

have impelled the Minister not to dismiss a poor woman like that who had served the department for three years—not to dismiss her right on the heel of the burial of her husband. Her husband suffered from the accident that he received while doing his duty as an officer of the department, and as a servant of Canada. Here was a servant of Canada, who, after being laid up for months, died, and the duties of this office were performed by his widow, but she was shortly afterwards removed by the Postmaster General, and deprived of the means of living. I say it is a hard case. I know the hon. Postmaster General has some Irish blood in his veins, and if that blood has anything of the kindness, pity and generosity that is supposed to inhere in Irish blood, I hope when he reconsiders what he has done, he will be able to tell the House in a few days that the course he took was inconsiderate, that he was not aware as to what the facts of the case were, and that the bare circumstance that the husband may have been the supporter of Mr. Haslam, and been a good Tory, should not lead him to strike a poor widow. I hope he will be able to assure the House that he will reconsider the matter.

An hon. MEMBER. What was the salary?

Mr. DAVIN. I am afraid it was very small. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). By accident I happen to have in my bag the papers which I brought to the House yesterday in order to answer the hon. gentleman's question, otherwise I would be at the disadvantage of not being able to make an answer except from memory. The hon. gentleman, in his chivalry, omitted to extend the ordinary courtesy of giving a Minister of the Crown notice that he would bring up this matter. I have no knowledge whatever of the circumstances of this case except what appear in the files of the department. I am not aware of the politics either of the lady or her deceased husband. The matter, so far as this department is concerned, is in no respect tainted with politics one way or the other.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I am stating what is true. There was a complaint made in November last by a large number of citizens against the administration of this post office, and this complaint was referred in the ordinary course as a matter of departmental routine, to Inspector Fletcher, who lives in Victoria.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. A Conservative.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I do not know his politics. He made a report in November; the answer I gave the hon. gentleman yesterday was a quotation from

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his report. Whether the husband has since died, I do not know. The report is dated 25th November, 1896. After referring to the conduct of Mrs. McManus as postmaster, and setting forth that the evidence on that ground was not considered sufficient for her removal, the report says :

That there has been considerable ill-feeling between those of the petitioners who gave evidence and the postmaster, is, on the other hand, quite apparent, and I would state that from inquiries made among the people of the place generally, there is a feeling that the postmaster and her assistant, Mr. McManus, her husband, are somewhat overbearing in their conduct towards many people visiting the office; and several instances were brought to my notice, trivial in themselves, where a more judicious treatment might have avoided more or less unpleasantness. This has given rise to the feeling amongst many of the residents of Northfield that a change is desirable. In deference to public opinion, a change was made.

Mr. DAVIN. Before you put the motion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that I was rather surprised when the Postmaster General rose to reply to the few remarks I made with reference to the letter of this afflicted woman, fell into what it is not too strong description to say, was a piece of brutal flippancy. It is inexcusable in any Minister of the Crown, but above all it is inexcusable in a gentleman supposed to be a gentleman and a scholar, who is connected with a great university and has the advantages, if he had availed himself of them, of the humanizing influences of education in that university. Can it be doubted for one moment, after hearing the report which the hon. gentleman read, that there was no ground whatever for dismissing this woman. The hon. gentleman's own inspector said that the charges made against her were trivial in themselves, and I expect if we inquired into the matter further, we would find this to be the case, that there was a politician who desired to get rid of this postmaster, and the politician desired to appoint a supporter of the Liberal party; and I will venture to say, and the Postmaster General will not dare to deny it, that a politician in British Columbia recommended the dismissal of this woman and recommended the appointment of D. S. Macdonald. The course taken by hon. gentlemen opposite in carrying out the spoils system is bad enough. There has been cruel and tyrannical conduct all over the country, but it caps the climax that a poor widow with her husband's grave still fresh, should be dismissed from her position, and when I bring up the case in this House we should have from a man in the position of the Postmaster General a piece of brutal flippancy.

Mr. FOSTER. I suppose the Postmaster General will lay on the Table of the House the report from which he has quoted.