

two section foremen in Prince county were summarily dismissed, without notice or examination, on the false suspicion that they had been active in local politics.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—The hon. gentleman is entirely wrong. In these cases there were investigations.

Hon. Mr. POWER—The authority on which I speak is quite as good as the hon. gentleman.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—Give us the name.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I am not laying the document on the table. It is not a communication to a member of the government, and I do not think it necessary to give the informant. If I gave the name it would be recognized at once as good authority. I think it only right to state that my information is that up to the present time only one section foreman, a man named Bradley, has been dismissed, and that he has been dismissed for violent and offensive partisanship. The other section labourers were dismissed mostly for being active partisans.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (P.E.I.)—Is that in Prince Edward Island?

Hon. Mr. POWER—Yes; in Prince Edward Island. There is just one other authority which I think I might read. It is a letter from the present leader of the opposition in another place, dated April 7th, 1893, and headed Department of Railways. It is as follows:

MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letters of the 17th November and the 9th February on the subject of the dismissal of your son from the service of the Intercolonial Railway, I have to state that the reason for his dismissal was that he openly took a very active part in opposition to the Government at the last election. This, as you will readily understand, no Government officer can be permitted to do, and your son's action was so conspicuous that it could not be passed over.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES TUPPER.

It is addressed to James Ryan, Esq., Moncton. The Ryan who was dismissed was only a lad of seventeen or eighteen. This was one of the old constituents of the hon. gentleman from Hopewell. I do not propose to say very much more.

Hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. POWER.—I can readily understand that what I have been saying is very unpleasant to hon. gentlemen. I wish to say this: I abhor the spoils system. I hope the time is coming when it will be here as it is in England, when, except the heads of departments, no one will suffer or gain from a change of government. But we are some distance from that yet. I think the principles governing the civil service ought to extend to the officers of the government railways, and we have to introduce the system of competitive examinations so as to keep politics out of the service from the beginning.

Hon. Mr. PROWSE—Why not introduce it now? You are in power.

Hon. Mr. POWER—That is just like the hon. gentlemen opposite. When they have got the service crammed with their own followers they say, now make a change. We must wait until we have a reasonable number of our friends in, and start then. That is common sense.

Hon. Mr. McINNES (B.C.)—And common fair play.

Hon. Mr. POWER—As I say, there has been great cry and little wool. We have had tears, wailings and declamations of all sorts, and all about dispensing with the services of a few temporary workmen. In 1878, when the Conservatives had been in power as long as the Liberals are in power now, there had been hundreds and hundreds of dismissals, but, as I said before, we took our medicine quietly. The people who are beaten have to accept the situation. They cannot be beaten and enjoy the fruits of victory at the same time; and, as far as I am aware, there is not the slightest intention or disposition on the part of the leaders of the Liberal party to go into any wholesale dismissal of officials. And the doctrine laid down by the leader of this House and by the leaders in the other House is a fair and reasonable doctrine, and does not go even as far in punishing civil servants who meddle in politics as would be done in England. I regret, hon. gentlemen, that I should have spoken at such length; but there has been a great deal of talk on the other side, a very large proportion of which was irrelevant, and a great deal of which was without foundation.