

ing. Some section men have been removed, but they were first granted an investigation, charges were preferred against them, which charges were inquired into and only those men dismissed who were found guilty of neglecting their duty. But men were never dismissed before in this manner. This marks the introduction of a vicious system which must tend to lower the tone of the civil service. The hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Lister) spoke of dismissals in 1878 and said that when the Government of the late Sir John A. Macdonald came into power there were wholesale dismissals, men being turned out simply because they were Liberals. My experience is very different from that. I was a candidate in 1878 in the Conservative interests in Prince County. My most active opponent, except the candidate on the other side, was a gentleman who occupied the position of sub-collector of customs in the town of Alberton. He attended and spoke at meetings and canvassed energetically for my opponent and went all over the county with him doing everything he could to gain support for him. I felt much annoyed, as also did my friends. They said: This is a public officer, and he should stay at home and attend to the duties of his office. He should not go through the country and act the part of a political heeler. When I came to Ottawa I went to the Minister of Customs and he said to me, I can do nothing in the matter, you have no charges to lay against this man. If you can show me that this man has neglected his duty by attending these meetings and taking part in politics, I will have him dismissed, but otherwise I cannot dismiss him. I replied that I had not been watching the work of his office, and could not tell anything about it except that I knew he had taken this active part in politics. I was so annoyed about the matter that I had a private interview with Sir John A. Macdonald, the leader of the party in this House at that time, and Sir John told me the same thing. He said: This is a free country, we allow a man free speech and a free vote. Although we want to keep our civil servants as efficient as possible, and attending to their duties as well as possible, yet we are not going to close their mouths or to deprive them of the rights of free men. But he said, as the Minister of Customs said, if you can establish a case, give us one instance where this man neglected his duty, where the duties of his office were not faithfully performed on account of his taking part in politics, he will be dismissed; but I am not going to dismiss him because he exercised the right of a British free man. So nothing was done in the matter. Now, Sir, in 1873, in the province of Prince Edward Island, when the Mackenzie Administration came into power, and when that province came into confederation, it was believed that the gentlemen who occupied public positions in that Island

would be reappointed to the civil service of Canada, but they were nearly all dismissed, and so we had on the Island the spoils system. Now, the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. McMullen) also made some remarks this evening, saying that there were very few men now in the service who were appointed by the Mackenzie Administration. Sir, that is not the case. The hon. gentleman did not seriously consider his statement. I know that in the province of Prince Edward Island we have railway agents, we have postmasters, we have collectors of customs, who were appointed by the Mackenzie Administration, and who have been retained in office from that time, although they are strong Liberals, and some of the most rabid opponents I had in my last election were railway station agents appointed by the Mackenzie Administration. But those men are being retained in office because they are good officers, they faithfully discharge their duty, and therefore it would be improper to remove them. The hon. member for Wright (Mr. Devlin) made an attack upon the hon. member for Cape Breton (Mr. McDougall) because the railway train happened to stop where that hon. gentleman lives. He says that the hon. member's word is so powerful on that Island that he made the railway trains stop at his door. Now, that is not an argument to use in this House. The railways of the country are run for the accommodation of the people, and if the hon. gentleman happens to live in a town or village where the railway stops to accommodate the people, I think it would be a very extraordinary thing for the Government to run that railway five miles further on in order not to stop in his town. That was an absurd argument to use, and I do not think the hon. gentleman considered what he was saying. I, therefore, trust with regard to these civil servants that none will be dismissed until charges are proved against them. But where you find men are actively and intelligently discharging the duties of their office, leave them there, do not remove them; and if you remove them, do so only after investigation and after proof that they have neglected their duty. By doing that you will promote efficiency in the service, and by not doing it you will degrade the service to the level of the American system, and with every change of Government you will have a change of the service.

Mr. YEO. I rise for the purpose of correcting a statement of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat (Mr. Hackett). He has said that no officials had been dismissed in Prince Edward Island without their conduct having been inquired into. Now, he is quite mistaken in that respect. The hon. gentleman must remember that shortly after the election of 1891, two competent men who were employed on the railway there, were dismissed without any reasons being assigned, and without any in-