

recommendations of that hon. gentleman with regard to those employed.

Mr. SPROULE. Is it in the interests of the service that men who have become familiar with the work should be dismissed and others put in their place? The list of dismissals and appointments was laid on the Table only a few minutes before these Estimates were submitted, no doubt lest we might otherwise have time to go into an analysis of it, but a rapid glance over it shows that men who have been doing the work year after year and who expected to be taken on this year again at the opening of navigation, were ruthlessly left aside and others appointed. Such a course was not followed in the past. Is it not a fact that on the canals the same men were re-employed year after year, and that, in pursuance of this understanding, these men have bought lots and built houses in the vicinity of their work, which they would not have done had they considered themselves liable to be not called upon again once their season's work was over. Take one man who was dismissed, on the Sault Ste. Marie Canal, he has only one limb, but did the work satisfactorily, and there is no information that he took any part in the election, or even voted, and it does seem a most inhuman thing to dismiss such a man as that. Then, with regard to the other parties dismissed, I would like to have the names of those who were considered offensive partisans and the name of the member who represented the riding and on whose representations they were dismissed.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. They were not dismissed.

Mr. SPROULE. Well, they were not re-employed, and it amounts to the same thing.

Mr. HAGGART. This is the first time in our history that any such policy as the hon. gentleman has introduced has been pursued. Every employee on the canal formerly was appointed by Order in Council, on the understanding that he would be kept on during good behaviour. There has been just the opposite policy introduced on the Soo Canal. The hon. gentleman said the reductions were made there for the purpose of economy. Well, there were thirty-two employees in all, and he has twenty-eight at present. He discharged every one of the old employees but two. He discharged thirty without inquiring whether they had been active partisans or incompetent or not. He altered a policy that has been pursued in this country ever since confederation. The lockmen on the canal were always appointed by Order in Council, and the same men kept on from season to season. We even took over from the Imperial Government all those who were on the Rideau Canal, and I am glad to see that the common sense possessed by my hon. friend from North Leeds (Mr. Frost) prevented his advising the dismissal of these

Mr. BLAIR.

men, for he knew the feeling that would be caused in that section if those old soldiers, who have been some forty or forty-five years in the employ of the Government had been treated in the supercilious manner in which the Minister of Railways treats employees from one end of the country to the other. Such a disgraceful condition of affairs never existed before—taking the bread from the mouths of the poor men in this country, who were appointed on the understanding, an understanding which has always been adhered to previously, that they would be retained during good behaviour. This gentleman, however, sends a letter to each of his political supporters, notably the hon. member for North Leeds (Mr. Frost), inclosing a list of every man employed on the canal, in his country, and gives him the option of either dismissing them or keeping on as many as he likes. Is that the policy which should be pursued by the head of a large department such as the Railway Department? The country will remember it. There is no advantage to be gained by conduct of that kind. Never was there any question raised by any previous Minister of Railways and Canals whether a man was a political partisan or not, so long as he did his work well. He owed his appointment, no doubt, to the fact that he was a political supporter of the party in power, but wholesale dismissals such as the hon. gentleman has made are the first in the history of the country, and I venture to say that no such disgraceful episode will again occur in its history as the dismissal of these men.

Mr. DYMENT. I know something with regard to these new appointments on the Soo Canal, and why the old hands were not taken on again. I am very much surprised to hear gentlemen of the long experience of the hon. member for Grey (Mr. Sproule) and the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Haggart), who had a list of these employed in front of them, get up and make the bald statement that there are only two of the old men kept on.

Mr. HAGGART. I take it from the list furnished by the Minister of Railways and Canals. On that list there are twenty-eight new appointments on the canal and two of the old hands kept on. If there is anything wrong, it is in the report of the Minister of Railways and Canals, which the hon. gentleman can see for himself.

Mr. DYMENT. To begin with, Superintendent Boyd is still there.

Mr. LISTER. He should be removed.

Mr. DYMENT. The next one I see is Mr. Taylor, the chief electrician. The next is Mr. Hill, the assistant electrician. I come down to John Gilbertson, the diver. These are the important positions with the big pay. Further on is Mr. McRae.

Mr. SPROULE. Look at McRae and see if the initials are the same?