

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It may be a long time, but if these dismissals are rolled up in the manner in which they have been during the short tenure of power of hon. gentlemen opposite, there will be a fearful account to be rendered when that day comes be it far or near, and it is just as well that it should be understood that these gentlemen on the Treasury benches are not laying down the law for their opponents; they are laying down the law for their friends. I want to ask the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, and who has argued this matter in a temperate and straightforward manner, stating that in his view the moment a man is appointed to office he is to understand that his political life has terminated and he is to do nothing but attend to his duty—I want to ask him if he holds, as I assume he does, from that statement, that the gentlemen appointed and holding office under this Government, are precluded from supporting the Government—from going to an election and giving their votes, or giving a free and independent, but fair and manly expression of the views they hold on public questions. My hon. friend behind me (Mr. McCleary) made an overwhelming case in regard to the matter now before the House—an unanswerable case, and consequently an unanswered case. I listened to the specious plea of the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Gibson) in favour of what had been done; but he was unable to meet the ground taken by my hon. friend behind me, when my hon. friend showed that what had been done by the Government had been done in contravention of the declaration of the leader of this Government made on the floor of Parliament. My hon. friend behind me shows that that declaration has been dishonoured, and a course diametrically opposed to it has been adopted in driving from an important office this man, against whom there is no charge of his not having honestly and faithfully performed his duties. What does the hon. member for Lincoln say? Do I require better evidence of the impropriety of driving this man from office without any investigation than that hon. gentleman's statement? No, Sir. What does he say? He says that when this gentleman came to him and said, "Do you intend to dismiss me, or do you intend to sustain me in office?" he, knowing the character of the man, the position he had attained in life, and the mode in which he discharged his duties, gave him his word that he would not be disturbed, provided he acted in a proper manner. What does he say to-day? He says he disapproves of some business arrangement between that man and his assistant. What had he to do with that? What had this House to do with that? A gentleman entrusted with official duties has a right to make his own arrangements with persons who assist him. That is no ground whatever for the violation of the declaration of the First Minister, that no man should

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be deprived of his office, if any charge were brought against him, except after investigation, save in a case in which the transaction was within the knowledge of the Minister himself. We all admit that if a Minister is able to say that he is aware of his own personal knowledge of offensive partisanship or any other improper conduct on the part of an official, he would be justified in acting upon his own personal knowledge. But that is not the case in this instance. There the matter stands, that the hon. member for Lincoln had given this gentleman a high character and had given his word that he should remain in the position undisturbed; and yet, when a gentleman came to him with complaints, what did he say? "I have given my word to this gentleman that he should be retained in his office, and I cannot listen to your complaints, but I will send them to the Postmaster General, and get him to turn out of office the man I was pledged to protect."

Mr. GIBSON. I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman should not put words in my mouth. What I said was that I had no time to listen to the complaint of the gentleman, and that if he would put his statement in writing, I would forward it to the Postmaster General for him to deal with. Not to discharge him; I did not say anything of the kind. I hope the hon. gentleman will accept my word.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I accept the hon. gentleman's statement without hesitation, but he makes the case stronger against himself, because, having refused to entertain the complaint himself, he sent it forward to be dealt with by other parties, after having given his pledge that this man would not be dismissed. But I was astonished to hear the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Lister) say that this Government had proceeded with great caution and great moderation. I believe I shall put a motion on the paper asking this Government to lay on the Table of the House a statement showing the number of persons who have been discharged from the various departments of the public service since they came into power; and I do not hesitate to say that I believe it will immensely outnumber all the dismissals which took place under previous Governments during the past eighteen years. What did an hon. gentleman say in reference to the mode in which I had administered the Department of Railways and Canals? Let me repeat that when I was appointed Minister of Public Works and of Railways and Canals in 1878, because the two departments were then consolidated, I found that the account of the Intercolonial Railway was between half a million dollars and three-quarters of a million dollars on the wrong side of the ledger of the previous year. I found also that the hon. gentleman who had been charged with the administration of the Railway Department had put