

I think that this return which I am asking for, if it is brought down at an early stage, will prove an interesting return, and will afford this House and the country information which they are desirous of obtaining. I, therefore, urge on the members of the Government to see that this return is not delayed, that we have it early in the Session, and that it is not treated in the same manner as the motion which I made during the last Session.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I hope the motion will be granted, because it is quite right the hon. gentleman should have his laudable desire of knowledge gratified. The return will be brought down immediately, and I have no doubt that the hon. gentleman will find great satisfaction in perusing it. My other colleagues may speak for themselves, but I may as well say that between the dates mentioned, the Government has neither paid, nor will pay, for the use of that car, or any car, or for travelling expenses of any kind, nor for my food, or clothing of any kind. I paid my own expenses.

Motion agreed to.

MR. JOHN CREIGHTON, INDIAN AGENT.

Mr. SOMERVILLE moved for:

Return showing the date of Mr. John Creighton's appointment as Indian agent at Saugeen; the date of his removal from office; the nature of the charges preferred against him, and all correspondence connected therewith.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The date of Mr. Creighton's appointment was 20th September, 1882; the date of his ceasing to be a public officer, was the 22nd of April, 1885. As to the charges that were made, if the hon. gentleman will give an explanation, and the reasons why he asks for the charges, I may, perhaps, agree that he shall get them.

Mr. SOMERVILLE. I would say that we have heard a great deal in connection with North-West affairs about the misconduct of Indian agents, and I have been informed, I do not know how correctly, by parties on the ground, that this gentleman, who has some eminent connections in this country, has been guilty of similar offences to those which have been charged against Indian agents in the North-West. For this reason I was requested to ask for this return, and I cannot see that there can be any objection to bringing it down.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. If it had been a complaint made by the party who was removed, a complaint made to the House, and an appeal to Parliament, I might, perhaps, yield to it, but I do not see there is any reason why I should agree to this portion of the motion.

Mr. BLAKE. That seems to me a very extraordinary doctrine. I think we have a right to know what the conduct of a public officer has been. I think the Parliament of the country has a right to know what has been the course and the conduct of the officials whom we authorise to act in our behalf. Under the same general doctrine of the hon. gentleman, we may not know what the misconduct of any public officer has been if he has been removed from office, unless the hon. gentleman himself chooses to say that we shall know, or unless an application is made on his behalf. I say the public has a right to know in what manner the public affairs have been conducted. And the hon. gentleman's statement is that we should be kept entirely in the dark, unless the person presumably in the wrong should himself ask that an explanation be given as to his removal.

Mr. LANDERKIN. This House desires to know whether this officer has been properly or improperly dismissed. It is not an impertinent action on our part to seek to know what has been the conduct of the Government in regard to one of their officers, and the reasons why he was dismissed. If a competent officer performs the duties of an office efficiently, we naturally want to know why the Gov-

Mr. SOMERVILLE.

ernment dismissed him. If it was not for improper conduct on his part, we want to know why he was dismissed; and it is the duty of the Government to allow members of the House to know the grounds on which they remove public officers. It was not an unreasonable but very proper request, and the Government should grant it, not only in the interests of the country but in their own interest.

Mr. MILLS. I think the doctrine laid down by the First Minister is one which is altogether untenable. The statement is made that a certain public officer has been improperly dismissed. The officer may have committed a wrong; the Government may be justified in dismissing him. But the Government are discharging certain public duties, they are trustees of the public, and they are responsible to this House and the country for the proper discharge of their duty. It is a reasonable proposition that the House should be placed in possession of certain information in regard to the dismissal of that officer. The position taken by the First Minister is that if the party himself complains, he is willing to disclose the grounds of his dismissal; but, if not, it is none of our business and we are not entitled to know. I do not think that the hon. gentleman when on this side of the House propounded that doctrine. My impression is that he insisted upon having information with respect to every public act of the Government and the dismissal of public officers, such being a public act, which the Government might be called upon by the House to justify.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It will be found that when persons hold office during pleasure, the Crown can exercise its pleasure, and the House of Commons is not to be a court of appeal.

Mr. MILLS. The dismissal of a county court judge could not be questioned in this House under that doctrine.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I find that the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, opposed a motion of this character, giving, however, an explanation of the matter complained of, while protesting against such a course being followed, and as the result the motion was withdrawn. Hon. gentlemen will find that in respect to officers holding office during pleasure, the Crown exercises that pleasure, and the House of Commons is not to be a court of appeal. If hon. members will look into the authorities they will find that such is the case. If any hon. member will rise and state that the public officer committed a crime, and move for the papers, we will bring them down; but this is a mere matter of curiosity on the part of the hon. member. The language of the hon. gentleman shows why he made the motion.

Mr. SOMERVILLE. The hon. gentleman is laboring under an erroneous impression in regard to my motive in making the motion. It is not from any feeling of curiosity whatever. I consider I am discharging a public duty in moving it, and the members of the House, the people resident in the constituency where that gentleman held office, and the people of the country generally are entitled to the information which I ask. It is not, I repeat, from mere curiosity or any such motive, but in the discharge of a public duty, that I move the motion.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. What is the duty? If the hon. gentleman will state in his place that this person has committed any crime, we will bring down the papers; or that he is informed that he has committed any defalcation, or the party himself complains and states that he has been improperly used, if there is a *prima facie* case, then we will bring down the papers.

Mr. SOMERVILLE. It is quite evident from the trouble taken by the First Minister to attempt to conceal the information I am desirous of obtaining, that it is advisable the