

has been done, and the value of the work which will be done by the continuation of the commission that this discussion has taken place. Therefore, I shall detain the House for a few minutes in dealing with some of the observations which have been made by hon. members in opposition to this Bill. I should have thought that the very clear and forcible statement of the Prime Minister, based on his observation of the work of this commission, which has continuously reported to him during the past four years, would have convinced the House of its value. My hon. friend from Maisonneuve (Mr. Lemieux) has referred to Sir Hormisdas Laporte in very high terms. With everything he has said in regard to that gentleman I am in entire agreement. I know the character of his work on this commission, I know his fine business ability, and with what unselfish public spirit he has served the country. I agree with my hon. friend in saying that Sir Hormisdas Laporte would not advise the Government contrary to the country's interest. I want to say that Sir Hormisdas Laporte will not be on the new commission; he will not accept a position on it. His duties will not permit him to do so. But if there is one thing more than another he has urged upon the attention of the Government, it is that we should make this commission permanent. He speaks out of the knowledge and experience gained during the past four years, from what he knows of the purchasing methods in all the departments of the Government, from what he knows of the purchasing by large business houses like the one with which he is himself connected. It is not a matter of speculation with him. He knows that it will save the public millions of dollars to have this commission established. If there is one thing that he wishes to see before he retires from office after four years of service, without receiving a dollar of remuneration for the splendid work which he has performed, it is the perpetuation of this commission for the benefit of the people of Canada.

What is true of Sir Hormisdas Laporte is equally true of every other member of the commission. In one of the last conversations I had with the late Mr. Gundy, one of the ablest business men from my own province, who had served his country without any compensation and who would not have accepted a position on the permanent commission because he was compelled to return, as he thought, to resume his business duties in Toronto, he said: "In my judgment the Government would

[Mr. Rowell.]

be doing a great thing in the interest of efficiency in the management of public affairs and in the saving of public money by making this commission permanent." He urged the value of the work of this commission and the great importance in the public interest of making it permanent. As a business man he considered the establishment of this permanent commission as one of the most important achievements of any Government. What is true of Sir Hormisdas Laporte and Mr. Gundy is equally true of Mr. Galt. He joined in the recommendation which the Prime Minister read to the House this afternoon urging the Government to continue the commission.

My hon. friend from Maisonneuve said that there was no better business man in Quebec than Sir Hormisdas Laporte. Why should one of the foremost business men of Quebec, Sir Hormisdas Laporte, why should one of the foremost business men of Ontario, Mr. Gundy, why should one of the foremost business men of Manitoba, Mr. Galt, after years of investigation and experience in this work, unite in making such a recommendation to the Prime Minister if it was not that, as business men, they believed it was in the public interest to do so and that it would mean the saving of millions of dollars to Canada? Otherwise they would never have thought of making such a recommendation. The adoption of this method of purchasing supplies during the war meant that we abolished party patronage in the purchase of millions of dollars' worth of supplies. Does any member of the House, now that the war is over, want to see a revival of that old system of patronage in the purchasing of supplies? The hon. member for Maisonneuve said that if patronage had not been abolished there must be on this side of the House some members of the society of Ananias. Party patronage was abolished in the purchase of supplies by the appointment of the War Purchasing Commission. Bring this commission to an end and in the purchase of supplies for all the departments of the Government party patronage will be restored. This Bill is to continue the work of this commission so that party patronage shall be abolished in the purchase of all supplies.

Let me read to the House what the Prime Minister said upon this subject at the opening of the last Parliament:

In addition, we have given our attention to abolishing patronage absolutely in respect of