

they will not receive a license in the future. So far as the officials of the Dominion Government are concerned, I agree with the hon. gentlemen in this House who have taken the stand that if a Dominion employee or an Ontario employee, or any other employee, paid out of the public fund, takes any part on the political platform of this Dominion, or in any of the provinces, he has no right to be continued in the employ of any government. I believe that an employee has a perfect right to vote for whatever candidate he chooses; but if he goes beyond that, then I say that his conduct should be open to investigation, and that investigation should be had in a straightforward and honest manner, and those who are interested in the dismissal of these employees should have the opportunity of seeing the records in connection with that investigation. This matter was discussed at the first session of the last Parliament, and it is now being discussed in the first session of this Parliament. Why is it discussed today by a number of our friends on this side? Because the word has gone forth that a large number of Dominion employees are to have their heads cut off, and it is important that the people and the employees of this country should know whether that report be true or not. If it be true, we ought to know whether these employees are to have the chance of defending themselves or not, and I should be very happy to hear the hon. First Minister state what his policy is on this important question.

Mr. HACKETT. I think it only due to those men who have been dismissed from office that their cases should be brought before this honourable House and discussed. I regret that the agents of the Fishery Department, whose cases were brought up by the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) Messrs. Noonan and Davies, should have been dismissed, as they have been for many years in the employ of the department, and have always given great satisfaction to the people in the discharge of their important duties. The people of Prince Edward Island are very much interested in the winter service between the island and the mainland. These gentlemen were acting as agents of the department, and it is just as necessary that these agents at that point should be experienced and able men as it is necessary that the captain in charge of a ship should be a man of skill and experience. The people of the island feel that the maintenance of this winter service is of the greatest importance. Under the care of those gentlemen, that service has been carried out efficiently and well, and if others with less experience are appointed in their place—able though they may be—it will take them some years before they can obtain equal experience to assist in the maintenance of that service. I therefore regret, on account of this important service between Prince Edward Is-

land and the mainland, that these men have been dismissed. I know that the hon. Minister himself desires very much that that service should be maintained efficiently, and I think it was not from any personal feeling that he dismissed these men, but simply because of the pressure that was brought upon him by political partisans to exercise his power of dismissal. There is another matter to which I wish to refer, and that is the dismissal of the fishery overseer for Prince County, P.E.I. I asked a question the other day with regard to the dismissal of that gentleman, and I was told by the Minister that Mr. McBride, the overseer, was removed to promote the efficiency of the service. I asked also if any one had been appointed in his place, and the hon. Minister replied that no appointment had been made. Then I asked him if Mr. McBride had been appointed by Order in Council, and he said, yes.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Was he dismissed without Order in Council?

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. No.

Mr. HACKETT. I saw Mr. McBride a day or two before he left Prince Edward Island, and he told me that he had received a letter, not from the department at Ottawa, but from the agent of the department at Charlottetown, Mr. Lord, no doubt, acting under instructions, informing him that he had been dismissed because of the change of Administration. That is the statement made by Mr. McBride to me a day or two before I left the Island. I could scarcely believe Mr. McBride. I said he must have been mistaken, that a reason of that kind could never have been given. You were appointed by Order in Council. I said, and I have always believed that a servant of the Dominion who was so appointed should be dismissed by Order in Council, and that before being dismissed he should have an opportunity of having the charge made against him investigated, and be given a fair trial for his life. In this case Mr. McBride assured me that the letter simply said it was on account of the change of Administration he was dismissed. I say that that is the introduction of the spoils system. We have in the Dominion, in the service of Canada, as fine, able, intelligent and prudent body of citizens as you can find in Canada. To what is that due? It is owing to the permanency of the service. It is owing to the fact that these men were appointed because of their ability to fill those offices, and, having been appointed, they have been continued in office, and it is a serious matter indeed that the permanency of the service should be disturbed and those gentlemen dismissed at the word of the Minister, and without a moment's warning. I say that will lower the standard of the civil service and have a bad effect upon the