

doing very improper work. I have noticed up in Ontario over and over again that the inspector of prisons, whenever there is a local election going on, is always sure to be there, and if you ask him: Why do you happen to be here? It is a strange coincidence that he just accidentally happens to be in that riding.

Mr. COWAN. He went there to see how many Conservatives ought to be in jail.

Mr. SPROULE. If he would attend to his own crowd first and put a few of them behind the bars, they would not be so troublesome at these particular times—I mean those who ought to be there, and whom the hon. gentleman who has just interrupted me (Mr. Cowan) has so frequently defended. It is a strange coincidence that the official always happens to be there at the time of an election, and according to his own statement, it is the merest accident in the world. So we are told it was in this particular case, Mr. Kirk, the warden of the penitentiary happened to be there because it was his old home. Now that may be an excuse and it may not be. I think if the honest and real reason was given we would find out that he went there for the purpose of assisting and voting in that election. Now I would not object to his voting, if he had a vote in that particular place, because I regard that as a right which every man should exercise. But if the Ontario law prevailed there he could not vote there because he does not reside there; as an elector can only vote in the polling subdivision in which he resides, and therefore this man could not possibly have voted there legally. I do not know what the law of that province is, or whether he was voting illegally or not; but if the same franchise law exists there as we have in Ontario, if he voted at all he voted illegally, and we are told that he did vote.

But the circumstances which strikes me is the fact that these officials always happen to be there when there is an election going on, and the excuse given is that it was a mere coincidence. I say it is very improper, and condign punishment should be meted out to any civil servant who is found taking a part in an election. Now the government have dealt with such cases, they have dealt with officials who have taken part in elections, dealt with them summarily, not upon affidavits, as the minister requires to-day, but upon the mere statement of a member of this House. I think it was the hon. the Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock) who stated that when any member of this House gets up and says that a person took part in an election, that he acted as an offensive partisan, he, the minister, would regard that as sufficient evidence and would ask nothing more. Why does not the Minister of Railways and Canals make the same rule apply to his side of the House that he applies to members

Mr. SPROULE.

on this side? It is because they apply one rule to this side and another to their own side that we complain. It is because he metes out punishment to his opponents that he does not mete out to his own friends that we have a right to complain. Now, as I said before, this offence is not confined to one particular branch of the service, nor was it an isolated offence. We find that there were some nine or ten names read over of employees of the Intercolonial, employees of the government, who went down to Guysborough and took part in that election. I have no doubt that many of them were offensive partisans and took an improper part in that election, and yet the Minister of Railways says: Oh, I have heard my friends laughing and joking about it. It was rather an amusing matter in his view, because he got the benefit of the joke and his candidate got the benefit of the votes.

Did the hon. Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock), did the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) treat it as a joke?—not by any means. They treated it as a serious reality and meted out punishment to the parties who were the guilty offenders. Then I say the same rule should be applied to both sides of politics. We had two employees from the Fisheries Department, one, Havelock Torrey, fishery officer, who is getting a salary from the country and another, John Davis, a fishery overseer, who is getting a salary from the country as well. These men and others, some getting large salaries, some moderate ones, but it does not matter whether their salaries be large or small, were employees of the country and had not any right to take part in the election. Then, we had another party named Geo. N. Grant, who was said to be chief constructor of cold storage plants. I suppose he is under the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher). He appears to be capable of running more branches than one and I suppose he had this election on his hands as well. I have cited these cases to show that there was evidently an understanding in the various departments that it was not only the right but the duty of civil servants to go down and help in the Guysborough election. There is the agricultural branch, the Marine and Fisheries branch and the railway branch and if we were aware of all the facts I have no doubt that there would be found to be several others as well so that it would be quite clear that there were a number of sinners in the election. Yet, we are told that this is only a joke, the hon. minister says: I heard some joking about it; I did not pay any attention to it. Is that the way they treated the Conservatives when they found them doing the same thing? Why do they not treat the Reformers the same as Conservatives? If the rule is good for one side it is good for the other and if they think it worth while to mete out punishment to one side