

not claim such treatment, but may be dismissed without any reason given.

Mr. EMMERSON. In the one case the man is employed without any such understanding, but in the case of the telegrapher there is a written agreement that this shall be one of the conditions of employment.

Mr. SPROULE. But why is that done in one case and not in another? We have a Minister of Labour to see to it that every employee gets fair-play. Was he invited to interfere in these cases or make any inquiries? Not at all, so far as any information has been given to the House. We are told that reason is given in the case of dismissal of a member of the telegraphers' union, but not in the case of one who has not such a powerful union at his back. Does not that of itself indicate that where a man has power behind him he can get his rights, but where he has none but himself to fight his battles his rights will not be recognized? It seems to me that that is the meaning that is to be taken from what the minister has told us. But the question which started this discussion was the question of employees taking part in elections—was that principle right or was it wrong? We have it on the authority of a number of hon. gentlemen opposite, including ministers, that it was an improper thing for employees in the public service to take an undue part in an election, and that any who did so would be dismissed. As a matter of fact a number of men have been dismissed on this plea. We are told that we must not accept these cases of mere rumour, and my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Bell) was asked if he had affidavits to establish the facts he alleged. I would ask in return where were the affidavits to establish the charges against any members of the Conservative party who were dismissed in 1896? Did it require affidavits for the dismissal of these men? Not at all. The government were quite ready to act on mere rumour; on the mere charge being brought to the department the men were ruthlessly and barbarously dismissed, with no opportunity given them to disprove the allegation made against them. On the other hand, the hon. member for Pictou mentioned nine or ten different cases of officials of the Intercolonial taking an active part in one by-election in support of the government candidate. But nothing is done to these men. If this kind of thing were confined to the Intercolonial it might not be so bad. But I have information here that men in the Department of Marine and Fisheries took an active part in that Guysborough election, men who were servants of the country, and servants not of one political party but the people of all political parties. But they are in the service of the party in power for the time being. They did not take their political lives in their hands because they knew they would be shielded, therefore they come

from the Fisheries Department to take part in that election. I have here two cases: Mr. John Davis, fishery overseer, goes down and takes part in that election; Mr. Havlock Torrey, another fishery officer, takes part in that election.

Mr. SINCLAIR. Will the hon. gentleman be kind enough to say what he is reading from?

Mr. SPROULE. I am reading information given to me with regard to certain parties who took part in that election.

Mr. SINCLAIR. By whom is that statement signed?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. It being one o'clock I now leave the chair.

Mr. SPROULE. I respectfully submit that when a member is on his feet it is hardly courteous, either to the committee or to the member, for the chairman abruptly to close the debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. It is always the rule for the speaker or the chairman to leave the chair when the hour arrives for adjournment. But if the hon. gentlemen wishes to finish his statement he can do so. If that is the sense of the committee, then the chairman will take his seat and give an opportunity to the hon. member to finish his statement. But it is not the business of the hon. gentleman to censure the chairman.

Mr. SPROULE. It is my business to draw attention to any irregularity in his conduct, and I refuse to abandon my right.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman will please sit down. The irregularity is not on the part of the chairman, the irregularity is on the part of the gentleman holding the floor after the hour has arrived for adjournment. It being one o'clock I now leave the chair.

At one o'clock, committee took recess.

Committee resumed at three o'clock.

Mr. SPROULE. At one o'clock I was treating the question of the interference of civil servants in elections. I wish now to continue, by saying that in this particular instance, the election at Guysborough the offence, if offence it is, and we have the authority of hon. members of the government to say it is an offence—was widespread and not confined to one branch of the service, because we have instances brought to our notice from several branches. We have first the warden of the penitentiary who belongs to the Justice Department. Now it is rather a strange coincidence that penitentiary officials are so frequently put in constituencies where there is an election going on. Some of them, I think, ought to be inside the walls instead of outside, but they happen for the time being to have their liberty, and they make use of it in