

let them mete out punishment to both sides impartially. If they mete out the same punishment to the members of their own party as they do to members of the Conservative party we will have no ground for complaint whatever. As long as it is the case that these offences are winked at, if they occur on the part of their own friends, and severe punishment is meted out to the friends of the Conservative party we will hold it to be an improper course and we will have the right to adversely criticise any minister of the Crown who evidently allows it and does not bring the parties to book for it and mete out to them the punishment which they justly deserve. The day is past when we should have such discrimination as this. We have had it all over the province of Ontario in a most disgraceful and scandalous way. It has been going on for over thirty years and yet there is no effort being made to stop it. We have penitentiary birds, we have every class and character of the worst type that the country affords and because they are useful at elections we find supporters of the government shielding these men and manipulating the course until it has become a public and notorious fact to-day that you cannot get one of those criminals before a magistrate appointed by the government of Ontario and secure a conviction. It is utterly impossible to do it because in one way or another the case is put over or hushed up or the indictment is quashed on a technicality, or something is done to shield the criminal. We hope that this is not coming down into this parliament. We have always had reason to hope that we would have a better code of morals in this House than in Ontario in regard to political offences, but I am afraid they are apt scholars down here and the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals seems to be as apt as any of them because he seems disposed to treat this as a joke so long as the benefits accrue to his own friends.

Mr. EMMERSON. I am perfectly fair.

Mr. SPROULE. Perfectly fair, the hon. gentleman says. I will not criticise his sense of fairness or the spirit he displays in saying so, but I may be permitted to say that so long as this is done the government are bound to take notice of it according to the rule they laid down in the House and if they do not do so there can only be one construction put upon their conduct and it is that they are not willing to mete out the same punishment to their friends as they mete out to their opponents.

Mr. INGRAM. The hon. minister has already promised to investigate the charges preferred against these men by my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Bell). Taking that view of it I assume the hon. gentleman is

not in favour of employees taking part in elections. Am I correct in that statement?

Mr. EMMERSON. If anybody went into an election in a county and showed himself to be a violent partisan I do not think it would be correct or proper.

Mr. INGRAM. So there are certain degrees of partisanship?

Mr. EMMERSON. I think the mere fact of a man going into a county, being there and exercising his franchise is not a reprehensible act.

Mr. INGRAM. But if he takes any part in the election by speaking or canvassing then he is a partisan? That is what I take the position of the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals to mean. We would like to get a proper definition of what partisanship is.

Mr. EMMERSON. What is an act of partisanship—is that what the hon. gentleman wants to know?

Mr. INGRAM. Yes.

Mr. EMMERSON. I think if a man went into a county and acted as the agent of a candidate and put himself in that position it would be a very partisan act.

Mr. INGRAM. I quite agree with the hon. minister in that and I think it is a very fair definition of what partisanship is. What steps is the hon. minister taking to prevent employees of the Intercolonial Railway taking such a part in elections?

Mr. EMMERSON. The employees of the Intercolonial Railway at Moncton, throughout the county of Westmoreland, throughout New Brunswick, and as far as I know throughout the several provinces are at liberty to exercise the franchise as they please. There are no restrictions upon them in that regard. They have been told that in every election that I am aware of since this government came into power. They have been told that distinctly by the late Minister of Railways and Canals and I shall follow in the footsteps of my predecessor (Mr. Blair) and the acting minister in that respect.

Mr. INGRAM. Would the hon. minister be good enough to tell us in what way that was communicated to the employees?

Mr. EMMERSON. Publicly.

Mr. INGRAM. In what way?

Mr. EMMERSON. On the public platform. I have heard the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals convey that on more than one occasion and in more than one election.

Mr. INGRAM. So that is really the only way in which it has been communicated to them?

Mr. EMMERSON. What more do you want?