

ever, we have a different rule, a rule for which the leader of this Government will be responsible if he establishes it himself or allows his Ministers to carry it out. That is not the worst of it; it will be a bad thing for the public service and for this country.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Sir Richard Cartwright). It so happened that I was a member of the Liberal Government which preceded the late Government, and I have a tolerably distinct recollection of what occurred at the time of our retiring from office. Unless my memory is wholly at fault—I am speaking from recollection, and therefore subject to correction—I think that on that occasion every employee on the Prince Edward Island Railroad was dismissed.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. True, a certain reorganization took place, and a certain number were reinstated. But a vast number were dismissed. I believe the same thing happened on the Intercolonial Railway. Under pretense of economy and reconstruction; and I think the first man to lose his head was Mr. C. J. Brydges, then manager of the Intercolonial Railway, who made himself especially obnoxious to the hon. gentlemen who sit opposite me. The fact of the matter is that for a great many years back the Intercolonial Railroad has been, from top to bottom, from cellar to garret, a political machine of the very worst type. I am not going to waste the time of this House by dwelling too long on evident facts, which are known to all men of any political experience in this country. But I have here the report of the Civil Service Commission, issued by hon. gentlemen opposite in 1892, and I propose to read a few sentences from that report; and when I have read them, I think every intelligent man in this House will agree with me that for the last eighteen years the Intercolonial Railway has been nothing more nor less than a political machine. Here is the sworn evidence given before that commission by Mr. Schreiber, at present and then the chief manager of the Intercolonial Railway:

How are the station masters, the conductors, the brakemen and all the other officers, appointed?—In the appointment of station masters, etc., the member for the district is consulted, and his nominee, as a rule, is appointed, unless some good reason is known why he should not be.

And the member for the district nominates the station masters?—The station masters and station operators, section men, section foremen, and brakemen, as a rule, are taken from the nominees of the member for the district.

Always excepting. I presume, that he is not a supporter of the Liberal Government. But I think the House is tolerably aware what the facts were. Now, I want to call the attention of the House to this:

Mr. FOSTER.

Have you any sort of check upon inefficient men being appointed, or do you require any qualifications?—If we consider a man is really of no use, we object to him, and we ask for another name.

Do you find that you have to do this often with men who are not efficient or not as efficient as you would like?—Yes; we have a large number of men now employed whose services we think could be dispensed with.

Is not the work on the railway of a technical character, so that not everybody is fit for any position there?—A conductor requires to be a man of experience, and a very careful man. If he does not perform his duties satisfactorily he should be dismissed, and so with station masters, train despatchers and others.

Thus they required to be men of special qualifications, and therefore they should not be appointed by the members for the district for political reasons, as they were all through the time of hon. gentlemen opposite. I venture to say that when my hon. friend came into office he did not find one man in a hundred, probably not one in a thousand, on that railroad, who had not been put there by hon. gentlemen opposite more or less for political reasons. Now, what did my hon. friend the Minister of Railways declare? He did not declare that he was going to interfere with any man's political opinions. On the contrary, he most expressly declared that no man should suffer at his hand in exercising the franchise as he pleased. What he did declare was this, that when sufficient evidence was laid before him to satisfy him that a particular man had been an active partisan, then he would dismiss that man. That was what he stated and nothing more; and that, Sir, is, I think, entirely in accord with the declaration made by my hon. friend beside me (the Prime Minister), and entirely in accord with the principles which have always been laid down. Now, Sir, I do not want to see the spoils system introduced in Canada; but I tell hon. gentlemen opposite that if civil servants are permitted to take an active part in politics, to speak on public platforms, to act as organizers, or in other ways to identify themselves with any political party, they must share the fate of that party. It is because I do not want to see the spoils system introduced that I uphold my hon. friend, and I say that it is his duty to make an example of all railway servants of the public in any capacity who refuse to abide by this wholesome rule. The rule is plain and clear, and hon. gentlemen have got to abide by it, whether they like it or not. We do not propose to deal with them as they dealt with us in all respects; but we do propose to say that civil servants who have actively interfered in political matters shall suffer the fate they deserve, and be dismissed on sufficient evidence of that fact being adduced.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I should not have said another word in this debate but