

was an efficient officer in every way, and the other night he intimated that he was very sorry to lose this man's services. The hon. member for Pictou thinks this man was guilty of political partisanship. He should be given an opportunity to defend himself in view of the fact that he has gone on the stand, as it were, and made a solemn declaration that he was not guilty of political partisanship.

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member raises a question that this house dealt with on a previous occasion. It will be recalled that one of the then ministers took the responsibility of making a declaration similar in terms to that which was made by the hon. member for Pictou and action was taken by his colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, upon such recommendation. The house decided then by a majority that this was the proper course to take. Under those circumstances there seems to be no reason why the rule thus established should be departed from. Where a member has pledged his word that a condition exists, the action taken upon it one should not say is irrevocable; but action at any rate has been taken upon it, and it is a matter between the member and the constituency which he has the honour to represent in the house. That has been the action previously taken by this house. What action it may take in the future I cannot say, for I have not had the opportunity to do more than just look through the correspondence and see that the facts were as I have indicated and as the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth has clearly indicated from correspondence. The matter can be further considered, but I have no opinion beyond that which I have just expressed.

Mr. RALSTON: I would urge my right hon. friend in the strongest way I can to reconsider the case in view of the representations that I have received. I do not think the case to which he refers is on all fours with the case I put before the house. I do not think there was a denial of the act in that case. The question was whether or not the acts constituted offensive partnership, but the acts were not denied. Here the acts are specifically denied, the man says he is innocent, and he is backed up by people who know him and his services, and he is backed up as well by the minister. I do submit that he ought at least to have a trial because after all the rule with regard to members certainly is only a rule of evidence; dismissal is made under section 55 of the act, which must be

[Mr. Ralston.]

on proof of active partisanship. I ask my right hon. friend to consider not only carefully but favourably the ordinary application for an investigation.

Mr. CANTLEY: The member for Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston) brought my name into this matter on a previous occasion, and has done so again to-night. I asked for the dismissal of Norman MacDonald, preventive officer. Yes, I certainly did, and I was fully justified in doing so. My action was taken at the urgent request of prominent Conservatives, my political friends, who were fully aware of the rabid and excessive political partisanship of the man known to be such and by them resented for years. While my action was taken as stated, it was, as of necessity it had to be, on my own definite, personal knowledge and in conformity with section 55 of the Civil Service Act.

As to the demand for an investigation, that is not a matter for me to decide and I can only refer my hon. friend to the proper authorities. May I suggest, however, that MacDonald and his friends, including the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth, might perhaps be well advised to drop their demand in that connection.

Of olden time, a judge in Israel contracted a matrimonial alliance with a Philistine woman of the Clachan of Tinmath. The men of the place being poor sports, lacking in imagination and devoid of honour, meanly and cowardly secured information by fraud and threats which won them thirty shirts and thirty changes of raiment. This brought from the victim of the fraud the classic: "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." The friends of the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth, with much the same high sense of honour, obtained access to correspondence marked "private and confidential." This they lacked the intelligence to understand and jumped to the erroneous conclusion that my action had been undertaken solely on the suggestion of some of my friends and not on my own personal knowledge.

If the hon. ex-minister wishes to further ventilate the matter, I shall be glad to accommodate him and, in that case will submit some facts to the house as to the action of his friends both prior to and after July 28, 1930, which, peradventure, will cause him and them to regret his action. He and his friends may need thirty shirts and thirty changes of raiment, but they will not get them from me. If he thinks he can, I say "Lead on Mac-Duff."