

ment, with difficulty, if at all, can they make any saving to protect their old age from want. The victims of misfortune, of physical infirmity, or of an outcry for retrenchment, they may be dismissed without indemnity; and, after devoting all their youth and all their energy to the public service, may find themselves in the street without support, without sympathy, and often the objects of the cutting irony of those who once envied them their position.

And let it not be thought that this is pure fiction, the invention of a too vivid imagination; the fact exists in all its stern reality. See that blind man led by the hand of a little child who supports him; he is an old official, he lost his sight in the full activity of duty; for fourteen long years he conscientiously fulfilled his daily task; he wore himself out in consideration of a small salary; misfortune came upon him and he was dismissed; that is to say, after profiting by his labour, after having had the benefit of his services and his experience, he was coldly discarded like a useless and worn-out piece of furniture.

As a contrast, let us turn to France and hear what Mr. Benoist has to say as to the salaries assigned to Officers in that country. He addresses the *Chambre des Députés* :—

"I do not purpose to enter at length into the question which is before the House. It appears to me that a great principle is involved here, and that we are about to vote on matters most seriously affecting our administrative organization; I may almost say, our social organization, for all know the relative position that administrative organization occupies with regard to our social organization.

"The question is this :—

"Does the State owe to its employes proper remuneration during service, and again proper means of existence when, after service, they are no longer in a condition to perform any duty?

"As to the question thus put, there can be no doubt: To me it is most clearly evident that to the State this is a moral question, a question of efficient service, and further, a question of economy.

"So closely does the State calculate the salaries which it gives to its employes, that it must further calculate that those salaries have to serve two purposes: the present support of the man who serves it, and the possible existence of the man, when he is no longer able to serve it."

In England a statesman and financier of the highest distinction, Mr. Gladstone, again proved that one may hold high rank in the politics of his country, without by consequence ceasing to be a protector to those whom Providence has placed under his control. In the House of Commons, in 1857, on the subject of the remuneration of public officers, he said:

"It is greatly to be desired that public officers should be contented and happy, for nothing in the world can be more truly prejudicial to the public service than a feeling of general discontent, consequent upon absolute destitution or an idea of injustice. I know by experience that in Russia and other foreign countries, the great calamity which proves fatal to the very germ of governmental life, is the existence of a body of public functionaries who are underpaid, discontented and corrupt. In this country we stand in no danger of corruption in that direction, but if we do not treat our public servants with justice and equity, we must not be astonished if we have one day to chronicle a relaxation of zeal and energy in the public service. To exhibit parsimony towards persons employed in the departments of the public service is an erroneous and vicious principle."

#### IS THE DIMINUTION OF SALARIES JUSTIFIABLE?

Having demonstrated that public employment in Canada is a service which is often ungrateful, and one which exposes those who engage in it to many mortifications, let us now consider the question of the diminution of salary to which it is proposed to subject the officers in the service of the House of Commons. Is it just, is it equitable, is it humane, in view of there being no retiring fund, to subject to a tax of twelve and a half per cent. the salaries of servants who are faithful, trustworthy, and devoted? To this there can be no hesitation in replying in the negative, the decision resting upon facts which cannot be disproved.

Now, either these officers are useful, able and zealous, or they are quite the reverse. If it can be proved that these employes are indispensable, and that they do their duty well; that among them there are men of known value, men of special attainments whom it would