

may be able to reach a conclusion that will be satisfactory all around. Let me say a word with respect to a fellow townsman of mine, Mr. Kirk, the warden of the Dorchester penitentiary. When it was intimated that he had gone to Guysborough to take part in the election, he wrote a letter to the press in which he stated distinctly that he went to Guysborough, but that he took part in no way in that election, nor did he canvass a single man. He unqualifiedly denies that he took any part in that election, and he challenges any one in the maritime provinces to prove the contrary. I have known Mr. Kirk since he came to Dorchester and from my knowledge of the gentleman I cannot believe that he is in any sense a political partisan. Mr. Kirk is a very high minded man, and a man who is true to his convictions. I am prepared to accept his statement, and until something more than mere rumour is brought to contradict him I shall rely on what Mr. Kirk says.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Does he say what he went to Guysborough for?

Mr. EMMERSON. He says he voted; do hon. gentleman opposite say that he had not the right to exercise the franchise?

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Mr. BENNETT. The friends of the Minister of Railways held that Ontario Conservatives who voted in 1896 should be sacked.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Mr. BENNETT. Yes, I can give you the names.

Mr. EMMERSON. I am obliged to accept the statement of my hon. friend (Mr. Bennett) but from my knowledge of the Liberal party, I believe they have in no sense dealt with officials for such a thing as exercising their franchise. However, the matter will be investigated.

Mr. DANIEL. Now that the Minister of Railways has referred to the St. John election, I may recall to his mind that shortly after the opening of parliament I put a question on the order paper with regard to the dismissal of two employees of the Intercolonial Railway, and the only answer given by the government was that they were considered to be undesirable employees. It was stated at the time in the public press that one of these persons was dismissed because he was unable to be present on election day, being away attending the funeral of a near relative. What truth there may be in that, of course I do not know. I would like the minister to give a little more definite information if he has it as to the reason why these two parties were dismissed at that time.

Mr. EMMERSON. I remember the question which my hon. friend asked shortly af-

Mr. EMMERSON.

ter the opening of parliament. I might say that these two men are not included in the list of employees whom I have in my mind as having been charged. I informed him at that time that they were not considered desirable employees. I have not seen the references in the press to these cases, but if there was any statement in the press that one of the men was dismissed because he was absent from the city and did not take part in the election, that statement was certainly absolutely untrue, because such a circumstance was not brought to my notice nor was my attention called to the subsequent report of it in the newspapers. The men whose action I have promised the House will be investigated, are not the employees mentioned by my hon. friend (Mr. Daniel). There were very substantial reasons why these men should not be continued in the employ of the Intercolonial Railway. The position taken by the management of the Intercolonial Railway with respect to the engagement and dismissal of men is that when it is necessary in the interest of the service that we should relieve ourselves of a man's services we do not feel that it should be either a matter of investigation in individual cases or that the management should be called upon to give in individual cases the reasons for their action.

Mr. DANIEL. I might remind the minister that one of these men has been in the service of the Intercolonial Railway for a great many years. What his political affiliations were I do not know, but I have always understood that he belonged to the same political party as the hon. gentleman. Although this man had been in the service of the Intercolonial for between twenty and thirty years he was dismissed without notice. It was a sudden and summary dismissal for which no reason was given. Treatment of that kind towards any official, no matter how humble, is nothing less than cruel. People in that position of life have not the chance to accumulate money, they do not get such salaries as, for instance, the minister himself enjoys. They receive simply a wage of a dollar or a dollar and a half a day, and it is hard that these two men should be summarily dismissed and thrown on the charity of the public in the middle of winter or early spring, at a time when they are very unlikely to get employment elsewhere. A large private employer of labour or a corporation, in case the necessity arose of dispensing with the services of an employee, would certainly find some more charitable and kindly way of doing so than has been adopted in this case. Every member will consider that treatment of that kind except in the most extreme cases is unwarranted and cruel, and I cannot conceive why this course should be adopted unless it was intended by the hon. gentleman to give a black eye to government ownership. It will certainly render a