

interests of the country at large. The Minister referred to the efficiency of the service and, as I said before, inefficiency would be a good reason for dismissal. I know that the hon. gentleman would desire to protect the fisheries of Prince Edward Island. We have on the shores of that island a very valuable fishery—the lobster fishery, which annually brings in about half a million dollars. It is most important in the interest of the whole province that that valuable fishery should be protected. Knowing that the hon. Minister desires to protect the fisheries I can quite believe that he did not make this dismissal of his own free will, but that he must have acted under extreme political pressure to dismiss the only active officer he had in the midst of the fishing season when the greatest vigilance was required.

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Will the hon. gentleman tell me whether in all the years this gentleman was an officer of the department he ever prosecuted a single case except one in which he was found to be entirely wrong and had to withdraw the prosecution, or ever made a report to the department?

MR. FOSTER. What has that to do with the question?

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The hon. member is speaking of this being an active man who faithfully discharged his duties. Now the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hackett) was inspector of fisheries, and this man was an overseer under him. I ask him can he recall a case in which this gentleman acted efficiently in the prosecution of offenders?

MR. HACKETT. Yes. I am well acquainted with Mr. McBride. For eight years we have been associated in the protection of the fisheries. He was not required to report to the department, but to the inspector his superior officer. But he has made reports to the department and these remained in the records of the department.

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Was it not in the county for which this gentleman was overseer that there were flagrant, notorious violations of the law?

MR. HACKETT. I can assure the hon. gentleman that no such thing as open and flagrant violation of the law took place under Mr. McBride. But it is going on at present. I was going on to say that the hon. gentleman made a great mistake. I know that he would not do such a thing intentionally, because he desires as much as any person to protect the fisheries of the province. Therefore, I say, political pressure must have been brought to bear upon him, as it would be contrary to his own good judgment to cut off this officer's head in the middle of a season when he should have been closely attending to his duty.

MR. HACKETT.

Take the case of the Dunk River, one of the most important fishery streams in the province. Mr. McBride resided on the banks of that river and it was his duty to protect the fishery there during the trout season, and the run of the salmon in the fall. But his services were dispensed with and no other man was appointed. And what is the result? That river is being netted day by day, until there is practically nothing left. Here is what a local paper in Prince Edward Island says on this subject:

The action of the new Liberal Government, in cancelling the commissions of the fishery officers who were charged with the protection of Dunk River, has already had a serious result on that river as a fly-fishing resort. No officers have yet, we are credibly informed, been appointed to replace those whose services were lately dispensed with, the reason being, we understand, that the candidates for the vacancies are about as numerous as the fish in the river now are, and the meetings called to select wardens have ended in disagreement and total failure, so far as any practical results are concerned. Meantime the river is being ruined by netting, and for angling it is at present almost valueless. For the past three or four weeks, during which time the river has been without protection, netting has been carried on wholesale. It is said that smelt nets are being used, by which the small fish, as well as the large ones, are taken, and it will be years before the stream, even with the most careful and strict supervision, will recover from the injury it has sustained this season. Under the watchfulness and care of the late officers, Mr. McBride and his assistants, instances of netting were rare; now, however, with no protection, the stream is being netted at a rate that must soon, if persisted in, leave it with trout as scarce as doubloons on the Queen's highway.

Here we have the result of the dismissal—the illegal dismissal, as I believe it to be—of this officer at a time when strict supervision was required for the protection of the river as well as other important fisheries on the coast.

Now, Sir, with regard to another matter that came up, the dismissal of employees on the railways. Two men who were working as trackmen on the Prince Edward Island Railway, and who have been so employed for many years, were dismissed. No cause was assigned. The Minister said they were dismissed because they were not satisfactory men. I am well acquainted with both of them. They are young, active men, accustomed to hard work and willing to work, and they have been performing their duties to the entire satisfaction of their foremen. To take these men off is a dangerous proceeding. The men who have taken their places have had no experience in railway work. It is most important that the track should be in good condition. The slightest carelessness or neglect may occasion an accident, and lives may be lost. It has not been the practice in Prince Edward Island to dismiss men occupying such positions, without a moment's warn-