

will be unable properly to discharge his duties if he is refused the collaboration of first-class administrators. The Minister stated to the House of Commons that he felt it was necessary to transfer responsibility for administration of the penitentiaries to a commission of three good and true men. It will perhaps be difficult to find three men who possess the requisite experience, character and administrative capacity, but the Minister has hopes that he will be successful in his quest. The Order in Council proclaiming the effective date of the measure will not be passed until the Minister is satisfied that he has three suitable commissioners.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: The Minister of Justice states the reason he wants to abolish the superintendent's office is that he himself cannot do the whole job of administering justice without the assistance of a commission. My knowledge of the Minister of Justice—and it ought to be a fairly dependable knowledge, for I sat opposite him many years—and my appreciation of his ability compel me to decline to accept that explanation. I know he can manage his department perfectly well, no matter who is Superintendent of Penitentiaries, and especially when the superintendent is a man of whom he speaks so highly as he does of General Ormond. The Minister can take care of the department all right; I am not worried a bit about that. If he has wardens who are unfit for their posts and not doing their duty, let him get better wardens. In the wardens' posts is where he needs better men, not on a commission. If you have the right warden, the less you interfere with him and the less you "commission" over him, the better it will be. This Bill would not reduce the Minister's responsibility one iota; he would still be charged with the administration of our penitentiaries. He thinks he can go out on the highways and byways and get three men to take this load off his back. He will not; the load will remain there. The only way to improve the situation is to appoint better men to do the work that has to be done; not to establish a bureaucratic commission. I refuse to accept the plea that the Minister is not capable of performing his task. There is no doubt that he is capable.

I do not want it to be understood that I am placing the stamp of my uninformed approval, without reservation, upon General Ormond as Superintendent of Penitentiaries. I am not in a position to express an opinion on the subject. Critical representations have been made to me by persons in whom I have much confidence, but I know General Ormond

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

as a man, and as one who has done things—and that in a very important and perilous period. I do not want to see him treated unfairly. In view of the fact that he could not possibly have had adequate means of establishing his own side of the case, or presenting what he would like to present in answer to allegations made against him, I cannot accept a report in which he is slapped on both sides of the face, kicked in the back, thrown out on the street, and left with only such rights as he may have in respect of a pension.

It may be that men can be found for this proposed commission. I do not know. I do not think it makes a tremendous amount of difference who they are, unless they are able to select for the work to be done under them better men than have been selected in the past. And, on the whole, I do not feel disposed to complain, as some people do, of the past selections. Taking them over the whole range of Canada, I think they have been pretty fair. With not a single one of those men—and I ask that this sentence be noted—had I the slightest thing in the world to do. Nobody in that service, within my knowledge, got his advance on anything except his own merits; every man stood on his own feet and never needed any help from me.

I am opposed to this measure. I do not think it was necessary to bring it down in these crowded and congested minutes at the end of the session, and I am going to vote against it.

Hon. GEORGE GORDON: Honourable members, I wonder if any other civilized country in the world ever created a commission which defamed officers of an institution on the strength of evidence given by convicts. I understand that this commission took evidence from more than 1,800 convicts. I could understand that being done in some country like Russia, where persons are imprisoned for political purposes, but to my mind the taking of evidence from 1,800 prisoners in Canada was ridiculous.

I have not read the whole of the report, but I understand the commission went to England and took further evidence there. I should like to inquire of the honourable leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) whether convicts were examined in England, and, if so, how many. I assume that if for the discovery of facts it was found necessary to receive testimony from convicts in Canada, the same procedure would be found