

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Not in regard to an officer.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). No, and I should hope that the hon. gentleman would not deal with a question of that kind in such a spirit, although if one were inclined to give literal meaning to some of the expressions that he used such a meaning might be extracted from his language. But I do not believe for a moment that the hon. gentleman had any such idea in his mind. If you say that the question of the payment of public money to an officer is to control questions of this kind, where are you to stop? I am a taxpayer of Nova Scotia, and interested in the money paid to the employees of the local government of that province. I have just as much right to complain when those gentlemen go out and fight political battles against me as if they were employees of the Dominion Government doing the same act; but I think it would be a little difficult to carry out the scheme of dismissing such officials for such reasons so long as they conduct themselves fairly and properly in advocating views which they are endeavouring to put before the people. For example, at the last Dominion election in Halifax a very prominent officer of the local government of the province, who is a warm personal friend of my own, although a political opponent, took the stump against me. I would not for a moment suggest that if the Conservative party came into power in local politics in that province that gentleman should be dismissed for that reason, but if you applied some of the arguments put forward before the House to-night, the necessary and logical result of those arguments would be that that gentleman should be dismissed from the office he holds. I do not go that far. Unfortunately, as I think, in some of the municipalities, if not all the municipalities of Nova Scotia, and even in the city of Halifax, politics enter to a greater or less extent into municipal affairs and the result is that the officers of those municipalities and the officers in the city of Halifax, to a certain extent, I think, are selected on political lines. I as a ratepayer in the city of Halifax am interested in the moneys which go to pay the officials of that city, and I think I may say, if I can at all rely on what has been told me by gentlemen in whose veracity I have every right to believe, that the officials of the city of Halifax did work and did use the civil machinery to some extent against me during the last Dominion election. I would not venture to say that those gentlemen, so far as any expression of their views is concerned, who worked against me in that contest, should suffer in any way, even if the administration of the city of Halifax should be selected on party lines and be Conservative instead of largely Liberal, as it is at present. I venture to say that if the question of an official's politics is to be considered when the new government make up its mind whe-

ther or not it will dismiss him from office, or if a government ventures to deal with these questions from the standpoint only of an official's political opinions, or if an official has given expression, even on a public platform, to his views on any public question—if these things are to control in determining whether or not a man is to remain in the service, we shall have approached very closely to the American spoils system, which I for one hope will never be introduced into Canada. I venture to submit to the House a statement made by a very able man with respect to the effect of that system throughout the United States. He says—I am reading from Mr. Leckey's latest work, "Democracy and Liberty":

The evil of the abominable spoils system in the United States is not so much the incompetency of the officers—an American's adaptiveness enables him quickly to learn the routine duties of an office—nor in the waste of public money (because in a community so rich in productive power as the United States the amount which speculation can take from it is a burden easy to be borne)—but the main evil is that the spoils system demoralizes both parties, and makes contests which should be for principle mainly for plunder.

And to show how far they seem to be ahead of us in England on this question, I may take the liberty of reading another sentence from the same work of that writer. He says:

The gigantic corruption which exists in America under the name of the spoils system has not taken root in England, though some recent attempts to tamper in the interest of party with the old method of appointing magistrates in the counties, and some claims that have been put forward by members of Parliament to dictate the patronage in their constituencies, show that there are politicians who would gladly introduce this poison germ into English political life.

Sir, I should welcome the day in Canada when this question of patronage would occupy much less of the time of members of Parliament than it does at present. I know from what has been said in this House, that a good deal of the time of members on the Government side must be taken up with matters of this kind, and I for one sympathize a great deal with them on that subject, and particularly with my colleague from Halifax (Mr. Russell), a constituency in which a very great amount of patronage exists. I also venture to believe that a good deal of pressure which may come upon the Government with regard to dismissals, comes, not so much from members of Parliament who would be content, in many instances, to allow matters to remain as they are, but comes from certain elements of the party which are not, in all cases, the very best elements. I shall welcome, as I have no doubt many of us would welcome, the day in Canada when members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown would