

public official capacity, is guilty of a misdemeanour.

I am not personally familiar with the facts, but I am informed it has been the practice in the Northwest that men who are in charge of the election campaign for a candidate are selected to act as deputy returning officers or otherwise in an official capacity as officers of this parliament. It is obviously not desirable in the public interest that such should be the case. A servant of parliament should be an impartial officer and should not engage actively in the management of a campaign for one candidate or another. I submit the amendment for the consideration of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I can see no reason why we should make that principle applicable exclusively to the Northwest Territories. If it is adopted at all it ought to be a law of general application.

Mr. BARKER. Still it might go into this Act.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. It seems to me it had better be applied to all the elections throughout the Dominion; it is not a bad principle by any means.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I think so, too, but will it not be taking a step in the right direction if you insert it in this Act? I also bring to the attention of the Minister of Justice the following amendment:

That Bill (No. 156) be amended by adding the following as section 7 thereof:

Any person being at the time employed in the service of the Dominion of Canada, or in the service of any province or territory of such Dominion, who shall during an election for an electoral district solicit any other person to vote for or to vote against any candidate in such election, or who shall in such election act as agent or otherwise for or on behalf of any candidate, or in the promotion of his election, or in the management, conduct or organization thereof, or in the canvass for votes, is guilty of an unlawful act and shall also forfeit the sum of two hundred dollars to any person who sues therefor with costs.

As I understand the conditions in the Northwest Territories it is most necessary to embody the principle of this amendment in the law. The policy has been laid down by this government that officers of the government paid by the people of this country shall not be actively employed either for or against any candidate at an election. They have the right to exercise their franchise, but their public duties are supposed to take up their whole time, and as the Prime Minister very well put in 1897, if any public officer sees fit to actively engage in political work the government will give him his whole time for that purpose. That is a principle which has not been acted upon by the government, and especially so in the Northwest Territories, where I am informed the officers of the government, especially

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

the officers of the Department of the Interior, have in the most wholesale and unblushing manner actively engaged in the work of canvassing in the interests of government candidates. It is not desirable that that should be continued, and I do not know any better way of stopping it than by legislation of this kind. I am content to accept such legislation for the whole Dominion of Canada, but as the conditions in the Northwest Territories are, I am told, worse than elsewhere in this respect, and as we have now this Bill before us, I bring the amendment to the attention of the government in the hope that they will adopt it as well as the other amendment I have proposed. I do not know that the wording of these amendments is drafted in exactly the best shape that could be devised. It is not so much the exact language as the principle which I am asking the government to accept.

Mr. SCOTT. I have not a word to say by way of comment on the suggested amendment of the hon. leader of the opposition; but he has again to-night, as has very often been done, not only in this House, but in the newspaper press, thrown out insinuations against the civil service of the Northwest Territories, and I am going to ask the committee to listen to a piece of proof with regard to a specific case. This newspaper clipping is a proof that very often upon the flimsiest kind of evidence, these charges are made against members of the civil service. I may remind my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake) that a couple of months ago he made a charge in the House on the basis of a two-line item in a newspaper against two members of the civil service who live at Regina, Messrs. Bredt and Porter, one a member of the immigration staff and the other a homestead inspector.

Mr. LAKE. Will the hon. gentleman specify? I am not quite sure to what he refers.

Mr. SCOTT. If I remember rightly, the hon. member, on the basis of a two-line item in a Regina newspaper, raised a discussion on the whole question whether the civil service in the Territories were departing from their proper line of duty.

Mr. LAKE. I am not aware that I made any special charge against these two gentlemen.

Mr. SCOTT. Did not my hon. friend quote from the Regina 'Standard' an item charging Messrs. Bredt and Porter with going into the Edmonton district in May and taking part in the election?

Mr. LAKE. I quoted an article and asked if it was true and the hon. gentleman said it was not.

Mr. SCOTT. I will give the committee further proof by quoting a short article from the Regina 'Standard' on June 12. It is headed, 'A Correction,' and is as follows: