

It is quite possible that, as there are discretionary limitations in all phases of life, some of the incidents in the daily life of the commissioners should be shielded from public view. We submit this view as a possibility merely and without attempting its justification. But we do submit absolutely, that as the Auditor General declines to authorize payments and publishes in his annual report illuminating correspondence on methods employed in public business, so should this commission, analogous as it is in its status towards parliament, take the public, the government and the service into its confidence by doing likewise. If it allows its name to become a synonym for detestation by both the government and the service through failure to put in a well timed word in the properly defined, orthodox manner provided for under democratic institutions and customs, it will furnish us with an exhibition of unexampled stupidity and folly.



#### A LEADER OF ACTION.

Elsewhere in this issue is a summary of the House of Commons debate on the question of co-operative credit societies. Here is a word from the opening speech, that of Mr. Meighen, of Portage la Prairie, which is worthy of special attention on the part of those interested in the civil service of Canada: "I desire to do full justice to those who have blazed the way which I now intend to follow. . . . I would not do justice to all those connected with this work if I did not refer to the strenuous efforts of a gentleman well known to us all, though not a member of this House. I refer to Mr. Alphonse Desjardins, of Levis, one of the members of our "Hansard" staff, who has borne the burden of a great endeavor in this country to establish on a firm basis a comprehensive system of co-operative banking."

And when Mr. Meighen came to that part of his speech setting forth results actually attained, the facts he gave, proved that the pioneer in this movement must be one in whom are combined in most remarkable degree the qualities of the idealist, the inventor and the practical man of affairs. When it is considered how hard it is to win the public to a new idea of any kind, and especially to one involving the reasonable use of money, it seems almost fabulous that in about one decade a pioneer should be able to set going a new and untried banking institution and make it so magnificently successful that scores of similar institutions are coming into existence, and every one of them equally a success. This is no "get rich quick" scheme, but a sober three per cent. proposition, yet so perfectly adapted to the needs of the commonest of the common people that the money which formerly was deposited idly in the cracked teapot, the tin bank, or the corner of the least-used drawer is now drawn into the channels of production and trade. And, better still, the money that was formerly fooled away merely because the fumbling fingers of the earner of it could not close tightly upon it, is now saved and made reproductive.

Decades of experiments in Europe had made the new system successful before Mr. Desjardins took it up. But to have faith in the adaptability of the system to our conditions; to carry on the great preliminary study necessary to the work; to begin with a small coterie of friends with their half-incredulous subscription of five dollars or so apiece; to work on without mistake and without lack of faith, even when the planted seed seemed not dormant but dead; to develop a system so perfect that the success attained can be duplicated anywhere and multiplied endlessly;—this is indeed a triumph of that highest genius which has been truly described as a capacity for hard work.

This is the work of the spare time