

privileges, as they ought to do, to gain a more intimate acquaintance at first hand with the great western country which, after all, is going to be the backbone of Canada. There is this to be said, however, that the leader of the opposition and the Conservative party, when they did begin to realize what the sentiment and feeling in British Columbia was on this great question, adjusted their position to meet the sentiment of British Columbia, which, after all, gentlemen on the opposite side did not do. It is all very well to say that this was done for party purposes, but we have no right to judge people in that way. We have a right to assume, and we may assume, that the leader of the opposition felt from the bottom of his heart that he ought to do as he has done, that he recognized the importance of this question, and, when he understood the sentiment of the people of the west, he adjusted his position and took a different stand, possibly, from that which he took a year or two ago. We recognize that this question has got to be divested of all bitterness, that it has got to be put on the soundest kind of basis. I hope that some time it will be the privilege of British Columbia members on this side to put up an argument on this question, and I hope that it will be an argument of sufficient strength and fairness to practically revolutionize the sentiments with regard to the matter of the members from the east, who, perhaps, have not grasped the importance of the question.

Now, I desire, in closing, to deal for a moment with another question—the character of the administration of public affairs in this country, more especially in relation to the Civil Service. This is a live matter, for it is referred to in the speech from the Throne, and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Mr. Brodeur) had occasion to deal with it in a somewhat lengthy way. One of that hon. gentleman's remarks was quite pathetic, it seems to me. He intimated that he would not deal with the campaign of the opposition on this subject, because these questions formed a very undignified theme. I think that is the way he put it. Well, not referring to the personal aspect of the matter, when charges are brought against individuals or against a government, that corruption and wrongdoing exist, it is certainly extremely undignified for some people to have it found out. But these people have to be dealt with. And here again, I may refer to the remarks of the Prime Minister on the matter of principle. I say that the character of the administration of our public affairs must essentially be a matter of great significance and vital importance to every man who values the welfare of Canada—it must be so for any man who is trying to make Canada a better nation than it is. Charges were made, and I find that the Prime Minister, in his campaign, underwent a series of changes in

his attitude toward these charges as the discussion proceeded. I think I quote him accurately when I say that his first statement was that these matters were of trifling magnitude, and he would dismiss them. His second position was that our charges would be probed to the bottom and the guilty parties punished. And, his third position was that he refused to discuss the matter at all. Well, in regard to his first suggestion, I can only say that any matter that affects the character of the administration of public affairs in Canada cannot be a matter of trifling moment. As to his second suggestion, that these things would be probed to the bottom and the guilty parties punished, I feel that our experience in the west, so far as we have followed public affairs—and we try to follow them intelligently—is that, the present regime is not very successful in such probing; they have not gone very far. Judging from what they found at the top, if they were to go to the bottom, there would be a bad mess. We felt some distrust as to their probing of these matters. And then, as I say, the Prime Minister declared that he would not discuss this subject. But, unfortunately for the Liberal cause, so far as British Columbia is concerned, the people went on discussing it. They thought these were important matters, matters the discussion of which was necessary. I know that in my own campaign I did discuss them. I see one or two gentlemen on the other side who followed me very closely in the campaign amongst whom I may mention the Hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver.).

Now the gentleman who did follow me, whether closely or at a distance, will admit that I was not guilty of making any unfair attacks in regard to the administration of public affairs in the country. My own course was simply this. I left on one side the Liberal and Conservative papers, and I went to the source and took up the report of the Civil Service Commission appointed by the right hon. gentleman's government. I simply showed what this report was, and what it said, and the result was that those people who could not be influenced by the party press were perfectly willing to be influenced by an independent authority such as that commission. I would even go further and say that I can hardly understand how it is that in eastern Canada that report did not have a greater effect than it appears to have had. Of course I can understand that all moral reform is of slow growth. I am glad to have the hon. gentleman's assurance that he is reforming his own department, and although it may take some time, I trust that the reform will ultimately take place. I may add that I believe that if a similar report had been published in Great Britain on any department of the public service there, it would have driven any