

*Supply—Agriculture*

that is to say documents within the department, reports of officials to officials and to the minister, interdepartmental reports and letters which have come in marked "personal and confidential"—have never been produced.

There is no one who knows that better than the hon. member who has got up in the house and tried to create a completely false impression with regard to this matter.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Harkness:** I went on to say, as reported at page 2858 of *Hansard* for yesterday, that if there are any documents in addition to these I shall be glad to produce them.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** In other words, you choose your evidence.

**Mr. Harkness:** As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Laurier was not satisfied with that, as he should have been and, as I say, he attempted to create a completely wrong impression in connection with this matter. He shouted, I think, the word "secrecy" or something of that nature, trying to create the impression that I was trying to conceal something.

**Mr. Chevrier:** You are.

**Mr. Harkness:** I have never tried to conceal anything in this matter. When the hon. member put his starred question on the order paper I answered it. I did not need at that time to say anything about the political grounds partly on which the man was dismissed. All I needed to say was that he had been dismissed because he was in possession of these contraband goods. I answered the question fully but the hon. member has been trying to create the impression that I have been endeavouring to maintain some secrecy in connection with it.

**Mr. Chevrier:** You certainly have.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The record shows it.

**Mr. Harkness:** What he had to say in regard to the production of papers I think is characteristic of his whole speech. It was an effort to twist this case around.

The next point I would like to comment upon is that the hon. member went into a long diatribe as to what happened in 1902, 1911 and various other dates. As far as I can make out, all that this amounted to was a great complaint because I had not just fired this man upon the complaint of a member but that I had made an inquiry into the matter. I had the matter investigated but the hon. member for Laurier is apparently complaining because I did make an inquiry and

[Mr. Harkness.]

after I made that inquiry I found there were very good grounds indeed for discharging this man.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Would the minister permit a question?

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Very well, if the minister does not want to answer my question.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Harkness:** I would point out to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate that we are in committee and he can ask as many questions as he wishes. It is not a matter of not permitting a question, but I would first like to deal with the questions which have already been asked. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has a great habit of trying to throw people off the track by getting up and inquiring if he may ask a question or something along those lines.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Harkness:** This is a tactic which does not always work.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** We shall see.

**Mr. Harkness:** The next point is that the hon. member for Laurier read from a document which happens to be a document not from my file. He said he was expecting it to be produced but I did not have that document.

**Mr. Chevrier:** You should have had it.

**Mr. Pearson:** Someone has been around the files.

**Mr. Harkness:** However, what I did have was a considerable number of police and other reports from which I am completely satisfied that this man was guilty of securing contraband liquor from these ships which he was inspecting in the Montreal harbour on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, and any employee of this department—and I hope of any other department of the government—who in the course of his duties as inspector takes gifts from the people he is inspecting should be dismissed just as soon as that fact comes to light. I do not think there is any question about that.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Harkness:** That was exactly what was done in this case.

**Mr. Pearson:** With no chance to defend himself.

**Mr. Harkness:** The hon. member for Laurier went around still trying to confuse the issue—