

## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

## Too Much Political Pull and Patronage—Militia and Marine Departments.

Ottawa, March 26.—The report of the Royal Commission, appointed last spring to investigate the conditions of the civil service of Canada, presented to Parliament this afternoon, hit straight out, right and left, at a multitude of radical defects which the commissioners find in connection with the whole system of the public service of the Dominion. The members of the commission are Mr. J. M. Courtney, C. M. G., ex-Deputy Minister of Finance, Ottawa; Mr. Thomas Fyvie, Quebec, ex-general manager of the Merchants' Bank of Canada, and Mr. P. J. Bazin, a prominent merchant of Quebec. Their report comprises some two hundred pages of findings as gleaned from 1,700 pages of evidence taken from 218 civil servants of all ranks in both the inside and outside service. The commissioners have made a very thorough investigation of the whole range of the civil service, covering the subjects of appointments and promotions in the service, salaries, the evils of the patronage system, the political pull, superannuation, and the conduct and efficiency of the various departments. The evils they point to are many; the recommendations they suggest, if carried into effect, will revolutionize the whole civil service system. In the matter of salaries, the commissioners, while not recommending general advances to the whole civil service staff, strongly recommend that higher emoluments be paid to all deserving officials, especially those in the eastern Canada fifteen per cent, on all salaries under \$1,000, and twelve and one-half per cent, on all salaries over \$1,000, while in western Canada where the cost of living is proportionately higher, increases should be 25 and 20 per cent, respectively. Deputy Ministers should have at least a salary of \$5,000. The report points out that the inadequate remuneration now given a large class of the civil service has resulted in a poor class of employees being secured in later years. Strong language is used regarding the evils of the patronage system and the influence of political pull, which the commissioners say vitiate both the inside and outside services. They recommend that political influence be entirely eliminated from the system of making appointments and promotions in the service, and that a commission of three be appointed to supervise all examinations for admission to the service. In the matter of the conduct of the various departments some severe strictures are made, especially in connection with the Departments of Marine and of Militia and Defence. A reorganization of interior economy and office methods in the former department is suggested, and the latter department is criticized as being overmanned and overpaid.

The salient features of the conclusions reached by the commission are as follows: In respect to the classification of members of the service, the commission declare that the classification at present existing is mostly disregarded. Officials are made chief clerks, engineers, architects, etc., without change of duties. The commission held that there should be, below the deputy heads, a rank of officials having special and technical qualifications, such as the officers of the experimental farm, engineers, architects, etc. Below these there should be a chief of each branch, as accountant, chief of correspondence, contracts, engineering, etc., or any other special work. Below these there should be clerks and file clerks, without any special classification.

In the matter of pay and promotion, every officer in the services should be treated on his merits. When a young man of great efficiency appears he should have swift promotion, instead of having obstacles thrown in his course by narrow official regulations and limitations. Each technical or special officer should have his duties clearly defined, and he should be held to a strict responsibility for their efficient performance. Letters connected with his special work should be answered and signed by him, as if he were solely responsible, and only countersigned, if thought necessary, by the deputy. The commission are of opinion that the service should be entirely free from political favoritism or patronage, that appointments should only be made by merit after competitive examination, and that for that purpose a permanent commission of three officials should be created. This commission should be entrusted with all the examinations in connection with the service, and the same should be made in the different services required by the several classes employed. In addition to examinations the commission consider that it would be desirable that such commission should have power to inspect, from time to time, say not less often than once a year, every department of the Government service, such inspection to cover the whole management of each department. Appointments made under this system in the public service should be supplemented by a rigid system of probation.

**Superannuation and Pensions.** In conclusion the report pointed out that the commissioners were unanimously agreed that a comprehensive superannuation system should be placed on the statute book, and that this should include pensions to dependents of civil servants, as conditions of life in the Dominion are now and are likely to continue such that advances in the prices of commodities are likely to be the rule, and it is almost impossible for the average civil servant to save anything from his salary.

**Amendments to the Act.** Some of the recommendations of the commissioners in reference to the amendments to the civil service act may be briefly pointed out. Among the suggestions made in this connection are that the power of the Government to determine the number of officers in the department should be exercised only on the report of the deputy head. Also that a candidate, to be admitted to the preliminary or qualifying examination, must satisfy the board "that he is free from any physical defect or disease which would be likely to interfere with the proper discharge of his duties." There should also be a certificate as regards moral character. In the matter of appointments it is recommended that the age limit of 35 years for appointment to the position of Deputy Minister should be increased. Promotions, it is suggested, should

ment. Large amounts have been spent in several places in the Dominion for supplies, bought from those enjoying political patronage at what may be called retail rates. Heavy expenditures have been incurred without necessary consideration of the value of the goods, while no doubt several officials have not themselves justified owing to the expansion of the revenue, yet such conduct is contrary to the public interest, and in the opinion of the commissioners ought to be restrained.

**British System Recommended.** In Great Britain the estimates are examined by memoranda and the Secretary of the Treasury explains all the differences. The Public Accounts Committee is composed of fifteen members, compared with one hundred in Canada, and the Chairman is always a member of the Opposition. These fifteen members spend from thirty to forty days in careful examination of all the expenditures and then report. In Canada during the present session, at the first meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, the members moved for forty-one sets of papers. There is no doubt that all these papers moved for are demanded for party purposes, and in the expectation that campaign literature may be derived therefrom. Of course, it is needless to say that the six members were all Opposition members. The report suggests a system more like that in Great Britain.

**Purchase of Stores.** The purchase of stores was then taken up. The report says by the evidence of several officials who are concerned in the purchase of stores it has been conclusively shown that large amounts of money are paid over each year to merchants for stores. The report points out that in the most simple way that this practice has been followed by everybody, and it could not be altered. Your commissioners, however, consider that the practice was always bad, yet through the great development of the country the extent was not so great as to become serious until recent years. When one witness stated that his expenditure had increased threefold recently, and it is a well-known fact that public expenditures have increased in the last twelve years 150 per cent, or more, in the opinion of the commissioners the time has come when this practice of paying retail prices to a few favored merchants in each locality should be discontinued. The commissioners conclude that purchasing agents, probably three, should be appointed, at good salaries, to make all the purchases, and all supplies received by the several departments should be procured by this means.

As a rule the commissioners found in the outside service that politics enter into every appointment, and that politics enter into the promotion of officials, not only in the appointments, but in the subsequent promotions of the officials. "While at Ottawa the departments generally are administered with a good consideration for the public interests, yet in the outside service the politics of the party is of greater importance in making appointments and promotions than the public interests of the Dominion. Promotion in that part of the service is a political matter, and it is in the outside service that we have a political pull as it for all its worth. They pass by their superior officers, and bring pressure to bear to procure anything that may prove to their advantage. As a rule the officials in the outside service are without hope and the majority of them are in dire need."

**The Marine Department.** In dealing with the Marine and Fisheries Department the commissioners make some severe strictures on the lack of system in the department in connection with the handling of correspondence. The department, they say, is practically swamped with correspondence. The custom seems to be that each letter has to be answered by some one in the department who is supposed to be an expert on the subject. The letter is prepared by him, but the deputy signs it, knowing often little or nothing about it, and having no time to inquire. But nobody is ever the wiser for all this. It is regarded as unfortunate that the marine department is allowed to sink into such a state. Some body or other is supposed to look after the business, and in a kind of a way three or four or half a dozen people put their oars in at different times and places, each one being supposed to have some authority because of his title would likely indicate that. There are officers enough in the department, both inside and outside, to do the work efficiently if they were properly organized, but there is no efficient organization. There is no fixed thing, and there are no printed rules and regulations in the service. It is practically impossible to fix responsibility upon anybody.

**The Militia Department.** The Department of Militia and Defence also comes in for much severe criticism. The report says the expenditure of this department has gone up by leaps and bounds. In 1903-04 the total expenditure was in the neighborhood of three and a half million dollars, while the estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1904, ask for \$5,000,000. The cost of the quarter years the expenditure has increased three million dollars. The commission pointed out that while there are in the rest of the service only three officials who rejoice in a salary of over \$4,000, in the Militia Department two officers receiving \$6,000, three members of the Militia Council receiving \$4,000, and an officer in one of the commands receiving \$5,000, besides other officials receiving salaries and allowances far beyond the ordinary officials. In fact, for the service performed, the Militia Department awards its officers pay vastly in proportion to any of the departments under the Crown. The reason given by Major-General Lake for the introduction of the system of paymasters was that he could not see how an army in the field could get along without paymasters. He would seem to carry to an extreme the principle of being prepared for war in time of peace.

**Extravagant Management.** In conclusion, the commissioners point out the large growth of expenditure, the increase of the permanent staff, the increase of the department to about 220, that in addition to the general system of high pay favored men in the militia service draw pensions not only for themselves, but for their wives and children, that the staff is sufficient for a corps of 100,000 men, and that the permanent corps is under 3,000 men, that the deserts

have been one in three, that about 40,000 militia are trained in the annual camps, that rural battalions have no drill except at these annual camps, that it is arguable whether the city corps are as efficient as they were some years ago, while 40,000 men come out of the drill yearly, compared with a population of over 1,000,000 men in Canada between the ages of 20 and 40, the proportion seems small. In connection with the particular criticisms of officers in the department special mention is made of the accountant and Paymaster-General, J. W. Borden, brother of the Opposition leader, as being specially favored with a high salary, more than would be paid for similar duties in a private business. This is pointed to as creating dissatisfaction among the officers of the other departments.

**Commissioners Were Mistaken.** "Anthracite coal in Ottawa costs from \$7.25 to \$7.25, and the regular price at Prescott is \$7 per ton. The said two commissioners saw a duplicate of this original memorandum on file, and they concluded, without further investigation, that what had been recommended had been approved by the department, and state in the report that the fact that the Deputy Minister had submitted to the Minister the memorandum with the following words written across it: 'This will have to be decided on the conditions of the contract. F. G. G. the last letters being his initials. I refused to increase the price of the contract, and wrote across the memorandum 'carry out the contract. (Liberal cheers.)'

"The two commissioners stated in the report that the department had agreed to pay a larger price than the rate mentioned in the contract. If they had taken the trouble to look more closely into the matter they would have found that positive instructions had been given to carry out the work of the contract as it was. Moreover, they state that I had had a very careful inquiry

made into the payments made since the date of this contract, and the prices which have been paid are those mentioned in the contract. (Renewed Liberal cheers.)"

**Another Little Error.** "I will call the attention of the House to another sample of the manner in which the two commissioners have supported their statements. The officials of the department here, having had occasion to question the price certified by the agent at Quebec for a certain brand of flour, wrote to that official and asked him for an explanation of the item before passing the account for payment. A long correspondence took place between the accountants' branch and that official, and the account was officially required into to find out whether the price asked was fair and just. In other words, the officials of the department took all necessary precautions not to pay more than would be a just and fair price. However, the two commissioners state in the report, as an instance of the carelessness of the officials of the department, that this was inquired into at the instance of the Auditor-General. As a matter of fact the Auditor-General has not yet seen the account, and the Auditor-General could not and did not have anything to do with the inquiry."

"While I am aware that some of the officials have been open to the question in the manner in which they have despatched their business, I have never had any evidence to establish dishonesty on their part. The accusation of the two commissioners, while general and indefinite, is of such a character as to reflect on the integrity of the officials generally. For the protection of the public interest, and in fairness to the officials, it is necessary that further inquiry should be made into such accusations. I propose to take, without any further delay, the necessary steps to that end." (Renewed Liberal cheers.)

**Mr. Borden's View.** Mr. Borden regarded it as a somewhat extraordinary course for a member of the Government to be put up to attack the report of a commission appointed by that Government, within a few minutes of the presentation of the report to the House. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries was guilty of grave discourtesy to the House, Mr. Borden held, in making his statement when there had been an opportunity of examining the report, and the members could not possibly discuss it fully, and when no answer could be made on behalf of the commissioners. The course taken was not only unusual, but he considered it was an unwise precedent for the Government.

**Mr. Bennett Corrected.** Mr. Bennett asked if there was anything in the report as to padding lists in connection with material paid for and not delivered at Sorel yard, in connection with which an investigation by a commissioner extending over one year was in progress.

Mr. Borden replied that the Civil Service Commission's report contained no mention of it. Mr. Bennett retorted that the cause of the delay was to be found in the fact that Mr. Desharats, in charge at Sorel yard, was a son-in-law of Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State.

Hon. Mr. Borden.—In regard to Mr. Desharats, the hon. gentleman is absolutely incorrect. (Liberal cheers.) Mr. Desharats, he explained, was not connected with the branch of the department to which Mr. Bennett referred, and had never been directly or indirectly concerned in the matter spoken of. (Renewed Liberal cheers.)

Mr. Bennett said he would have to accept the statement of the Minister. He asked if any reference was made in the report just brought down to the fact that a member of that Fisheries Commission had been convicted by one of Mr. Borden's own officials for illegal fishing.

Mr. Borden replied that there was no mention of such an incident. The Civil Service Commission was not charged with looking into the Fisheries Commission.

**Mr. Bennett.** The Minister stated, in reply to a question the other day, that the inquiry had been along the line of padding the pay lists at Sorel. Is that in connection with Mr. Fraser?

Mr. Borden replied that Mr. Fraser had not been suspended. There was nothing before him that would justify him in suspending that official, who was not appointed by the present Government, had been in the employ of the department for many years, and was, as far as he knew, a worthy official. He would not think of suspending him until it had been proved that he was not a deserving official.

Mr. Bennett asked if there was any report from Mr. Gaudet as to supplies for the Sorel yards said to have been bought but not delivered. The Minister, he added, had several times promised to bring it down.

Mr. Borden said the interim report had been laid on the table several days ago. (Liberal cheers and laughter.)

**Mr. Taylor's Questions.** Mr. Taylor wanted to know what was the cost of the Civil Service Commission report, whether the commissioners had been paid, and if the Minister who disagreed with this report, as far as his department was concerned, would vote with the Opposition that the report be not received. Hon. W. S. Fielding replied that the report had not yet been printed in full; the evidence only had been printed, paid, nor had their remuneration been decided upon. Therefore, Mr. Taylor's question could not be answered.

**Hon. W. S. Fielding.** Mr. Fielding dissented entirely from the view of the leader of the Opposition, that there was any impropriety in the action of Hon. Mr. Brodeur. That gentleman had not attacked anybody, nor made accusations against anybody, in the House or out of it. If he had not called attention to a discrepancy or error of judgment on a fact affecting the character and honesty of his officials, Mr. Brodeur had that right. He had no right without doing what he had done, would not have been acting fairly or justly. He had simply called attention to the fact that the commission, through erroneous information or imperfect judgment, had made accusations, not as to mismanagement, but affecting the personal honor and integrity of officials who had been in the department many years, whose integrity and honor they had trusted in the past, and ought to trust until the contrary had been proved. The report gave nothing specific, no names were mentioned, but it left a general charge of dishonesty against all the officials of the department. That was a charge against the honor and in-

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egrity of the department, and Hon. Mr. Brodeur had properly stated that he did not intend to let the matter rest there, that it called for further proceedings, and he intended to take them in fairness to himself and to his officials.

Dr. Reid asked if Mr. Brodeur had called the attention of the commissioners to the way in which accounts were passed by him.

Mr. Brodeur was extremely sorry to say that, except in one instance, the commissioners had never consulted him or come near him. One of them had complained that he could not get some invoices placed at the Auditor-General's disposal.

Dr. Reid wanted to know how it came about that parties like Mervin Scrubb were able to continue to do business with the department, according to recent reports of the Auditor-General, after revelations showing that those parties had received payment for goods at double the price they themselves had paid for them. He believed the officials of the department had made purchases from these men because the Minister had told them to.

Mr. Brodeur—What my hon. friend says is absolutely incorrect, and he knows it. (Liberal cheers.)

Dr. Reid said that in such a case the Auditor-General's report could not be true. Mr. Brodeur—Does my hon. friend state that these things have been ordered since I have been Minister? Dr. Reid—If I said what I believe myself, I would say that I do—(cries of "Oh, oh!" from Liberals)—but of course I am not in a position to prove it. (Liberal cheers and laughter.)

Mr. Brodeur—The Auditor-General's report will have to take what the Minister states. He argued that Mervin Scrubb was getting the same prices as before, and characterized these transactions as graft.

**Hon. G. E. Foster.** Hon. Geo. E. Foster thought Mr. Brodeur should be thankful he had got off so lightly, and that the commission had not gone through his department from top to bottom, covering its workings for the last five years. In view of what had transpired, the Minister ought to have the fullest investigation by a Royal Commission or a committee of independent members of the House.

**Sir Wilfrid Laurier.** Sir Wilfrid Laurier said Mr. Foster had gone far afield in throwing out general insinuations. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries had found that the commission had, in regard to the transactions, made a singular error affecting the honor of officials of his department. At the same time he had stated that there was enough to warrant further investigation, and he proposed to have it. The commissioners had made their statements without naming anybody. They had thrown out suspicions, but they had not named the names, and at once said that he could easily tell. Taking an egg between his fingers and his thumb, he twirled it on the table, and it spun like a top. "That egg," said he, "has been boiled." Another was tried, with the same result, and then he found one that he could not spin. "That," said he, "is the raw egg. And so the puzzle was solved."

Try it; it is an interesting experiment, and when those of you who are pursuing your studies in natural philosophy reach the higher branches, you will find that it illustrates some very high important principles.—John Plin, in April St. Nicholas.

**Mr. Brodeur asked whether Dr. Sproule recommended that Mr. Fraser, who certified the accounts in question, should be dismissed.** (Laughter.)

Mr. Blain thought the electors would be surprised at the attitude taken by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries. It was a disgrace to the Government and a black mark against the Minister that he had failed to detect the loose working of his department without the assistance of American bookkeepers and a commission.

**Mr. G. W. Fowler.** Mr. Foster commented on the fact that the investigation into the charges against Mr. Roy, former foreman of

works at Sorel, had not been completed. Mr. Roy, he understood, was charged with having padded lists, and, although the Minister himself had ordered Mr. Gaudet in February, 1907, to investigate the charges, Roy still continued in the position.

Mr. Brodeur—That is not correct; he has been removed to Quebec.

Mr. Fowler—What was the amount of the padding?

Mr. Brodeur—I do not remember exactly, but it was not a large amount.

Mr. Reid—It amounts to \$180,000, doesn't it?

Mr. Brodeur—Oh, no; I don't think it is more than \$500.

Hon. Mr. Haggart asked why the Minister did not suspend Roy.

Mr. Brodeur—I removed him from the place where he was. Mr. Haggart maintained that he should have been suspended at once.

Mr. Brodeur—I did not know that it was a British principle to convict a man before he was tried.

The discussion closed with some remarks by Mr. Boyce, who took as his text the Wallberg contracts.

Supplementary militia estimates amounting to \$702,950 were passed through the Committee of Supply practically without discussion, and then the railway and canal items were taken up, and after some discussion passed.

The House adjourned at 12 o'clock.

## CAN YOU TELL?

Whether the Egg in Your Hand is Cooked or Uncooked.

It was a holiday; school was closed, and as the weather was congenial, two young ones and their mother got leave to spend the afternoon in the woods and carry a picnic basket with them. Among the eatables they had three fresh eggs—one for each, and one for the lady.

About to set out a young friend called, and they invited him to accompany them. The oldest girl, with an elder sister's thoughtfulness, said to her brother: "Why, George, where did you get that egg?"

"Oh, out of the basket in the cellar," was the reply.

"But it is not cooked, and we cannot use a raw egg. Which was the egg that you put in last?"

But George could not tell; the eggs all looked just alike, so they took them to see which were the warmest, but they were all equally cold, the boiled eggs having been cooked early in the day and taken to the cellar to cool. They then held them up to the light and they thought that one of the eggs was more transparent than the rest, but the difference did not seem to be so great as to make them quite sure as to which had been boiled and which was raw. At last the visitor found out the dilemma, and at once said that he could easily tell. Taking an egg between his fingers and his thumb, he twirled it on the table, and it spun like a top. "That egg," said he, "has been boiled." Another was tried, with the same result, and then he found one that he could not spin. "That," said he, "is the raw egg. And so the puzzle was solved."

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**CASTORIA.** The Kind You Have Always Bought. Bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Ayer*.

**GODERICH MAYORALTY.** Dr. Macklin, Who Was Counted Out. Elected by One Majority. Goderich, March 26.—Dr. Macklin, who occupied the Mayor's chair for the first month of this year, and who was counted out, was to-day declared duly elected Mayor by a majority of one by his Honor Judge Doyle. Robert Thompson has occupied the Mayor's chair since January.