

Shortly after the government of that day came into power, every man on the canal was dismissed, without any charge, without any notice, almost without the knowledge of the Minister of Railways and Canals. It mattered little whether these men had been placed there by a Liberal or Conservative administration, they were all dismissed, without notice, without a hearing of any kind. When I complained to the Minister of Railways and Canals, at that time the Hon. Mr. Blair, he told me that he knew nothing about it, that these dismissals had taken place under pressure of members of parliament from the district of Montreal. I remember particularly the case of a man named Sauvé, who had been placed on the canal by the Hon. Mr. Laflamme when he was Minister of Justice in the Mackenzie administration. Mr. Sauvé had always behaved very well, he had been retained after 1878 by the Conservative administration. He was bridgekeeper in 1896, he was a Liberal, who had never meddled in politics. At midnight, in the month which followed the advent to power of the right hon. the leader of the opposition, that man, with twelve children, living in a small house near the bridge, government property, an infirm man, guardian of the bridge, with that large family, was told to leave next morning. He had to clear out the next morning, without having any knowledge whatever of what he was charged with. He had never meddled in any way with politics, and was not given any opportunity to defend himself. The matter created quite a sensation in that locality. From one end of the canal to the other it was known that the man in charge at Ste. Anne's was dismissed, without even a mock inquiry. It is well known that everybody was changed on that canal from one end to the other. In Sauvé's case he was removed on this short notice, and under those circumstances, to make place for a brother-in-law of a member in the district of Montreal. That was the experience I had when I entered public life, and I am bound to say to this House that it created such an impression upon my young mind at the time that I determined that I never would be a party to proceedings of that kind. Let me say to my right hon. friend who leads the opposition and who was primarily responsible for all that occurred at that time, that though we may try to improve the Civil Service law, and remove the Civil Service entirely from the operation of patronage, whatever else you may do, you must absolutely prevent our civil servants from meddling in politics. Unless you are rigid on that point all the other reforms will come to naught. All civil servants of whatever grade or condition must be absolutely prohibited from meddling in politics if you are going to carry out any real reform. They must

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know, they should know by this time, that any interference in politics must meet with immediate punishment, and that if they choose to meddle in politics they must take the consequences. When you have proof before you, satisfactory proof, that they have infringed that wise and salutary rule, you must act upon it, they must be dismissed. What are you going to do when you find that a civil servant has meddled in politics? What does the minister do when he finds one of his employees at fault? He dismisses him. If he has committed faults of omission of sufficient gravity he dismisses him the moment he is satisfied in his own mind that the man is guilty, that he has really infringed the rule. Is the minister going to have a trial, a kind of Warren Hastings trial, in the case of every public servant when he is satisfied that he has infringed the rule? I think it is a wise rule which says that the minister must be satisfied. In what way? Well, it has been considered I think, that the denunciation by the sitting member in this House, who takes the responsibility of making the accusation, is a sufficient warrant to the minister. I believe it is. Is he going to appoint a Royal Commission to make a costly investigation when he is satisfied from the declarations before him that the accused has interfered in politics contrary to the rule? Let me call attention to this fact, that many candidates, to my knowledge, have called upon civil servants to help them in elections. To my mind that is a very grave matter. Members of this House will all admit that that is done sometimes, men who have teams are invited to furnish their teams for election purposes. That was done in the last election, public servants were invited to take part, to come to the committee rooms, to canvass, to work, and very often the civil servant did so with reluctance.

But what I wish to emphasize is that, when the minister is satisfied by the evidence placed before him or from his personal knowledge that the rule has been infringed, the public should know that the very best step to take at once is to be severe. No reform in the Civil Service will be of any use unless that rule is adhered to. I had the case of a man to deal with, and I was perfectly satisfied from what I had been told, from information received here and there, that he had infringed this rule. I was reluctant to place the department to the cost of—how much?—\$150, \$200, \$250, or \$300, for an investigation, and I sent for this man. I asked him: Have you anything on your conscience; do you not think you have, unfortunately—because I had no desire to dismiss this man—infringed the rule? I believe my colleagues will bear me out when I say that our experience is that, probably in the hope of saving themselves civil servants deny hav-