

I am glad to be supported in my opinion by no less an authority than the hon. member for Northumberland as a Minister, for the law passed while he was in the Administration contained the wise provision that no clerk should receive extra remuneration for work performed in his own Department. It was felt that such a practice would be open to abuse—that the clerks might be continually asking for extra work, and that, perhaps, the work of the day would include the extra work that would be paid for extra, and therefore the law prohibits it. The hon. gentleman speaks of over-hours. As I understand, during the Session of Parliament, the ordinary rules as to the evening hours are suspended, and it is well understood, that at that period, when returns and information are required by members, it is part of the duties of the clerks to put in over-time to perform those duties. They are not over-hours, but are part of their contract. The discretion possessed by the deputy heads under the present law, is, I think, a very wise provision, and the repeal of it would lead to great abuses.

Mr. MITCHELL. I was aware that the practice of requiring the clerks to put in extra time without remuneration prevailed, but I hardly remembered that such a law existed. But, whether the law exists or not, it does not alter the force or effect of any argument I advance. I know nothing about this particular case; I was speaking generally in reply to the hon. member for Middlesex. I know, for a matter of fact, that there is one Department of this Government, in which the clerks have been employed for upwards of a month up to ten or eleven o'clock at night. If the law is as the hon. gentleman states, the sooner the law is altered, in my opinion, the better. We ought not to exact from these gentlemen any such extraordinary hours of work as some of them have to put in; and while I am free to admit, that the heads of Departments might be open to great importunities, I trust that they have firmness and determination to resist these importunities, and to decide when extra services should be performed. I take issue with my hon. friend as to the contract that exists between the civil servants and the Government. They are obliged to work from ten to four, and when required to perform extra services, they are bound to do that; but while they are bound to do so, they are not bound to do it without extra remuneration. That is the position I take, and if the law is different from that, it ought to be amended.

Mr. ROSS. I hope I am not to be understood as casting any reflection on the service, as the remarks of the hon. member for Northumberland might lead one to infer.

Mr. MITCHELL. I do not mean them to bear that inference.

Mr. ROSS. I know many of them too well as able, courteous gentleman, to accuse them to be guilty of offence in the respect alluded to. I do not mean that all the members of the Civil Service are equally able and valuable. I am speaking my mind freely and frankly on this subject. The hon. member is allowing here not only a violation of the law, but is establishing a very bad precedent, the natural effect of which is to lead the civil servants to neglect their duties in the day in order that extra work might accumulate which they might do in the evening and get extra pay for it. Human nature in the Civil Service is the same as anywhere else. If three or four of them put their heads together and agree to loiter away their time during the day in order that work might accumulate, and when there is a plethora apply for the extra pay for the extra work accumulated, their conspiracy—I call it a conspiracy—under this system would succeed. As to the hours of the service, the clerks are not taxed more or as much as the members of any other profession. My hon. friend from Northumberland puts in a greater number of hours, taking

the year round, than any member of the Civil Service; and take any professional man, a bank clerk or dry goods clerk, the same thing will be found, while their average salary is not so large. I have made an estimate of the average salary of the service from the deputy head down, including third class clerks and messengers, but excluding packers, and I find it to be \$1,120 a year. That is a salary that would gladden the hearts of members of some of the learned professions and of many other individuals in this country which is so prosperous. If we ask civil servants to put in a little extra work, occasionally, we do not ask too much. True, some of our officers are paid very small allowances. The messengers that wait in our lobbies are paid very small allowances. They are the worst paid class in our service. The hours of our Civil Service clerks are from ten to four, and they have two or three weeks' holidays in each year, so that they are not so badly paid for the work they do; and I am not to blame if I insist, not only that the law should be observed, but that we should not be asked to vote this money again and again. I know of four officers of the House, besides Mr. Dionne, who have been away at the elections. I could name other officials who were similarly engaged. If these men are so severely taxed to perform the work assigned them, how is it they can leave their business and go electioneering to the various counties where they can bring political influence to bear? Take the case of Mr. Dionne; not only did he oppose the hon. member for L'Islet, but he was one of the most active canvassers in Ottawa during the last campaign, and was noted for his exertions in seeing that his own political friends, and nobody else, got a hearing. Was he working extra hours during that time and is this his extra pay?

Mr. BLAKE. These are a part of Public Works.

Mr. ROSS. No doubt these are the public works that Mr. Dionne did, that he was employed upon. They were the public occasions upon which he was employed, and this \$1,500 is no doubt to compensate him for the noise he made at various public meetings, and the assistance he gave to candidates of the Government. Do these little duties turn up in the Estimates occasionally? I hope not. I am not satisfied, taking this matter on its merits, that the seven pages I notice in the Public Accounts are rendered value for the \$1,500. The principle is wrong from top to bottom. This man should not be so employed or any other man, contrary to law, contrary to the duty of the Administration, and detrimental to the morale of the service.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We are departing from the practice of Parliament in discussing in Committee of Supply "all round my hat," going over the whole subject of the public administration of affairs. My hon. friend wants to know if Mr. Dionne is to be paid for howling at different elections. If the hon. gentleman will look at the paper, he will see that it contains a detailed statement of the work Mr. Dionne is to be paid for. The information is thorough, and therefore he cannot for a moment suppose the payment is in any way connected with crying out at elections. There is nothing contrary to law in this. The Minister of the Department in which Mr. Dionne has been engaged asks Parliament to vote the money. The law says, the employé of a Department should not be paid for extra work. My hon. friend did not pay him, but he asks Parliament in its omnipotence to do so. Now, what is the work? As a clerk in the Department Mr. Dionne was not obliged to prepare this elaborate compilation.

Mr. ROSS. Only seven pages.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is a valuable work containing a detailed statement of all the expenditure on every public work from 1867. We are in the habit, and have been properly in the habit, of voting remuneration to a clerk when he applies himself to some useful work outside his