

to the reasons for the dismissal of Captain Mackenzie from this dredge. If I remember well the reply of the hon. Minister of Public Works was that the captain was not dismissed, that this was an annual appointment and that he was not reappointed. I would like to call attention to the facts of the case, which do not quite agree with that answer. Captain Mackenzie was appointed, I believe, some time in the autumn of 1896. He had no reason to believe that his appointment was an annual one. I understand that the practice in connection with these dredges has been that in the fall, when the season's work is completed, the crew are paid off except the engineer and captain, who, I understand, are retained and continue in charge of the dredge and continue to receive their salaries. In 1896 the crew of the dredge "Canada" were paid off at Liverpool, N.S., and the captain and the engineer remained in the dredge all winter. Repairs were being carried on, and these officers continued regularly in the service of the department, and were on the pay-roll of the department. But, without notice, on the 21st of April, I think, just the day after the local election in Nova Scotia, Captain Mackenzie received peremptory notice dismissing him, without any explanation whatever. It would seem that the Minister had not been correctly informed in his reply given to the House, because I think there can be no question about the fact of the captain remaining in the dredge all winter engaged in repairs, and not dismissed until the 21st April, when the dredge was about to begin work, and when, as Captain Mackenzie might suppose, his position was sure for another year.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The facts as stated by my hon. friend (Mr. Bell, Pictou) are, I believe, about right. It has been the rule, or perhaps it would be better to say the habit of the Department of Public Works to keep the engineer and captain of a dredge, or one of them, as caretaker, but at half pay. When the time came this year to engage a captain for the dredge "Canada," I thought it was quite permissible for me to engage another man than Mr. Mackenzie. He was not engaged by the year but by the month, and at half pay for the winter season, and when the time came to engage a captain I thought it would be just as well to engage another man, who is a very capable man, indeed.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Are we to understand that the officers on board these vessels are not to be regarded as permanent employees? The Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Davies) stated the other day in reply to an inquiry that all the officers of the vessels in the service of the Government were continued, all were treated as permanent employees, and retained in their positions. I do not see why a distinction should be drawn between the officers com-

manding the vessels in the service of the Marine and Fisheries Department and the officers engaged in this important work of dredging. The hon. Minister, I believe, will know that Captain Mackenzie had been for many years—

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. For only one year.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Was he employed for only one year? At all events, the practice, I believe, was not to make any changes, but to continue the employment of the captain of a dredge, provided he performed his duties in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, and I presume there was no fault found with the manner in which Captain Mackenzie performed his duties.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. No.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. And I think the hon. Minister will admit that there is an advantage in having for this service a man experienced in the work, that every year a man is in the service qualifies him better to perform his duties efficiently. It is carrying the spoils system to an unnecessary length to dismiss a man simply because some other person else wants his place.

Mr. MACDONALD (King's, P.E.I.) I would say with respect to the dredge "Prince Edward," that it has been the habit for many years past to continue the captain's services from year to year. He might have been paid by the month, but he was kept on during the winter season. The captain that has been there for the past year has been displaced, and another man has been put in his place, I understand. Now, with respect to this man, I do not think that any fault in the world could be found with him except that he might have voted Conservative. He is a man whose character is above suspicion, he is a man the like of whom can seldom be found in any community, a most thoroughly reliable man, and I wish that the public service in every capacity had men like him. Now, I must take this occasion of expressing my great regret that the Minister of Public Works has not seen fit to continue that man. I had great pleasure in recommending him for the position; I knew he was thoroughly reliable to put into a position of trust. He has filled that position with credit to himself and satisfaction to the public; and I think it is a great mistake on the part of this or any other Government to dispense with the services of a public servant of that kind who has filled his position in the manner that that man has done.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I do not think that it would be quite correct to say that officers of the class mentioned by the hon. gentleman are perma-