

was in the Government of New Brunswick, and during all that time I never once, without the weightiest cause, took upon myself to interfere with any man's tenure of office, and during all that period there were men whom I retained in office under me, who were strong, though of course not active, political opponents of mine. I am, therefore, not bringing with me from the province of New Brunswick any disposition at all to pursue a severe or rigorous course with regard to the employees in the public service. Now, what did I do in the two cases to which the hon. member for Pictou called particular attention? There is no one in this House who will not admit that Mr. Macdonald is a responsible man. There is no one in this House whose personal assurance and statement would be accepted more readily than that of Mr. Macdonald, barrister, who was the opponent of the hon. member for Pictou. When he wrote to me to say that these two men had had been active in the campaign and should be removed, I wrote to him and said I trusted he was not making the statements without having every assurance of their accuracy. I said to him: I want you to satisfy yourself beyond the shadow of a doubt that what you say is true, and I trust that you will only ask me to sanction these removals until you have convinced yourself and can give your personal guarantee that what you state against these men is perfectly true. He assured me, in reply, that he knew, from his own personal and actual knowledge, that these two persons had been active partisans in the campaign. I do not care, Mr. Chairman, what may be the opinions of hon. gentlemen on the other side as to the fairness of my treatment of these two men. I want to say and I am prepared to take the responsibility, as the head of this department, of acting upon this principle, that, when it is brought to my knowledge, when I am satisfied—acting as I am determined to act, in a spirit of fair-play and justice to all—that a man, whether his position be high or low, whether he fills the office of a temporary employee or is a permanent employee, has acted as these men were said to have acted, has entered actively into the campaign and chosen to put his official life into the hands of his opponents, then I am prepared, as the head of this department, to dispense with the services of such a man. I feel myself justified in this, because I do not think that we can carry on party government, as we have been carrying it on in times past, if we act in any other way or upon any other principle. It is all very well for our hon. friends opposite, who have filled every department of the public service with their own appointees to cry out against the adoption of this rule, when it operates against them, and when by crying out against it they hope to reap some political advantage. Why have they not applied this principle in times

Mr. BLAIR.

past, when they had it in their power to do so? Talk about 200 persons only being removed at the time or following the defeat of the Mackenzie Government. Two hundred—it is ridiculous to us who know the actual facts to make such a statement. Why, the heads of unoffending Liberals fell in all directions, and without the shadow of a judicial inquiry. I have in my possession the sworn declarations of gentlemen who were thus treated, gentlemen of the highest character and credibility, who have satisfied me, and will satisfy the public, if the occasion offers, that they were not dealt with in the judicial manner in which persons ought to be dealt with who are permanently employed in the public service. The evidence of this lies on every hand. I say it is not unreasonable that the Liberals of this country, who have during even the whole period of Conservative administration constituted at least one-half of the population of Canada, should have some share in the civil service and in the patronage of the Government of the country. When a charge is made and sustained—I do not say by any process of official inquiry, held by myself personally, because that cannot be available—when a responsible Minister is satisfied by evidence which is at his hand, or which he receives from persons upon whom he may rely, that any employee of the Government, against whom a complaint is made, has violated this principle of neutrality, has been an active and violent partisan, has entered into a campaign against his opponents, no one can complain, least of all those on the other side, if the Government exercises its undoubted right to dispense with the services of that man. Before I take my seat, I wish to give the information to the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) concerning which he called my attention this afternoon, and which he says he asked me for a few days since. I have referred to "Hansard," and have procured the names of the persons he spoke of. I find that the following are the names of those for whom he inquired:—

John G. McDougall, R. McLean, Hugh McPherson, D. A. McDougall, James Landry, John Morrell, D. R. McLean.

The hon. gentleman asked me whether or not these persons have been dismissed from the Intercolonial. I may say that I was not aware, and personally I am not now aware, as to whether or not these persons were dismissed. I have been informed by the Deputy Minister of the department that John G. McDougall, R. McLean, Hugh McPherson, D. A. McDougall, James Landry, John Morrell and D. R. McLean were seven carpenters employed in repairing bridges and stations on the line between New Glasgow and Port Mulgrave. As soon as the work on which they were engaged was completed, in July last, their services were dispensed with, which caused no vacancies, as they