

ing engaged actively in politics, having gone beyond the mark, having infringed the rule. What is the consequence? The country is put to an expense of some \$200 or \$300 when the minister in reality, had it not been for the sentiment of mercy, and the desire to do justice, would have been justified in acting on the information he had. But the country is put to the expense with the result that the facts are established so that you have to act.

I believe, as far as my experience has gone since I have been in office, that it is always with reluctance that members of parliament, even in the face of gross violations of the rule, the everyday rule which all civil servants ought to know, and which they do know as a general thing, take action towards the dismissal of an official guilty of that offence. I do not believe, whatever may be said, that the idea of the spoils of office, for the victors is prevalent in this country or among my colleagues in this House. But when we have the evidence that a rule of that kind has been transgressed we are acting in the public interest in applying the sanction of that rule as it has been recognized time and again for fifteen years on both sides of the House. In England interference of the public service in elections was the bane of the country. It was the plague of public administration. They reformed it. I was talking to a man the other day who has sat for many years in the British parliament. He told me that thirty years ago these abuses completely disappeared, and that during the many years that he sat in the British parliament as a member he had never once been applied to for any position or for anything in the nature of patronage. In 1882, the American government sent a commission to England that came back and made a complete report, and the American government, beginning with Mr. Cleveland, have, in many of their departments, carried out reforms, placing the Civil Service entirely outside of the region of politics. They are pursuing these reforms every day. In this country we have to make considerable progress before we reach that stage of perfection.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Hear, hear.

Mr. WILSON (Laval). Give us an example.

Mr. MONK. Well, I will not copy the example you set for me fifteen years ago when you spread desolation throughout my county under the circumstances I have just indicated. But, I venture to say that we have gone a great deal further, and at any rate cases which have come under my observation have been most conspicuous. I think I should give this explanation to the House.

With regard to dredging in the maritime provinces, it has not been necessary for me to be a long time in the control of my department to ascertain there are great reforms to be effected. The branch of my department which, in my estimation, calls for the most drastic reforms is that of dredging. Dredging has been carried out to a very large extent, and the necessity for it is increasing, but with regard to the awarding of contracts there are a great many things which require to be looked into and which I hope will be looked into with the least delay possible. Where the dredging is done by the government with its own plant the abuses have been most grave. The appointment of officers upon these dredges, and of the men who serve under them has been a question of political patronage and particularly so in the maritime provinces. I do not at this moment remember exactly the circumstances of the dismissal of Captain Decoste, but I am perfectly certain when the documents are all brought down it will be found that the department has acted with prudence and that the facts absolutely justified the action we took.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR (Guysborough). Mr. Speaker, I am inclined to think that my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) does not know what is going on in his department. There are very few officials in the Department of Public Works in the constituency that I have the honour to represent. I only know of three and the whole three have been dismissed without any trial and without any complaint as far as I know against them. There was one case that I brought on two occasions to the notice of my hon. friend—the case of Mr. Roderick Sutherland, the caretaker of the public building at Canso. When I heard that this gentleman had been ordered out of the building without any complaint being made against him and that another gentleman was waiting at the door with his furniture—

Mr. MONK. Does the hon. gentleman say that no complaint was made against him?

Mr. SINCLAIR. That was my information. My information was that no complaint was made against him that he knew of. No complaint was made to him or to myself and I endeavoured by letter to find out from my hon. friend what the reason was for the dismissal of Mr. Sutherland. It was very severe weather, Mr. Sutherland had a family living in the upper part of the building, he had no other house to go to and he was ordered out on the street with his family. The furniture of the heeler who was to take his place was piled at the door and he was striking and rapping for admittance. I received telegrams from Mr. Sutherland and I wrote a letter