

folly for the Minister of Railways to state in this House that he is administering the Intercolonial Railway in a non-partisan way. He has not taken the primary step to do so, and judging from his conduct to-day he has no idea of doing so.

Mr. SPROULE. It seems to me that the case of Geo. N. Grant, chief inspector of cold storage, who draws salary and expenses amounting to \$2,167 a year, is a most glaring case of political partisanship. This man who took an active part in the Guysborough election is not only an active partisan, but he is actually the president of the Reform Association in Guysborough and he evidently regards that position as not inconsistent with his position as a civil servant. Is that fair or proper?

Mr. SINCLAIR. What evidence has the hon. gentleman that Mr. Grant took an active part in the election?

Mr. SPROULE. I have been telling the House what evidence I have. The hon. gentleman is better at asking than at answering questions. I am not here to be cross-questioned.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. SPROULE. Not even by an eminent lawyer on that side of the House who seems always to interrupt for the sake of interrupting more than for the sake of information.

Is that statement correct? Is George N. Grant not the president of the Reform Association in Guysborough? Does not the president of an association take an active part in elections? Generally the most active and influential politicians in constituencies are made presidents of these associations and the very fact that Mr. Grant is a president and at the same time an employee of the country should be sufficient evidence to the minister that he was not doing his duty. He could not properly serve the country and hold that position because he was acting the part of a partisan.

Mr. BLAIN. I am sure the members will be surprised at the statement made by the Minister of Railways and Canals and the flippant manner in which he passes over the serious charge brought to his attention by the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Bell). The hon. member for Pictou pointed out that no less than 10 or 12 of the officials of the railway, receiving large salaries from the government of this country, had taken an active part in a certain election. The minister pays no attention to it but says the matter was brought to his attention by some supporters on his own side who were laughing about it at some former time. My hon. friend was not sufficiently interested to inquire whether it was correct or not. But he dismisses Conservatives in the employ of this government without the shadow of investigation. This was also done by his

predecessor. This matter was discussed in the House in 1897. This is not the first time that the opposition has charged the present government with having acted in a partisan way in the dismissal of officials since they came into power. In 1897 this question was asked by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper:

(a). Have the following, or any of them, and which of them, if any, been dismissed from the service of the Intercolonial:

1. Alexander Stewart, section foreman at Linwood, Antigonish?
2. John Chisholm, section man at Heatherton, Antigonish?
3. Finlay Chisholm, section foreman, James River, Antigonish?

(b). If dismissed, was any investigation made prior to dismissal, and what was its nature?

(c). How long were these men in the service of the government, and what was the record of each for efficiency and conduct?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS (Mr. Blair). The services of Alexander Stewart, section foreman at Linwood, Antigonish, were dispensed with on the 7th of January last. (b.) No investigation was considered necessary as it was explicitly and positively affirmed by Mr. McIsaac, M.P., that Alex. Stewart had infringed the rule laid down in respect to government employees. (c.) He had been in the service since September, 1880. Nothing recorded against him.

2. The services of John Chisholm, section man at Heatherton, Antigonish, were dispensed with on the 12th of November last on the personal statement and representation of Mr. McIsaac, M.P., that Chisholm had been guilty of active and offensive partisanship in the last general elections. There was no investigation. He had been in the service since August, 1884. Nothing recorded against him. 3. The services of Finlay Chisholm, section foreman at James River, Antigonish, were dispensed with on the 18th November last, on the statement and representation of Mr. McIsaac, M.P., that he had been guilty of active and offensive partisanship in the last general elections. There was no investigation. He had been in the service since June, 1879.

The hon. gentleman who was then Minister of Railways regarded it as sufficient evidence when a supporter in the House stood up in his place and charged a government official with having taken an active part in politics. The minister then thought that was sufficient evidence and dismissed Conservatives without any investigation whatever. Now, when an hon. gentleman on this side of the House brings to the attention of the government the case of a government employee having taken an active part in politics the minister laughs at the idea. The hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Bell) not only made the statement in the House but made the further statement that he had an affidavit that a certain government employee named LeBlanc, holding a very important position on the Intercolonial Railway, that of travelling agent, and receiving a large salary, had not only taken an active part in politics but had arranged for and spoken at political meetings, and was an active partisan while holding this important position.