

OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF THE

DOMINION OF CANADA

THIRD SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

61 VICTORIA, 1898

VOL. XLVI.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE THIRD DAY OF FEBRUARY TO THE
TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF APRIL INCLUSIVE



OTTAWA

PRINTED BY S. E. DAWSON, PRINTER TO THE QUEEN'S MOST
EXCELLENT MAJESTY

1898

the Government to provide the \$6,000 to pay them.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. I am not suggesting that \$6,000 would be an exorbitant sum to pay these gentlemen; but I had some difficulty, in a hasty glance at the Bill, in discovering just where the money was coming from. My hon. friend seems to think that he ought to be able to throw the matter on the generous consideration of the Government, but unless he made some provision in his Bill, the Government itself would not be authorized to pay these officers. And if he put that provision in the Bill to enable the Government to pay, it would, unfortunately, prevent his Bill from being entertained by the House. So, we have a rather awkward dilemma to face. I understand that the hon. gentleman has given a great deal of consideration to this subject, and has matured his views in this form. I would feel, for one, like examining the Bill very carefully. I presume that, before another session of Parliament, the whole subject may receive the consideration of the Government. I hope it will be possible to do that. I apprehend that the hon. gentleman would not think of pressing the Bill further during this session, having opened the discussion and given us the benefit of his views and placed them on record in the form of this Bill. If I am able to give attention to the subject during the recess, I can avail of the suggestions contained in the Bill, and would do so very gladly.

Mr. **REID**. Under those circumstances, I would move for leave to withdraw the Bill.

Motion agreed to, and Bill withdrawn.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES** (Sir Louis Davies). As it is now growing late, and we have done a good deal of work, and as I anticipate a rather heavy day to-morrow in the discussion of the Franchise Bill in committee, I would move that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to, and the House adjourned at 10.05 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, 1st April, 1898.

The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at Three o'clock.

LEASURES

THE POST OFFICE ACT.

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. Mulock) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 110) to amend the Post Office Act.

Sir **CHARLES TUPPER**. It would be interesting if the hon. gentleman would explain what the provisions of this Bill are.

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL**. The first clause in the Bill provides that books for the use of the blind shall be entitled to free transmission through the mails. That suggestion has been made to me by Mr. C. F. Fraser, of Halifax, who, I understand, is connected with an institute for the blind, and the subject has also been pressed upon me by Mr. Dymond, who is the superintendent of the Blind Asylum in Brantford. These books are large and bulky and very heavy; the letters being raised so that the unfortunate blind who have lost the priceless treasure of sight may know them by the sense of touch. I have been furnished with a list of these books which are to be found in many libraries now, and I have a statement showing the cost of their transmission through the mails. In some cases the postage alone is equal to the cost of the book in ordinary type. For instance, it would cost to transmit the Bible when prepared for the blind nearly \$4.80. I am sure every member of this House will approve of this suggestion.

Sir **CHARLES TUPPER**. Hear, hear.

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL**. The next clause provides for the decentralization of the dead letter branch which is now centred at Ottawa. At present if a letter is put in any post office and if the writer omits to stamp it or direct it or otherwise makes it impossible for it to be delivered, it has to be sent to Ottawa to the dead letter office here. The result is often productive of inconvenience and loss to those interested in the letter. For example, a wrongly-directed or unstamped letter dropped into the post office at Victoria would have to be forwarded to Ottawa and delay and loss frequently results. I propose to ask Parliament for permission to decentralize the dead letter office to a certain extent so that this work can be done at other convenient points throughout the Dominion. That is the practice in Great Britain, and it works to advantage there, I understand.

Mr. **DAVIN**. Hear, hear.

The **POSTMASTER GENERAL**. Sections 3 and 4 of the Bill have to do with the question of postage. Section 3 proposes a reduction of the letter rate from the present rate of 3 cents to 2 cents. Section 4 proposes a partial restoration of postage upon newspapers. The suggestion in the Bill as to the rate for newspapers is half a cent a pound, to come into force in two instalments; one-quarter of a cent per pound on the 1st of January, 1899, nine months hence; and the other quarter of a cent per pound on the 1st of July, 1899. It was thought advisable to defer the coming into force of this proposition about the reimposition of postage upon newspapers so that those interested in such publications may have opportunity to make such arrangements. In connection with that matter, it is not proposed to absolutely wipe out the free transmission