thousand, my hon. friend takes a perilous step, and asks Parliament to do away with the principle of the lowest tender, and to put into the hands of the Postmaster General the power to award—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. I may remark to the hon. gentleman that the discussion he is now making is concerning section 2, and we are on subsection 119 of section 5.

Mr. FOSTER. I am sure the Chairman is not unreasonable, but will allow me to make this argument strong, and then pile it up on my argument on section 119, to show that the argument is cumulative, and that has power with an audience, and I think has power with the Postmaster General.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Sir Louis Davies). It is really too bad for the hon. leader of the Opposition, in a matter of this kind, to take up the time of the House as he is doing. We have no objection to his taking all the latitude possible, but I certainly think, after we have two or three hours on this measure, it is an abuse of the privilege of a member to go on discussing all round it as the hon. gentleman is doing. Is it worth while dragging on this debate?

Mr. FOSTER. No, it is not.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The Bill has got to go through. I do not suppose that there are more than two or three days of the session left. And unless there is some strong argument against this section, I appeal to the hon. gentleman to let it pass.

Mr. FOSTER. Now, I shall just pass from that first stage of my argument to the section under hand, to show that what is essentially a centralization of power and a dangerous one if section 2 is carried out and repeated again in section 5. That really puts the whole system of railway mail clerk work in the power of the head of the department, because the controller is to be the appointee of the Postmaster General and makes his report to him. Now, I do not think that that centralization of power is a good thing, and it is for that and many other reasons that I make my protest against this measure. I repeat again that at this extremely late hour of the session, we should drop this measure and go on with more important business, and if my hon. friend is reasonable he will give way to my appeal. If my hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) and my hon. friend from Lambton (Mr. Lister) were here, I would ask them to join me in this appeal. If we have any time at our disposal, let us rather take up the plebiscite. That is a matter which is dear to the Minister of Agriculture and of very great interest to the hon. member for Lambton. That hon. gentleman interpolated myself and some other gentle-

men on this side, the other day, with reference to it. Why should we go on with an unimportant piece of legislation such as the one before us when such an important and pledged-piece of legislation remain unfulfilled? Were they here I would appeal to them to join me in urging the Postmaster General to withdraw his Bill for the present and give up the hours we are now wasting to a discussion of the plebiscite measure. I think it is really too bad that that measure was not crystallized into form of law and placed before the people for their judgment, as was promised. That important legislation, however, is shoved off, and we are called upon to take up this Bill which is important, it is true, in some of its details, but which, at the same time, might very well wait for another session, when all the members are here.

Mr. MILLS. It would not be very satisfactory to pass this Bill in its present state, and I am sure the country is not pining for it. We have other legislation of vastly more importance to deal with. Some portions of this Bill I do not consider at all satisfactory, but quite the reverse, though, so far as section 5 is concerned, I repeat that in the main I approve of the railway mail service being made a separate department. This Bill was brought down for the first time when quite a number of members were present, and it was withdrawn on some objections to it being raised. Then it was brought on again, and again objected to, and again withdrawn; but now, in the dying hours of the session, the hon. Postmaster General brings it up again and persists in forcing it through. Under the circumstances, it is not decent for the Postmaster General to force this Bill upon the House as he is doing. There is not a shadow of excuse for his conduct, but we cannot but think that there is some sinister motive behind it and not a desire for the welfare of the country. I do not believe that there are three members on the other side who understand the Bill. We have had but very meagre information from the Postmaster General with reference to it. I looked over "Hansard" when it was first brought up, and could find very little information concerning it. I am sure that if this Bill should pass, and I were asked by my constituents to say what it means, I would not be in a position to do so.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Would that necessarily be the fault of the Bill?

Mr. MILLS. Well, it may be a lack of intelligence on the part of the Speaker. But I do not believe you will get the constituency of Annapolis to believe that.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. But you may not have read it.

Mr. MILLS. I doubt very much if the Minister of Railways understands it. I