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The Speech that Failed

How the Civilian, being fallen into an ecstasy, made a Speech to the House of Commons.—The Words we spoke.—And how we found it was but a Dream.

Sometimes we almost wish we were a Member of Parliament. It is not, we trust, an irreverent wish; and we try hard to keep it from egotism. But the truth is, we feel at times so full of our knowledge about the civil service that we simply cannot resist the longing that we might dump it all upon the emblematical green carpet, where the power is so great and the interest so little. Representing, let us say, the 15,000 men who comprise, between the one ocean and the other, the public service of Canada, we fancy we should make some figure. And how we should take up this question of Civil Service Reform, and play upon it, and arouse and organize the country upon it, and in short be "it" upon it, all in the compass of a session or two, partly for the country, and partly for our constituents (constituencies always need nursing) and partly for ourselves—for by this time we should have learned to play the game in dead earnest! We have not yet decided which post in the cabinet we would take when we had made our hit and it was recognized what a fascinating person we were.

This foolishness was strong upon us as we sat listening the other day to the debate on the increase—some-

where high up in the officials' gallery, for we have never been invited to a seat in the press gallery, the daily papers somehow never having taken kindly to us. Perhaps it was the fact that of a House of 225 scarcely fifteen members were following the discussion, while of these no more than half spoke (not all advisedly), that brought on the feeling so powerfully. But so it was that as the talk passed on to the lesser authorities, and the galleries began to empty, we ourselves fell into a muse, so that we lost all sense of propriety, and fancied ourselves even down below in the midst of the empty benches, somewhere not quite at the rear, nor yet so far ahead as to seem immodest,—below the gangway, if there be such a place. It was not that we had anything very new to say, but we wanted to say some things over again in our own way, thereby proving that our fitness for the place is founded on instinct. And the following is the speech we heard ourselves uttering: "Mr. Speaker,—

"As one who has been greatly interested from the first in the question at present before the House, and who is proud to have had some share in the developments resulting in the pre-