

under such conditions with the financial institutions of any country. Then is it not reasonable to urge upon the government that something like a cautious and prudent administration of the public revenues should be had? It is the duty of the Senate to properly consider and to resist in every possible way, the demands made by the government of the day from time to time for enormous sums to carry out the public service without the necessary information being brought before us to show what those services will actually cost. Another phase of the public expenditure has been revealed by the inquiry into the Marine Department. I say that those disclosures reveal incompetency in the administration of the public service to a shocking extent. Minor as well as major officials of that department were permitted to incur obligations representing a corrupt expenditure from 20 to 150 per cent higher than any business man would have paid for the same supplies. It is idle to attempt in behalf of the interest of a political party to vindicate the government in administration of that character. What has been disclosed in connection with the administration of the Marine Department marks every spending department of the government. Even the commissioner himself was obliged to say in his report—are there not other departments administered by the government which could be dealt with in the same manner? It is well known that the great spending departments are administered with the same reckless extravagance and incompetence as the Marine Department; and yet when we remember that the abuses involved in those disclosures were vindicated by the government on the floor of parliament—when we remember that every possible obstruction was thrown in the way of the public accounts committee in its investigation, one is humiliated at the action of parliament and led to ask what the duty of the people's representatives is? It was this same department that attacked the report of the civil service commission when it was laid before the House. We all recollect with what indignation the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and the Minister of Finance attacked their own commission for suggesting that such abuses existed. We

can recall the various attempts made some two or three years ago to have a proper investigation into the administration of the Marine Department. Every attempt was blocked by the government and the majority in parliament. I reiterate, that this is not the duty of parliament. The duty of the representatives of the people in both Houses is to see that the fullest investigation is made when any such charge is brought before them, and that every opportunity be afforded to investigate the facts with a view to stop abuses. I observe in the report of Commissioner Cassels that a reference is made to the necessity of awakening the public conscience. It occurs to me that he has not come as closely in contact with political conditions in Canada as those more closely identified with public life, or he would have concluded that for some years the public conscience has been dead. At the last general election, an opportunity was given to the public to show whether a public conscience did exist in Canada, and I venture to say that there was not a question involving public conscience before the electorate that received favourable consideration in any constituency. How could it be expected, in view of the course pursued by the Prime Minister himself? In a letter addressed to his associate member in the city of Ottawa, he assured the civil service that if he should be returned to power to increase their salaries by at least 12½ per cent, and to make that increase retroactive. Now what does that mean? It means simply that the Prime Minister of the Dominion had not sufficient public conscience to realize the enormity of seeking to bribe a constituency with money out of the public treasury. There are fifteen hundred civil servants in Ottawa. At the last session of parliament the Minister of Agriculture informed the House of Commons that the recommendation made by the civil service commission for an increase of salary could not be carried out. When the two seats of the city of Ottawa seemed to be in jeopardy, what did the premier do? He announced to the 1,500 civil servants that if the Liberal administration was returned he would use his influence to increase their salaries by 12½ per cent and to make that increase date from the 1st of September last.