

for the statement that has just fallen from the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce. In 1878 I had the honour of succeeding the former Premier, Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, in the Public Works Department, which at that time embraced railways and canals as well as other public works. The hon. gentleman has said that my first act was to dismiss Mr. C. J. Brydges. That is not exactly the case. The hon. gentleman knows that Mr. Brydges and myself had come into such strong and violent collision in reference to the management of the Intercolonial Railway and the department over which I presided, that it would have been quite impracticable and quite impossible for me to ask him to continue in the discharge of that duty. Under those circumstances the change was made, but there was another reason, and that was that under Mr. Mackenzie and under the management of Mr. C. J. Brydges, the deficit between the revenue from the Intercolonial and the expenditure was from one-half to three-quarters of a million per annum, and I think I am right in saying that Mr. Brydges had committed himself to a statement, which had become public, to the then president of the Grand Trunk Railway, that the Intercolonial could not be operated without the loss of something like \$700,000 a year. The best advice and information I could obtain led me to the belief that a great reduction could be made in the expenditure for the Intercolonial, and I took measures for that purpose. A gentleman was appointed superintendent of that road who, from that time to this, has shown the value of that change by the remarkable success of his administration. The reorganization of the road in such a way as to reduce the expenditure to something like the income involved the dispensing with the services of a large number of individuals. That duty was discharged by gentlemen who were declared by Mr. Brydges himself to be the ablest and best men on the road. It was discharged by them in a thoroughly impartial spirit. They made the selection of the persons who should be retained and whose services should be dispensed with. I make the statement in the presence of hon. gentlemen opposite, and I refer the hon. Minister of Railways to the department, where he will find the facts as I state them, that the reduction of the employees of the Intercolonial, was done without favour or affection for Liberals or Liberal-Conservatives. Although the great body of those employees had been appointed by Mr. Mackenzie and his administration, all who were required and whose services were most valuable were retained, and I was assailed constantly, day in and day out, by Liberal-Conservatives who said to me: you have dispensed with a large number of your own friends and retained a large number of your strongest opponents. That does not bear out the statement which the hon. gentleman has made at

all. The effect of that reorganization of the department was of a most striking character. It enabled us, as my hon. friend will find by the records of the department, to bring its expenses practically within the receipts. Nothing can be more unjust than the aspersion that there was any reorganization for the purpose of getting rid of the Liberals and placing Liberal-Conservatives in their place. Nothing of the kind was done. I am not able to charge my mind now, having had the honour of administering the Department of Railways and Canals for many years, with a single instance in which a person's services were dispensed with because he was a Liberal or had supported Liberal candidates in the elections. An effort was always made to retain the best men; and so long as I remained in charge of the department, if the gentlemen who had the responsibility of working the Intercolonial, said that a person was not required for any particular post, no person was pressed upon them nor were they called upon to obtain the services of any such person. No one knows better than the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce, how strongly the late Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald, who led for so many years the Government of this country, set his face against the spoils system, and how firmly he resisted in every possible way the introduction of the system of political dismissals, and I feel that no greater injury can be done to the public service than to do anything which is calculated to lower the tone and character of a public servant, as it will be, if it is found that civil servants are to be slaves. No system of terrorism, under the Liberal-Conservative administration, with which I have had the honour of being connected, ever existed. We never adopted anything in the shape of terrorism or coercion or anything else to prevent the free and independent exercise of the franchise or that moderate expression of political opinion which both sides of the House were of opinion ought to be tolerated and exercised. I am sorry my hon. friend the First Minister was not in the House to-day, when his colleague, the Minister of Railways and Canals, made his statement of the policy which governs his administration of that great department. It was one which I think would have startled the First Minister as much as it startled me when it fell on my ears.

Mr. MCGREGOR. You were not startled very much.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. If the hon. gentleman has no better ground for interrupting, it would be well for him to permit me to complete my remarks, without interrupting me. I believe it would have startled the hon. First Minister as much as it did me. It was greatly in advance of anything intimated by the hon. First Minister as governing the tenure of office in the civil