

Mr. BELL. I presume this is rather strict ruling, not often applied, I think. I do not wish in any way to violate the rules. And I may say that there is every reason to believe that this power of accusing and condemning will be exercised, and exercised without the slightest attempt whatever to gain information in relation to the party accused. What is the motive in all these cases? Simply that the party has come into power and its adherents desire positions. That is the sentiment reflected in the speech of the hon. member for North Wentworth (Mr. Somerville). They say the Conservative party have been in power long enough; they have been in office eighteen years, and it is time they were dismissed, and now the Liberals are to have their turn. The consequence will be that men who have never made themselves obnoxious, who are prepared to state and prove that they have never taken an active part in politics, are going to be dismissed, and not because this is determined by the responsible Administration. This is the most disagreeable thing about the whole affair, for where the Administration does not shirk responsibility, some reply can be had to the accusation of injustice. But they do not assume responsibility. They say: We delegate our authority to behead these men to our supporters in the House or our defeated supporters in the country. Now, I am sure that it is not in the interest of Canada that any such doctrine should prevail. It is not a part of the platform of the Liberal-Conservative party to consent to the adoption of such a policy. I hope, and we have every reason to believe, that if, in some counties in this Dominion, this power is exercised as coldly, and unfeelingly, and as callously as, from the statement of the Minister of Railways, we might expect, there are other counties in which better feelings will prevail and better sentiments exist, and the officials there may hope to have their official existence spared through the kindness of their neighbours. Why should this Administration deliberately incur the odium of being converted into an executioner, in order to gratify the malignant, revengeful or greedy sentiments of the lowest and poorest class of politicians that are to be found in the Liberal ranks? It appears to me that, as a party, they cannot afford to take such a position. Let them be in this case, as they should be in everything else, guided by their best men, by those who occupy the highest positions in the estimation of the people of Canada, and not undertake the odium of being represented, or rather misrepresented, by those who have less claim to the consideration and respect of the people of this country. I think we should remember, in this matter, that there is one great interest to be considered, and that is the interests of the country. I believe in the whole people being served by these officers and employees—if there is to be a distinction between these two classes who have been thus

named. The interests of the country demand that, no matter what party is in power, the guarantee should be given to every man engaged in the public service that he will be allowed to retain his position until good reason can be shown, after fair trial and an opportunity to rebut evidence, that he should be dismissed. And the Liberal-Conservative party are ready to take their stand upon that, and they do so, throwing back with indignant denial the charges of hon. gentlemen on the other side that they were guilty of wholesale dismissals. In 1879, after the Government of Sir John Macdonald came into power, all the changes, superannuations, removals and dismissals did not reach a total of 200. And the late Hon. Alexander Mackenzie set for hon. gentlemen opposite, in this matter, as in many others, a good example that they might well follow, and that was that the dogs of destruction should not be let loose among the officials and employees in every county because the Liberals have been successful at the polls and have come into power. It is only for us to protest; we cannot do more. If it be the pleasure of hon. gentlemen opposite, and if there be no restraining influence, in their own party, if there be no better feeling prevailing among them, it is perfectly evident that they can carry on these dismissals. Under the doctrine laid down in this House by the hon. Minister of Railways, there is nothing controlling them in this matter, and nothing to prevent them dismissing every official appointed by the Liberal-Conservative party. And still, I find it hard to believe that the Liberal party will deliberately surrender itself to such a course as that marked out by my hon. friend. And most of all do I hesitate to believe that the Liberal party will deliberately inform the workmen of Canada that, while the official drawing such a salary as enables him to live in a style somewhat approaching gentility, is to be protected with something like care, the workingman, the horny-handed son of toil, as he is sometimes called, the bone and sinew of the country, as the Liberal party is fond of calling him, has no rights, no privilege, and that no justice is to be extended to him. I hesitate, and I will hesitate a long time, to believe that, in making this declaration, the Minister of Railways and Canals spoke for an undivided Cabinet. In the debate of yesterday, the facts showed a division existing in the ranks of the Cabinet on the question of the fast line, just as it was shown that they were divided on the question of Chinese immigration. So the facts, I think, will bring to the knowledge of the country that even in relation to these dismissals and the wholesale decapitation of officers, there is not a united Cabinet. I hope that is the case, that there is some better feeling and some more kindly influence in the Government, that all are not wedded to this heartless, cruel doctrine. Finally, the hon. Minister of Railways gave

Mr. BELL (Pictou).