

quiry of any kind. They were capable men, had been a long time in the employment of the railway, they gave good service, and no complaint was made against them ; but because they were suspected of voting for the Liberal candidates they were dismissed.

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Hear, hear.

Mr. YEO. Those are only two instances. The hon. gentleman has also referred to the sub-collector at Alberton, who was appointed under the Mackenzie Administration, and who, he says, ought to have been dismissed. Well, he may have been a strong Liberal, perhaps a partisan, but the hon. gentleman says that he could not be dismissed without some cause being assigned. Well, I do not think they were very long in making out a good reason, at least assuming they had good reasons for dismissing this gentleman. He was only allowed to retain office for a very short time before he was dismissed. Then there is the case of the section foremen on the railway who were dismissed in 1891. They were told one evening that after the next evening their services would be no longer required. Although I was one of the candidates in that county, I did not know how those men voted, but I knew they were inoffensive to either party, and fulfilled their duties well. That is the only reason I have heard assigned for their dismissal. We know as a fact that in Prince Edward Island no Liberal was employed to even shovel snow on the railway in the winter. A train may be blocked there and men may be required to shovel snow, but if they are supposed to have Liberal proclivities, they cannot get work. The system which has obtained in Prince Edward Island has been disgraceful to the Government. That is a well known fact to Liberals and Conservatives alike, and it is condemned. I may say, by every respectable Conservative who knows what has taken place there in this respect.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I would like to ask whether the hon. gentleman was referring to the dismissal of the fishery officers of 1891 ?

THE MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. No, but to the section foremen on the railway.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). It is with great diffidence, after so many gentlemen much more experienced than I am in public affairs have dealt with this question, that I venture to submit a few ideas to the House on this subject. I was much pleased with the way in which the Controller of Inland Revenue, the member for North Oxford (Mr. Sutherland) and one other gentleman on the same side of the House, dealt with this question. It seems to me that, in the first place, we have to consider it in the light, not of the interest of any particular party, be it Liberal or Conservative, not in the light of

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the interest of any office holder, not in the light of any influence which may be brought to bear upon the members of this House, but entirely in the interests of the civil service of Canada. Looking at the question from that standpoint, it seems to me, with all deference to gentlemen more experienced than I am, that the fact of the payment of the public money to public officers for their services, ought not to enter very largely into the question as to how far these gentlemen should participate in election contests. It is not the money of the Liberal party or of the Conservative party which is paid these gentlemen for their services ; it is the money of the country, and the fact that these gentlemen worked for either party, so long as they worked openly, honourably and fairly, ought not to weigh against them if, at the same time, they do not neglect their duty as public officers. It seems to me that those gentlemen who are in the civil service of this country ought to have the same right, as other electors not only to vote, but to work during elections, subject to certain limitations which I shall endeavour to submit to the House. In the first place, I entirely agree that if any such official is guilty of any corrupt or dishonourable conduct in an election contest while working for one party or the other, such conduct ought to have only one result. In the second place, if, for the purpose of supporting one party or the other, he neglects his duty in any way as a public servant, and employs the time for which the country has paid him in furthering the interests of either party, it seems to me that such conduct is reprehensible and ought to be punished. I would be willing to go a little further than some of the hon. gentlemen opposite and have a further limitation, namely, that if an officer is in confidential relations with a Minister or with a superior officer, he ought not to take such part in an election as would interfere with the discipline of the office which he holds. I would be prepared to concede that ; but it does not seem to me that a consideration of that kind would apply in the way the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries seems to indicate it would apply in his judgment. I can well understand why it is impossible that a Minister of the Crown should meet on a public platform a subordinate officer in his department for the purpose of discussing public questions with him, but it does not seem to me that a public officer discussing in an honourable and straightforward manner a public question of absorbing interest with a gentleman who afterwards succeeds to office as a Minister of the Crown ought necessarily on that account to lose his office. I should think, indeed I believe, that the hon. Minister is too large a man to deal with any question of this kind in a spirit of revenge, although he did use the expression that the whirligig of time brings its revenge.