

Mr. BENNETT: I think it would be unfair to attack the present Minister of Justice for this item; he is in no way responsible for it. The late government must assume responsibility for the item, because the present Minister of Justice found it there and has not changed it. I think that should be stated in fairness to the government. I should like however to point out in the first place that there has been no change in the allowances given to the commissioner of mounted police for many years—I think perhaps for twenty-five or thirty years—and any change that has been made is one that has been made also with respect to the other members of the force, from the constables up. So that so far as allowances are concerned there has been no change. Whatever rule prevailed before still prevails with respect to this and other services mentioned. With respect to the salary, the late government must take full responsibility; in no sense must blame be attached to the present Minister of Justice or those sitting around him. And the reason the salary is what it is is the fact—I wish the commissioner were not here—that we believed there was no other man in Canada who could render similar service or undertake the enormous duties involved in the prevention of smuggling on sea and on land, and the administration of the law with respect to liquor. All that was taken over by him, and he had a position that enabled him to secure a fairly large salary—he had an offer of one at the moment. In addition to that, my memory is that he had a pension, which of course is suspended during the period of time he holds the office of commissioner, so that the sum total of salary received by him is, in my judgment, not out of proportion in any sense to salaries paid elsewhere, having regard to the conditions I have referred to.

I am sure that my hon. friend from Grey-Bruce has no desire to be unfair, but it must be pointed out that you could not secure a man of the capacity and the experience and the ability of the commissioner; you could not secure such a man anywhere for less money. Go to England and see what Scotland Yard pays, or go to any other first class country and see what payments they are making, and compare them with the salary we pay for the enormous service which we put upon our commissioner of police. Think of smuggling, if any, in Nova Scotia; think of smuggling, if any, in Cape Breton; think of smuggling, if any, in the interior provinces, smuggling by sea and by land—the preven-

tion of all has to be directed through his department of the public service.

Some thirty years ago in western Canada there was a constable in the northwest mounted police whose name was James H. MacBrien. He was around about Calgary. He went to the South African war, where he made a notable contribution to our country's service. He went back and began with the police there. He passed ultimately the staff college at Camberley, and I have it—I give it only as I have it from one of our former governors general—that we have not produced in this country a more distinguished soldier. I am only giving that for what it is worth. Having regard to the peculiar service that had to be rendered, there was no person in Canada we could secure who would undertake like duties and discharge them with equal efficiency and effectiveness. I would go further. On three occasions I personally endeavoured to get the commissioner to take this position, and twice I failed. On the third occasion, putting it to me as a matter of public service to the country at this time, he said he would take it, and he did. And the terms and conditions under which he did were first of all the suspension of any pension he had—I believe there was; there may not be—secondly, that he should secure the pay and allowances heretofore paid, and thirdly, that the salary should be as mentioned. These were the conditions, and he did not seek the position.

If I were asked my opinion with respect to any services rendered the dominion, which were outstanding so far as the personnel in charge of distinguished positions were concerned, I know of no appointment that was more advisable, and I say that frankly to this committee whether it agrees with me or not. I would go one step further. Reference has been made to the fact that there had been conferred upon the commissioner the rank of Knight Commander of the Bath. He had already held a Companionship of the Bath at the end of the war, and it had been purposed that he should be given the rank of Knight Commander. But for reasons well known to all members of this committee that opportunity was not offered to the sovereign. When the opportunity was offered and the first and only K.C.B. then made available, the then Prime Minister, without hesitancy, recommended the present commissioner, and he is very proud to think that he was able to render that service to a Canadian so distinguished, who had given outstanding service to a country such as this at that time.