

three men for the purpose of illegal fishing. He was rightly convicted before a magistrate and justly fined. Every hon. gentleman here will admit that a man holding a position of lighthouse-keeper having been convicted and rightly convicted, as the records show, of having been a law-breaker, might naturally look to be dispossessed at once of the office of which he was the incumbent. But, while I had the pleasure to participate in the patronage of my riding, I never felt that my duty in life was to endeavour to do harm to those who might be politically opposed to me. If there is nothing more in politics than giving vent to one's spleen against political opponents, then I can only say that there must be but little in politics. I had hoped that during this long debate some hon. gentlemen opposite would have justified the principle of dispossessing men who are in possession of offices otherwise than on the principle, as it has been argued, that if we ever attain power in the province of Ontario we shall have full leave and license to retaliate upon the office-holders of that province. There is a principle at stake in this matter, and it is this—first to be just, even generous to all; and, in the next place, if you have the advantage, if you have the power, use that power in a merciful manner. So far, in my constituency, I have no cause to complain, because there have been no removals; but I know that if hon. gentlemen opposite are prepared to give full sway to my political opponents in that riding there will be an emptying of a great many saddles of the present office-holders there. If the principle followed out by the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries in the cases referred to is to prevail in that riding, I think it will be contrary to the spirit of fair-play, of justice, and a sense of right as between man and man. And I would ask the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and every other hon. gentleman who has charge of a department, that before any dismissals are made in that constituency—or in any other constituency, for that matter—a spirit of fair-play should be shown by bringing the accused face to face with those who believe that they have cause of complaint, and giving him an opportunity to defend himself fairly and above board. To believe the statements made here to-night one would believe that the greatest possible horror is manifested by the Ontario government at the interference of office-holders in election matters. There was an election the other day in North Grey; and not only those holding subordinate positions participated in that contest, but, Sir,—and I say it was a most regrettable thing—the First Minister of the province, Premier Hardy went upon the public platform in the town of Owen Sound and made use of language such as should never have been heard upon the public platform and such as I trust will never be heard again. In the exercise of his privilege, Mr. Hardy went to Owen Sound on be-

half of the Controller of Customs and, addressing a large meeting of the people of that town, which is much interested in shipping and in marine matters, said:

I am not talking politics to you to-night, but business. I want to know what you Owen Sounders have to lose by electing Mr. Paterson. (Cries of "Nothing.") What have you to gain by electing Mr. McLaughlin? (Cries of "Nothing.") Some of you say "Nothing." That is the point you must keep before you. Do you want a feeble commerce and a decaying population, or do you want the opposite? Shall Owen Sound stagnate for five years to come or perhaps ten years to come, or will you put yourselves in a position to be in sympathy with the Government.

I say it would have been more fair if he had given them fair promises if they would support the candidate he favoured. But he goes out of his way to threaten the town that the influence of the Government would be thrown against the town, damaging it and causing it to stagnate if at all possible. When that example is set, do you stand in amazement to know that every official in the province, whether his position be a humble one or whether it be an exalted one, takes a strong interest—aye, more than a strong interest, as has been stated here to-night by hon. gentlemen who preceded me. The hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Clarke) cited the case of Mr. Preston, who resigned the position of Librarian of the local legislature in order to become a candidate in the Dominion election, and, after his defeat was at once replaced in his position. Why, there sits in the House here to-day as representative of the city of Ottawa, a gentleman who held a position of trust under the Ontario government, which he resigned in order to become a candidate of hon. gentlemen opposite. And I have little reason to doubt that had that hon. gentleman been defeated, he would at once have been restored to a position he had vacated. Not only that, Sir, but a gentleman whom I had the honour, and I may add the pleasure, of defeating in my constituency, was also an employee of the local government. Going through the whole chapter, going through the whole list, it may be said, as has been alleged here by hon. gentlemen to-night, that the whole power, the whole machinery of the local government is used in federal elections and in elections for the legislative assembly, in the interest of hon. gentlemen opposite. Now, hon. gentlemen opposite should, I think, be fair. I think they should be prepared, as I said before, to accord that principle of British fair-play to all officials. If an official has voted against the Government they admit the principle that he is perfectly within his rights in doing so. They admit furthermore that if he has acted in a fair manner—and it is hard to determine what is meant by a fair manner—that then, too, he should not be interfered with. Why, Sir, who is to be the judge? Who is to decide as to the