

rounded by good officials whom he will trust. Have not we reformed our Civil Service? Have not we increased the salaries of the deputy ministers and given them, so to speak, a more extended authority to protect the public exchequer against the raids that might be made from outside? And, Mr. Speaker, have not we abolished the patronage system? If we have not abolished it, then, Sir, some of the hon. gentlemen opposite belong to the tribe of Ananias, because we have been repeatedly informed in this House, day in and day out, that patronage had been abolished in every department of government. If patronage no longer prevails, if the system of public tender is followed in each department, what need is there to create this new commission, and for what purpose have we this year increased the salaries of deputy ministers? Their salaries were increased first from \$4,000 to \$5,000, and now from \$5,000 to \$6,000 a year. Are they going to be deprived of all authority? What is their business if not to administer their departments and to see that expenditures are honestly made and procedure honestly carried out? I say that there are checks and safeguards at every step in each department if the deputy does his duty and if the minister in charge will simply live up to the statute defining his powers in his own department. My hon. friend, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Rowell) belongs, as I do, to the legal fraternity, and I believe that he has a keen business intellect. Will he tell me that in his own department, and sticking to his business—of course, if he is lost in Imperialistic dreams, that is another matter—he could not keep a vigilant scrutiny on expenditures? Now that the war is over and peace is going to be signed, let us come to essentials, let us get down to elementals—in popular language, let us get down to brass tacks. We are no longer at war. The Peace Treaty will be signed in a short while and we shall resume the even tenor of our way, constitutionally speaking. Canada is Canada. There is no revolution from a constitutional point of view. There is some unrest in the country, but it is against the Government, and the profiteers, not against the constitution. We are resuming our duties as in pre-war times, and I would urge my hon. friend to come down from the high heaven of his dreams to solid earth. Let him tackle the business of his department. Although I do not share his views politically, I know he has enough business acumen to direct the affairs committed to his charge in conformity with the statute. What is the use

[Mr. Lemieux.]

of that Bill? Has my hon. friend read the statutory powers of each department? If he has, he will find that in each department there are checks and safeguards; and above all there is in the Government of Canada an officer who is the watch dog of the treasury and who officially is known as the Auditor General of Canada.

Do you believe, Mr. Speaker, for one moment that old Lorne Macdougall, that John Fraser, that the present Auditor General—whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, but who is an honest and sturdy officer of the Crown—might have been or would be in need of a commission to curtail expenditure, to see that the law as regards public tenders was followed? What are the duties of the Auditor General if not to call the attention of every minister of the Crown, when he has overstepped the mark, to the fact that he has not confined himself within the powers conferred upon him by the laws of Canada?—When I was in the Government, Mr. Speaker, my nightmare was the Auditor General. I was afraid every year—

An hon. MEMBER: A guilty conscience.

Mr. LEMIEUX: —homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto; I am only a man; and nothing that is human do I count foreign to me. I know what are the weaknesses of my human nature; and I know that the Auditor General is the nightmare of every minister of the Crown. During the years I was acting as Postmaster General my only fear was that at the end of the fiscal year on opening the Blue Book at the pages covering the expenditures and receipts of my department, I would find a foot note from the Auditor General ordering me to live up to the statute conferring the powers upon me as Postmaster General.

This commission, Mr. Speaker, clips the claws of the Auditor General. He will be a very efficient officer no doubt, but he will rely in the future on the three commissioners to be appointed to do the business which by statute each minister, plus the Auditor General, is bound to attend to. Take the Department of Public Works, where moneys can be spent lavishly if there is not the greatest care taken on the part of the minister, the chief engineer, and the deputy minister, and, finally, the Auditor General. Do you not find in the Public Works Act a section providing that it is not within the power of the minister of the department to spend more than \$5,000 for any public work unless it has been voted by Parliament? I remember when that amendment to the Act was