

cent while the next highest, Japan, was 97.20 per cent; Cape Colony 59.50 and the United States only 47.18 as against Canada's 107.43. Do hon. gentlemen opposite object to information like that, being given to the people? Do they object to that information going to foreign countries to show how Canada is progressing? Then here is a table with reference to British preferential trade. That table was, I believe, prepared before we went to England and was used in England in our conference with the board of trade there, in which we were showing the average duty, and how it had been lowered on many important lines under the preferential tariff. That you will find at page 17 of 'Political Pointers No. 1,' as it is termed. These figures only come down to 1902, and they were prepared I believe before that and were made use of in England. I say here, with reference to these tables, that I have been reading that Mr. Bain said: yes, I originally prepared them; they were prepared for use in the House, and you have used some of them; when asked for them I have given out these figures, I believe they are absolutely correct; I believe I was wholly within my duty in preparing them for you as your private secretary. To ask that the private secretary of a minister shall not have anything whatever to do in the way of confidential relations with this minister in matters political, is to deny what is the well understood principle both in England and Canada. Mr. Bain occupied the position of private secretary to me. Mr. Bain occupies the position of my acting private secretary, to this day, and I ask gentlemen opposite if it has not been the rule under all ministers and under all ministries, to have their private secretaries furnish them with information? I would ask if private secretaries have not gone further than that, and have not made information public with reference to matters political? But, hon. gentlemen opposite say: Mr. Bain is Assistant Commissioner of Customs. True; he has been in that position since the 1st of July last. Many of these statements were originally prepared, a considerable time in some cases, before he became assistant commissioner. But even if he were assistant commissioner at the time, what does the Civil Service Act say:

Any member of the civil service may be appointed private secretary to the head of the department, and may be paid an additional salary not exceeding \$600 a year while so acting. The salary shall be payable to no private secretary unless the amount has been voted by parliament.

That amount was voted by parliament, and as I say, Mr. Bain continues to be my private secretary and to act in the capacity of private secretary to me. When he was raised from being a first-class clerk to be assistant commissioner of customs at a salary of \$2,800, I said to him: I will not pay you anything of the amount of \$600 for private secretary that parliament has

sanctioned, but I will keep that standing there; it may be that the work will so increase that I will find it necessary to engage another in that capacity, and that vote will be available. I am trying to get along in that way and therefore this is money saved to the country; except as I have said, that I have used part of it to supplement the salaries of two lady stenographers and typewriters who are assisting in private secretarial work. I have nothing to hide. If we have done wrong, I do not object to the censuring. True, the hon. gentleman who has taken his seat seems to have higher conceptions of right and wrong, if we are to believe him, than I have; he seems to think that I am deficient in that respect. I can only say that my private secretary has not done anything which I believe was inconsistent with his duties; and when hon. gentlemen opposite spoke of him as a political hack, if I did wax a little warm, it was the honest indignation of a man who knows the value of a faithful public officer, and I am not inclined to sit still and hear a gentleman whom I know intimately, whose value I know, whose character I appreciate, who I believe will not swerve from the line of rectitude—I am not going to sit still and hear him spoken of in terms of reproach by a gentleman who, I venture to say, from the remarks he has made, has not the first proper conception of the work that pertains to the Customs Department or its various officers. Any member who thinks that the work of the Customs Department is light work, or who thinks that this young man is not entitled to the salary he is receiving, or worthy of the position to which I have exalted him, is, in my judgment, mistaken. So long as I am the head of that department, the deputy head concurring in my views, promotions and increase of salaries will be given to the officers who we believe deserve it on their merits; and I venture to think that fair-minded men, watching my course in the department, will admit that the increases and promotions which have been made have been made, not from a party point of view, but on consideration of the merits of each case. Men who entered the department before I took charge of it have been advanced in their salaries and in their positions. If it be a charge against me that since I took charge of the department not many of the Conservative faith have been appointed to office there, I plead guilty. I think that is perfectly known to be constitutional under party government; but I am not conscious of having done an injustice to faithful men who were not appointed by myself, but who have done their work faithfully and well. This I say in all confidence. The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) asked me if any one in the department had been promoted as fast as Mr. Bain, and I candidly told him no. I know not who prompted him to ask that question.