

have more of their time to devote to the business of the country, and would require to devote less of their time to matters of this kind, which ought to be dealt with in Canada more upon the lines on which they are now dealt with in England. Mr. Speaker, I have not attempted in these remarks to be very practical so far as my own constituency is concerned with respect to these matters, and I do not intend to do so at present. I hope and trust that the new Administration will deal with this question in a way which will be in the best interests of the country, and inexperienced as I am in public life, I venture to suggest to these gentlemen, that if they do deal with these matters in the best interests of the country, they will also, at the same time, deal with them in the best interests of the Liberal party as a party. I believe that, politically speaking, it would be far better for the Conservative party, that the Liberal party in Canada at the present time should make wholesale dismissals, but I would regret that such a step should be taken, because, in the end, it might result—we are weak, human nature is weak—it might result in reprisals in the future. I for one should most sincerely deplore a condition of affairs in Canada which should have any such results as that. It would be bad for the public service, it would be bad for the public interest, and it would have a most injurious effect on public opinion and on public morals.

Mr. DAVIN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words upon this subject. I was very glad, indeed, to hear the remarks that fell from the Treasury benches upon this important question, because all over Canada, after the 23rd of June, there were evidences that some persons scattered all through the Dominion, thought that we had entered on an era when the old policy, the English policy of a permanent civil service would be abandoned and the spoils system adopted. When that idea was expressed out west, I ventured to say myself that I had confidence that with the present Prime Minister at the head of affairs, and with other members of his Cabinet whom I knew in authority, there was no danger whatever of such a degrading step being taken. The language which we have heard to-night from leading members of the dominant party, and from leading Ministers, is calculated to give assurance that the worse course is not likely to be adopted. Mr. Speaker, it is only right to say, in defence of a body of men—the major part of whom we may assert with confidence earn well whatever money is paid them by Canada—it is only just to say that it is cowardly, it is wanting in fairness, to speak of our civil servants, as some gentlemen speak of them, without an opportunity of reply being given them on their part. To speak of these gentlemen, because they are in the employ of the public, as though they are not to have opinions of their own, or are men to be driven into a certain course by

the mere idea of self-interest—as coarse and vulgar minds are apt to speak of them—is to do a great injustice to a body of men, whether in the permanent service or in the outside service, who are a credit to Canada. Any view that would denude these men of their political manhood, any view which would necessitate Canadian civil servants taking a lower position as citizens than their fellow men, is not merely unjust to the civil service, but it is unjust to Canada, and inimical to the public welfare generally. When we look at the action of civil servants, in the elections, we meet with cases like this: Here is a man who, for instance, has held certain opinions. He has been appointed on the recommendation of a politician connected with the dominant party, or we will suppose connected with the party out of power. He has been appointed before the dominant party came into power. The election is on, and this man not merely votes, which it is admitted he has a right to do, but he expresses his opinions in private, which it is admitted he has a right to do. It has been admitted to-day from the Treasury benches that an official has a perfect right to exercise his citizenship in the fullest possible manner, and not merely to vote, but to express his opinions as a free man in a free country, and the only barrier put around his liberty of action is: You are not to become an offensive partisan. It is not that he is not to be a partisan, not as I understand, that he is not to advocate his views, but he is not to offensively advocate them. Well, Sir, in defining what "offensive" is, the Minister who has to do it should certainly, from the point of view of justice, consider the whole circumstances of the case.

I can easily understand what the course of a Minister should be in the case of a man who says, Not merely am I to have the advantages which belong to the civil service, but I am also to have the privileges which belong to public life, and who insists on going into public life. I do not think there can be a doubt as to how that man should be treated. But take the case of a man who has been appointed to office on the recommendation of a public man. I do not care now whether he works for the dominant party or for the party that is trying to storm the seats of power. Provided his action is merely an expression of what might be called exuberant zeal, provided he has only shown himself zealous for the cause of the person he has tried to serve, surely no Government or Minister who has any justice in his heart would punish any man in such a position as that. I may say that I have very little interest in this question personally, because I do not think that any of my supporters in Western Assiniboia erred in any way that will call for a large stretch of mercy at the hands of any Minister. But I have heard of a case of dismissal of a man, a teamster, who had been accustomed to team from the Indian Office

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).