

indirectly concerned with the general questions with which this commission has to deal.

This report on free zones was taken up through a reference to the commission of two bills dealing with the establishment of free zones in the ports of the United States. It gives the history of such ports, their progress in Europe, suggestions as to the betterment of the submitted bills and evidence from various individuals and bodies as to the desirability of their establishment, so this report makes possible an intelligent discussion of such a subject, which would otherwise have entailed much labour on the part of those called upon to vote. Similar reports of the tariff commission proposed for Canada, would give to Canadian Ministers and Canadian Legislators equally valuable service.

The other Commission to which I refer, may be described as the Public Works Commission, to which would be referred for report as to the facts, all proposals to the government which required expenditure. They would examine into these proposals and would give findings as to the national importance of each, the importance to the community immediately to be benefitted, and both these findings in relation to the cost. They should be empowered to suggest alternative schemes, and their findings should be in the hands of Parliament before proposals of expenditure would be brought down.

Recurring again to the example which I gave, the Harbor of Kingston—if proposals were made by any government, for example, to make a harbor which would take vessels of 24 feet draft at Kingston, while the river below had a draft of 12 feet, and the Welland Canal a draft of 18 feet, the report of the commission would kill the project. In the same way the findings of the commission would be a safeguard to a Minister or to a government. They are bound within limits to please constituencies. They do not desire to alienate the sympathies of any of their supporters and yet proposals are made to them which are preposterous and would be killed by the plain statement of the actual facts in the case. It would also give the Minister independent information, and I am sure that the present Minister of Public Works or any of his predecessors has found that the most difficult thing was to get accurate information on the various projects which are presented to him. Sir John A. Macdonald once said that the most valuable legacy from Mr. McKenzie's government was the Auditor-General. It put him in a position to point out that the Auditor-General could not pass any expenditure not authorized specifically and that much