

I am opposed to the Bill now before the House. I do not agree with this phase of the commission's report. I do not think a board to superintend our penitentiaries is necessary from any point of view. I wonder, whether, from this time on, we could run a hen-roost in this country without a commission. One would think, to listen to the words of the Minister of Justice, that it was a giant's job to exercise the powers and perform the duties of Superintendent of Penitentiaries. It is the job of an able man, I know, and possibly he needs an assistant; but that it is a job for a commission I do not know and do not believe.

Commissions are appropriate where the duties are judicial, where the meeting of mind with mind over controversial matters is essential. It is not appropriate here. This is a mere matter of administration. It is a fairly large matter of administration, but it is no more than that. To tell me that one capable man cannot do the job is an affront. The real test of the success of management of penitentiaries is not the superintendent, and never will be. He is miles, in most cases thousands of miles, from the real task. The real task is done by the wardens and deputy wardens and those under them in contact with the prisoners. If you get the right warden and deputy warden, and do not inflict them with humbugs for guards, you will get the best out of those men, and you will have a good penitentiary. All the commissions between here and the end of Christendom will be a failure if you have not a good warden and deputy warden.

If the Minister thinks that by a commission he will convert and renovate the condition of our penitentiary inmates into a sort of paradise, or even improve it by an iota, he is wrong. In fact, he is likely to get the very opposite result. He is going to have now a bureau instead of individual responsibility. I do not know of any place where a commission is less appropriate than where it is superimposed in lieu of a superintendent of penitentiaries.

I do not pretend to know more than anybody else on this subject, but I do know something. For about four or five years I was in charge of parole and visited the penitentiaries frequently; and I have had the more reason to study the subject because one of my brothers happened to be a warden.

And I repeat that the way to get better penitentiaries is to get better wardens and better deputies, and to see that the men they are given to help them are of the right type. That is the whole problem. There is nothing else to it. An excellent man might not be a good warden. The warden's task is about the

last on earth I should want. He has to be firm, and he has to be considerate. He must possess a combination of qualities that are rare. I think the commission of three is not going to help a bit in getting better wardens.

As to General Ormond, I have known him all my mature life. He was brought up as a boy in the small city in which I practised law. His family were friends of mine, though certainly not political friends. I am proud of his record as a soldier. There would be very few men of whom Canada would have more reason to be proud than of General Ormond, in view of his services in France. I do not like the slightest sign of unfairness towards a returned soldier who, because of his standing and his record, deserves better. But I am afraid there are signs of unfairness. I regret very much to say this, for I have a high regard for Judge Archambault.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The Minister of Justice has said just about the same thing.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I have to admit that this is another reason why I oppose the report. It is all right to say the Minister of Justice has spoken kindly of General Ormond. He has; he could not have spoken more kindly. But, following the dictates of a report which condemns the superintendent, the Minister abolishes General Ormond's office, establishes a commission in his place and leaves him to his fate. The Minister says: "I am not discussing General Ormond. I have not a word to say against him. I am not accepting the findings of the commission against him." I tell him he is accepting the report of the commission, which condemns the work of the superintendent, his character and his fitness. The Minister proposes to abolish the office and substitute a commission, and then he says, "I have a high opinion of General Ormond." If so, why does he kick him downstairs?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Would my right honourable friend allow me to answer?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The Minister of Justice has had quite a number of years of experience in carrying the responsibility for the administration of penitentiaries from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I know little about the administration, but for three months, as Acting Minister of Justice, I looked through the reports from the penitentiaries as to convicts who were asking for tickets of leave. That has been my sole contact with the penitentiaries. However, the Minister of Justice says that from the experience he has gathered he feels that he