

bring down whatever papers there may be in the department on this subject, and I have no doubt that in this, as in every other case, it will be found that these men were dismissed for proper and good cause, and not, I am quite sure, for the reasons alleged by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. FRASER. I shall be more specific. I tell the hon. Minister of Railways that at Port Mulgrave Station, in the County of Guysborough, within two days after the election, every Liberal there who was in the employ of the Government was dismissed, and orders given that none should be employed but Conservatives.

Mr. BOWELL. Repeat that statement please. I was engaged at the moment and did not hear you.

Mr. FRASER. I said that I would be more specific in my charges, so that the hon. Minister of Railways will have no cause to complain of not knowing who the parties are. I said that at Port Mulgrave every Liberal employed at the station was dismissed, and orders given to the station master to employ none but Conservatives. I state that a Mr. Murray who was employed there was dismissed among others, and his brother or uncle—a man of some influence—who was collector of Customs, made it so hot for the superintendent that Mr. Murray had to be restored to his position, and with that exception no other person is employed there.

An hon. MEMBER. You mean no Liberal.

Mr. FRASER. Not one single Liberal, and I further say that that statement was put in writing by the superintendent and that since that time—I will not go into that question just now, but I will take it up afterwards—that many other things have been done; changes made without investigation, and salaries reduced without one single charge or investigation into the reason why. That is specific enough.

Mr. BOWELL. Yes; that is specific.

Mr. TUPPER. I would like to ask the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Fraser), whether he is aware of the political opinions of the agent at that station? The hon. gentleman said that all the employes at Port Mulgrave were dismissed. Does he include the agent there?

Mr. FRASER. Not at all. I mean the poor men who were working outside on the railway, at very small salaries. Since that time, the agent at that place was removed to a smaller office and his salary reduced from \$50 a month to \$35 a month, because he was suspected of political leanings against the Government.

Mr. LAURIER. The answer given by the Minister of Customs would have been more satisfactory if he had been ready to lay down some principle upon which it would be understood that the Government were prepared to act upon all occasions. The charge made by my hon. friend from Prince (Mr. Perry) is, that two labouring men, men who from their station in life I suppose had not much influence, have been dismissed from the service simply because they were suspected of having voted in favour of the Liberal Government. The hon. Minister says he knows nothing about these two men, but he will make enquiries. So far so good. But the hon. gentleman is asked by my friend from North York (Mr. Mulock): "Supposing the facts

Mr. BOWELL.

to be as stated, what would you do?" and the only answer the hon. gentleman is able to give at present is, "I will act; I will not say now what I will do, but I will act."

Mr. BOWELL. I said a little more than that. I said I would act in such a way as to meet his approval.

Mr. LAURIER. That is very vague. If the hon. gentleman is prepared to act in a way which would satisfy my hon. friend, then he should be able to say at once that if these facts are as stated by my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island, these two men will be reinstated in office, and the man who discharged them, after having enquired how they had voted, will be dismissed from office. I am sure that the hon. gentleman will not controvert this proposition, that no officer of the railway has a right to enquire as to how a man in his employ has voted. The law gives the ballot to officers in the employ of the Government, and, therefore, it implies that they have a right to use the ballot in whatever way they think proper; and if an officer above them ventures to enquire as to how they have voted, and dismisses them because he believes they have voted in a certain way, then this man should be dismissed, and not the men who exercise their right under the ballot. I would have expected the hon. Minister, not merely to say that he will act in future in a way to satisfy my hon. friend, but to lay down a general rule that no man is to be subject to enquiry as to how he has voted or exercised his franchise. More than that, in these matters, if the law is to be respected at all, as it is conceived to be, every man in the service should be able to cast his vote unchallenged, and without giving any reasons except to his own conscience. I am not prepared to say that I understand the hon. member for Huron to be as radical as the hon. Minister of Customs made him out to be; but at all events, I would agree with him in this, that every officer has a right to a vote, but every officer in the service who goes out of his way to make an offensive campaign ought not to be retained in the service. Nothing in my estimation is more calculated to bring the service into contempt than to allow an officer, while in the public service, whether high or low in station, to go offensively into a campaign. Let every man in the Civil Service vote; that is his right; but it seems to me unjust and intolerable that a man should go out of his office to canvass or to take any prominent part in elections. This is going beyond the right the law gives him; and with these remarks I quite agree with my hon. friend from Huron that these things, although tolerated by this Government, ought not to be tolerated at all by any Government.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Well, Sir, I do not think that any one on this side of the House will find fault with the rule which the hon. leader of the Opposition has just laid down; and so far as my experience with public officers goes—and I have had a pretty extensive experience, having found that many of the post offices and office holders' houses in my constituency have been made the committee rooms of my opponents—that is the rule I have observed. Every public officer in my county knows that he is just as free to vote as I am, without the slightest danger to his salary or his office. But I have a right to expect that the interference of these officials in elections shall cease