

Mr. McNEILL. I should be sorry if my hon. friend misunderstood me in any way. I would like to remove two misconceptions from his mind. In the first place, I had no reference, when I spoke, to political dismissals at all. Certainly so far as my hon. friend himself is concerned, I could not make any complaint as to that. On the contrary, I have to thank my hon. friend for the very straightforward course he has taken in reference to a matter which I brought to his notice some time ago in connection to a matter of that sort. The other misapprehension I wish to remove from the mind of my hon. friend is this. I should be sorry if he thought that the speech he has just made was an answer to the observations I offered. I did not say one word as to whether the granting of \$50 a year increase was a good or bad system. I did not say whether it was a good or bad system to select some men for special reward. I was speaking of the understanding which existed when those men entered the service, and I ventured to think that hon. gentlemen opposite had violated that understanding.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The hon. gentleman had better settle that matter with the leader of the Opposition, because that hon. gentleman said it was the duty of the deputy to make, in each case, a careful report.

Mr. McNEILL. The understanding was that the practice would be continued as it existed previously. It is only in special cases, as the hon. gentleman has admitted, that it is refused; and he said in the course of his remarks that when the question was asked in the House why the \$50 was given, the answer made was that it was the usual statutory increase.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. The hon. gentleman was wrong in his contention. I do not admit that a civil servant has a right to a statutory increase of \$50 annually. I grant that this was done by our predecessors and by the late Government, but I do not admit the increase as a matter of right or as anything more than a matter of grace. I contend it was not because of any right belonging to the civil servant in any respect that such an increase was granted. I hold it had become a very gross abuse, and was leading to gross abuses all the time. No deputy head could have stated, if he were examined on oath, that he had complied with the direct terms of the Act and had made a careful report. It has always been notorious that if this statutory increase were given to perhaps one thousand men, not one was found who would not deserve the \$50 increase. Does any one suppose that out of a thousand civil servants a very considerable number did not render inferior service? We know better; we know that many should have been dismissed, and that a large number did not render honest eight hours' work

daily to the country, and should not have had \$50 increase yearly. I will show the practical result of this. In 1892, with eighty-eight officers, precisely the same number as at the present time, the annual charge to the department was \$92,000. Then it sprang up to \$95,000—statutory increases all the time. The next year it was \$98,000—statutory increases and one or two men added. Then it advanced to \$101,000, then it was \$102,000, and so it reached the present figure. Is there going to be no end to this state of things? The civil service estimates amounted to \$1,413,000, then \$1,457,000 was reached, then the sum advanced to \$1,475,000, and so on all the time under the operation of this rule. I say it is high time that this should be stopped. We have stopped it. Instead of asking for \$1,475,000, we ask for \$1,414,000. If hon. gentlemen opposite desire to promote economy, they will not criticise unduly that reduction. Civil servants have rights which will not be violated by us. We are not disposed to interfere with civil servants except for three causes: If a civil servant is found inefficient and incapable, we are entitled to discharge him, and we will not hesitate to do so; if he is guilty of malfeasance in office, we are entitled to discharge him, and we will not hesitate to do so; if he is guilty of active partisanship while he holds office in the civil service, we will most assuredly dismiss him. For these three causes we will dismiss civil servants. But as a Government, we must reserve to ourselves, as every man of business will do, the right if we find too many men in the service, more men employed than are required for the work of the department, to dismiss them. We break no covenant with them, we violate no arrangement entered into with them, but we simply carry out provisions made by law, which provisions hon. gentlemen opposite know well to be that if a civil servant has served less than ten years he is entitled to a certain gratuity, if he has served more than ten years and has paid the superannuation allowance, he is entitled to a certain superannuation in proportion to his salary. But I do not think the hon. gentleman is wise in talking about covenants entered into so far as civil servants are concerned. If the hon. gentleman is going to maintain that it is a great compliment on the part of a civil servant to enter the public service, I may inform him that I do not understand such to be the opinion of the people generally. Comparing the pay of the ordinary civil servants with that of the clerks of any bank—and with a bank I think a fair comparison may be made—it appears to me that the members of our civil service are exceedingly well paid. I have never held that the higher grades were paid as highly as they deserved. I draw a broad distinction between ordinary clerical work such as is done by a majority of the civil servants, and high grade work done by deputy heads or