

DISMISSALS.

The House of Commons has had a long discussion of the question of dismissals from the public service. On a resolution calling for papers many members of the Opposition brought forward charges that the new government was taking spoils by dismissing postmasters and others without good reason and appointing its own partizans to the places thus made vacant. The Prime Minister himself, Hon. R. L. Borden, declared the policy of the government in this matter. In the course of his address he said:

"I would like to point out to my hon. friend what he seems to have forgotten that with respect to both the inside service and the outside service this matter has been settled. In the first place by a statute of Canada concerning the inside service, in the second place by a resolution of this House, concurred in by both political parties with regard to the outside service. So far as the inside service is concerned, the statutory provision to which I desire to call attention is to be found in the Act of 1908 introduced and passed by the late administration. Section 43 of that statute is as follows:

"No officer, clerk or employee in the Civil Service shall be debarred from voting at any Dominion or provincial election if under the laws governing the said election he has the right to vote; but no such officer, clerk or employee shall engage in partisan work in connection with said election."

"The words of that section do not seem to restrict it to the inside service. My impression of the interpretation of the Act is that the language is restricted to the inside service. However, that is a matter to which we can very easily determine upon an examination of the earlier part of the statute. Sufficient it is to say for the present that it does lay down a definite and specific

rule so far as the inside service is concerned.

"Now, so far as the outside service is concerned, the rule was embodied in a resolution of the House of Commons moved by Mr. Lake on the 17th July, 1905, and accepted by my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) who was then leading the government, and that rule in these words:

"That whilst it is desirable that every official in the employ of the government of Canada, should enjoy perfect freedom of political opinion, and the untrammelled exercise of his franchise in accord therewith, no official should be engaged, or permitted to engage, in partisan work of any description in the election of a representative to the provincial or Dominion legislature."

Referring to "patronage committees", and the charge that these local groups of politicians were dictating dismissals and appointments, the Prime Minister said:

"No committee, since this government came into power, has had any authority to dismiss any official, and officials, whether in the inside or the outside service, can only be dismissed by this government or by the minister responsible for the administration of the department. If any such incidents as those alluded to have really taken place, they have taken place without the knowledge, the sanction, or the approval of this government.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, in part:

"I lay down the rule that a man who has taken an offensive part in politics is a proper subject for dismissal; but I should like hon. gentlemen opposite to say whether this man should be dismissed without being given the opportunity of being heard. I say that he should not, and I do not understand that such a rule is contradicted by hon. gentlemen opposite. In 1896 we laid down the rule that every man should