

Mr. POWER: I think the same thing happened in connection with the bill setting up the tariff board.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: What about the unemployment insurance measure?

Mr. POWER: As I understand it, nearly all the employees are placed under the civil service commission.

Mr. ISNOR: I shall not deal with the question of patronage raised by the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Cahan), because that has been answered by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Finn), who showed clearly that ninety-five to ninety-nine per cent of the employees of the Halifax harbour commission were dismissed immediately after the change of government in 1930. If I remember correctly, the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George stated that they took steps at once to change conditions. They did take steps at once, the steps referred to by my colleague.

Mr. CAHAN: Mr. Chairman, I ask the hon. member to please take that back. I did not make any such statement with regard to conditions in Halifax or in any other port. I had nothing whatever to do with the employment or dismissal of any person in the port of Halifax or the port of Montreal. I stand in this chamber and say that I was a minister of the crown for five years and never interfered to dismiss from his employ any man, no matter what his political or partisan views or how partisan his actions may have been.

Mr. POWER: There is such a thing as trying to wash one's hands of one's colleague.

Mr. CAHAN: I am not trying to do that; I am replying to an insinuation which is entirely unfounded.

Mr. ISNOR: I should not like to misquote or make a misstatement where the hon. member is concerned. If he did not use those words, he did say—and I hope I am correct this time—that steps were taken. In other words steps were taken by his government to bring about certain changes. I simply make the statement that they did make changes. They made changes to a very marked extent in connection with one particular activity, that of the Halifax harbour commission, where they dismissed practically every employee. That was a minor step. The all-important step which they should have taken did not take place until January 15, 1932. At that time a very important step was taken by the late government when it appointed

[Sir George Perley.]

Sir Alexander Gibb to look into harbour matters.

It is surprising the extent to which hon. gentlemen opposite change their tactics when they lose office. When in power they are ready to bring about changes which will provide for their friends, but immediately they are in opposition their tactics change. "Oh no, you must not do this; you must not do that; you must not make changes, because they will have a tendency to bring about a greater degree of patronage!" Such observations are not fitting at a time when the Minister of Marine is endeavouring to bring about conditions which will add to efficiency in the handling and development of ports in Canada.

I do not wish to deal with this matter in a sectional way. If I were to do so I would strongly advocate the recommendation in the Gibb report concerning local advisory committees. Last night mention was made of a local advisory committee to cooperate with the central board. However I do not propose to go into that matter now. The minister has laid down a program, which he believes will be effective, but which does not provide for this type of committee, and his judgment is good enough for me. For that reason I will not press the suggestion.

May I offer to the minister a constructive thought with regard to all Canadian ports. First may I call the attention of the committee to one or two facts brought out by the royal commission on maritime claims headed by Sir Andrew Rae Duncan. I do not wish unnecessarily to take up time, but I should like to point out that the commission was appointed by the present Prime Minister, and the report tabled is of national importance. Among other recommendations the commission stressed the importance of shipment through Canadian ports. When I refer to that part of the report I am certainly not advancing the claims of Halifax, Saint John, or any other single port. I refer to all Canadian ports, and with that thought in mind I address my observations to the Minister of Marine. After examining records and hearing the evidence of witnesses, they say:

From the records, as we have examined them, we reach the conclusion that Nova Scotia was peculiarly unfortunate in the treatment which was accorded to the claims she pressed forward to the dominion government from time to time, with the result that no consideration—apart from the "better terms" of 1869, which were, in fact, an adjustment made as at 1867—was given her to meet what she regarded as her special wants and interests.