

House, and the hon. gentleman is not honest, because he did not ask his assistant commissioner whether he was guilty of that charge or not. I hope the hon Minister of Customs will give me his ear. I may say that I shall also have some remarks to make to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) before I get through.

I would like to find out the opinion of the Minister of Customs on this point. He has stated that the assistant commissioner performs the duties of commissioner of customs in the absence of the latter. I do not know what that means, whether those duties are confined to the office here, or whether he may go outside and perform the duties of the commissioner. Now, I would like to point this out to the hon. gentleman. He has in his department an assistant commissioner, a gentleman who is receiving public money from both political parties, a gentleman who prepares campaign literature, who is a political partisan. Suppose he meets on official business an importer or manufacturer who may be a strong Conservative, who may have an invoice over which there is some trouble, or who is importing goods that may not be fully valued, and that he may have got into difficulty with the department for some reason or other. Now would it be in the public interest that this partisan commissioner could go to the importer or manufacturer and say: You would not be prosecuted in the way you are if you knew on which side your bread is buttered—in other words, if you were not an active Conservative the department might deal with you more leniently than they are doing? Would that not be a consistent course for a partisan commissioner to take? Now if that be so, we say that so long as Mr. Bain is employed in the department he has no right to prepare campaign literature for either the Liberal or the Conservative party in this country. On the strength of the position that we take on this side of the House, I moved last Friday night that the salary of Mr. Bain be struck out of the item in the estimates. I consider that I was doing my duty, I consider it was the proper thing to do. In support of my action I could quote the First Minister, I could quote the Minister of Trade and Commerce, I could quote gentlemen occupying cabinet positions since 1896, to the effect that whenever a civil servant undertakes to perform political work for a party he is liable to be dismissed. That principle is laid down by the right hon. gentleman himself. In view of that, I say I was justified in making that motion. Now the Minister of Customs speaks of the figures prepared by this gentleman. I do not care whether these figures are true or false, that is not the point at issue between the two parties in this House. The point at issue is the principle involved in the matter, and the minister should not forget that. Then speaking of

promotions, I was surprised to hear my right hon. friend. He reminded me somewhat of the Russians at Port Arthur. When the Japanese are attacking Port Arthur the Russians are afraid to move out of the harbour to meet them for fear of their own mines. When we bring charges of this kind before the government, from the suspicious way in which they allude to them, they appear to be conscious that there are mines under them prepared by themselves that are liable to explode. I could go on and refer to some other things that I have marked out here to show that hon. gentlemen are not carrying out the principles they laid down in 1896. I could go further and show by documents I have marked here, that the only recommendation any civil servant requires to secure a good position in this government, is to do something that is exactly in opposition to what they advocated previous to 1896, something of a partisan character, stronger and more pronounced than they ever charged their opponents with doing.

Mr. CLANCY. We have rarely witnessed such any exhibition as we have had here to-night. The Minister of Customs has acted many parts in this House, and has always over-acted every one of them. I think the committee to-night will conclude that the hon. gentleman has excelled himself in that respect. I know of nothing that is more disgusting than a martyr with no prosecutors. The hon. gentleman has been acting the part of injured innocence here to-night. I desire to say to the hon. gentleman that so far as I am concerned, I have not a word to say against Mr. Bain. The guilty party seems to be the minister himself from start to finish, and I want to show to the hon. gentleman that from the first day Mr. Bain came into the department, he has treated Mr. Bain in a way he did not deserve, and he has treated the civil servants in his department in a most shameless manner. I say that without having had any communication with any of them in any shape or form. I say the hon. gentleman has scandalously treated the civil servants in his own department, and he has elevated Mr. Bain, a gentleman who came into the service without even an examination, and I will prove my statements. Now let us look into the history of Mr. Bain. I say the hon. gentleman has done more, he, as a minister, has connived unfairly to put Mr. Bain forward beyond all experience in his own department in the past, and I fancy even beyond the experience of any other department in the service. Now how did Mr. Bain get into the service? He came in as an extra clerk in June, 1896 Mr. Bristol, who was acting up to that time as private secretary and second-class clerk, was put aside. I am not going to argue for a moment that the hon. gentleman should take the private secretary of the