

terests. Under these circumstances we may look with some suspicion, at least, upon the new found zeal of hon. gentlemen of the Liberal party, for the purity and efficiency of the public service of the Dominion. The officials of the province of Ontario are public officials in the same sense that the officials of the Dominion are. They are paid from the public funds of the province of Ontario contributed to by Liberals and Conservatives alike. The taxpayers of the province of Ontario have a right to demand from these gentlemen opposite, if they are honest and sincere in the expressions they profess on the floor of this House, that they shall use their influence with their political friends, who have been in power in Ontario for twenty years, to see to it, that the great majority of the officials of that province shall cease to be the active agents and political partisans and supporters of hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches, and of their friends who are in power in Ontario. For twenty years past the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite have ruled in Ontario, and during that long period they have made hundreds if not thousands of appointments. Many of these appointments are excellent ones; they are gentlemen who do their duty faithfully and efficiently and who do not act in a partisan manner at election times. But I may say, Mr. Speaker, and I say it without fear of successful contradiction, that in every centre of population in Ontario there are to be found in the provincial service, as violent partisans as can be found in the public service of the Dominion, or of any other province in the confederation. It is hardly consistent for hon. gentlemen opposite to take the position they do to-day, and to state that public officials should only vote—we are thankful that they are permitted even to vote—and that they should not take any active part in the elections; while at the same time the political fortunes of those gentlemen had been helped by the active and untiring exertion of officials who are appointed by the Liberal administration of Ontario. Take the case of West Toronto in the recent elections. A public servant of the province of Ontario was selected as the standard bearer of the Liberal party in that constituency. He was a paid official when he accepted that nomination—I am sure that neither my colleague nor myself had any objection to his being our opponent—but I point to that case, because since the time that gentleman became a candidate for a seat in this House, the gentleman who was then the Premier of the province of Ontario has become a very important member and holds a very important portfolio in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of Canada. Let me ask: what view did the present Minister of Justice entertain as to the propriety, or the impropriety, of a public official of the province of Ontario becoming a candidate for a seat in the House, and taking an active

part in the campaign? Did he offer any objection to it? No, Sir. After the campaign had closed and the electors of West Toronto had rejected the candidate of hon. gentlemen opposite, how was he dealt with for his violent partisan conduct on that occasion? Was his head cut off? Was he treated as hon. gentlemen now propose to treat some Conservative officials of the Dominion, who took an active part in the recent campaign? Not at all. He resigned his office—a lucrative and most important one in the province—the day after he received the nomination for West Toronto, and the day after he was defeated for West Toronto he was reappointed to that office. And that, Sir, is the condign punishment that was meted out to the gentleman who opposed my colleague and myself, and who tried to obtain the representation of West Toronto. Sir, I am bold to say that if hon. gentlemen will examine the lists of delegates who composed the conventions of the Liberal party in the city of Toronto, they will find in those lists the names of many gentlemen who occupy positions in the civil service of the province of Ontario; and before they can expect the country to believe that they are sincere in their profession that the civil service should not be composed of political partisans and heelers, they should see that where their party have control of public offices, the officials should be models of public propriety—voting as their consciences dictated, but abstaining under all circumstances from partisanship or from taking an active part in political elections. The statement of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) has been questioned as to the state to which the liquor traffic of the province of Ontario has been brought by partisanship being introduced into it. I can tell hon. gentlemen opposite that not on one occasion only, but on several, on the floor of the legislative assembly of this province, the Government were challenged to appoint a commission to examine into the operation of the liquor license law. Not only have the commissioners and inspectors acted as partisans, but the mouths of the licensees have been closed in many cases, and they have been afraid to exercise their franchise freely lest their licenses should be taken from them when the time came to renew them on account of the heavy hand laid upon that traffic by the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite. I entirely concur in what the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Britton) has said, that it would be well, in the interest of the public service of the Dominion, that some clearly-defined line should be laid down as to how far public officials should have a right to interfere in political contests. I am one of those who believe firmly that the civil service of the country would be better than it is if there was not so much activity displayed by public officers at election times. Those officers are public servants, paid by the people of all classes and creeds, and they