

THE OTTAWA JOURNAL

Journal Publishing Company of Ottawa, Limited.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 1924.

THE CASE OF GENERAL SIR EUGENE FISET.

Major-General Sir EUGENE FISET, for some years Deputy Minister of Militia in Ottawa, is said to be considering the acceptance of the Liberal nomination for the Rimouski seat in the House of Commons made vacant through the resignation of EMMANUEL D'ANJOU.

That raises again in rather pronounced manner the question whether civil servants who have resigned and who are in receipt of superannuation allowance should be permitted to enjoy that allowance and at the same time receive a sessional indemnity of \$4,000 as member of Parliament.

General FISET was born in Rimouski in March, 1874, so he is just fifty years of age. That certainly is not too old to prevent him entering Parliament and doing good work. By the same token, if not too old for active work in the House of Commons, is Gen. FISET too old for active work in the Militia Department?

If it be held that he is not too old for these positions, does it seem fair that he should receive a pension from the Militia Department, paid by the people of Canada, amounting all told to \$6,000 per annum?

We can well believe that, at 50, General FISET who has led an active life and been a public figure finds it rather a bore to do nothing down in Rimouski, even with a never falling cheque every month from Ottawa of \$500. If he can find some pleasant and not too arduous and exacting work in Ottawa, where he has many friends, and increase his annual income from the public exchequer to \$10,000, and pickings such as railroad passes, who shall blame him? And there are precedents where gentlemen did rather well for themselves in a similar manner.

Several million people in Canada would, however, we are sure, express rather strong opinions against practices of this sort, and there are some, doubtless, who would denounce the proposal in regard to Gen. FISET as an outrage.

THE JOURNAL would take a rather more moderate view. General FISET is undoubtedly an able man—perhaps above the average of members of Parliament. It is possible that any other man Rimouski might send to Ottawa would be considerably below his standard of qualification. That being the case, perhaps it would pay better to give General FISET the \$4,000 indemnity.

But we are brought back again to the \$6,000 superannuation that presumably a grateful country pays Gen. FISET for having lived to be 49 years old in its service. We suppose, according to the generally accepted theory in these parts about individual transactions with the Government, it is all right if he can "get away with it." There will be those quite ready to condone with Gen. FISET, even to congratulate him on his business acumen. But for ourselves we have a suspicion that the thing is not right and that something should be done about it, that civil servants who resign to private life with large superannuation allowances should be made to stay put.

The despatch that announced General FISET's probable future career in Parliament said that over one hundred leading citizens of Rimouski in a delegation expressed their desire to see him as their candidate at the byelection.

"However, they added that a declaration regarding his attitude on the enforcement of the Military Service Act might be of great moment, due to the fact that as Deputy Minister of Militia he had had much to do with the enforcement of that law."

The answer General FISET is reported to have given—we are relying on a newspaper despatch—was:—

"That he had never approved conscription, that he had taken all possible means of obtaining exemption from compulsory service for theological students, and that he had only carried out his instructions as an officer of the Government."

We are not going to discuss that answer because believing that his listeners would be confined to the good citizens of Rimouski whose favor he desired to enlist, possibly General FISET said rather more than he would care to see in print. But we are free to confess that, coming from the gentleman who was vice-president of the Defence Council all through the war, General FISET's verbal bid for the votes of the people of Rimouski will be as distasteful to almost as many Canadians as the idea that he should continue to draw at one and the same time a superannuation allowance of \$6,000 per annum and a sessional indemnity of \$4,000.

075993

180.

MEIGHEN PAPERS, Series 3—(M.G. 26, I, Volume 127)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA