

had been loaned to the protective association and by them loaned to the Customs department, and was a Customs official for over a year before that. Now, I wonder how it was they could not get any evidence till the end of November. Were Bisailon's offences only shortly prior to the end of November, 1925? The offences upon which he has been dismissed, were they of recent date? Why, they extend back for years. The Prime Minister said: Oh, we are the people, we got Bisailon, we kept at him until we got him, and only because we caught him and because we had the Duncan report a little later were these charges laid. Has he read the evidence of Mr. Walter Duncan? If he has, he will find Mr. Walter Duncan swore that on the very occasion when the present Minister of Customs sent him to Montreal to get evidence against Bisailon he told him about Mr. Stevens' resolution to be moved in the House of Commons. Will the hon. member look at page 499 of the evidence? On the last third of the page he will find the following:

The Witness: I do not recall all that was said at the time—

That is the time of the conversation when he was sent down to Montreal.

—but I know that before I started out there was talk of his dismissal.

An hon. MEMBER: This is Duncan speaking?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Q. For what reason?

A. I presume complaints that had reached the minister.

Q. Was anything more than that said to you?

A. Not that I can recollect.

Q. Before you commenced to execute your commission?

A. Well, there was something said about the Hon. Mr. Stevens' resolution.

Q. Who said that?

A. I talked about it, and I think the minister talked about it.

Q. Hon. Mr. Boivin talked to you about that?

A. Yes.

Q. About the Stevens' resolution?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember the purport of that conversation?

A. No, only that I was to proceed to Montreal, and as soon as I had sufficient evidence, to report to the minister, which I did.

Q. Was the reference to Mr. Stevens' investigation made on the same occasion when you were told to proceed to Montreal and proceed to investigate Mr. Bisailon?

A. Yes.

Q. It was?

A. Yes.

I wonder what hon. members now think of the promptitude of the government in this respect. Let me make this remark in passing.

It is quite true that Mr. Duncan was sent to Montreal a day or two days before Mr. Stevens' resolution came out in this House, or before notice of it was given in the press. But it was known to those associated with Mr. Duncan, and indirectly to the minister, that this resolution was coming; it must have been so known or the minister never could have spoken of the resolution at the time he sent Mr. Duncan to Montreal. I wonder why the assiduous minister who was only too anxious, if Mr. Bisailon were guilty, to have him arrested and punished; that assiduous minister of the immaculate record, Mr. Bureau, was never able to get any evidence on Bisailon. If hon. gentlemen will read the evidence taken before this committee regarding Bisailon they will find whole series of pages taken up with it. Then ask yourselves how it is that all this was unknown to the minister and unknown to the government until news of the resolution came out and Mr. Duncan hid himself to Montreal at the request of the Minister of Customs.

One would think, to hear the Prime Minister this afternoon, that all Mr. Sparks had done was to say, "I have suspicions of Mr. Bisailon; I want you to dismiss him." I ask hon. gentlemen to read the letters which Mr. Sparks wrote the Prime Minister on February 4 and again on March 20, 1925. I speak now from memory, but my memory is good; it is not very long since I read the letters, and I speak in the hearing of those who may correct me. In that letter allegation after allegation was recited against Mr. Bisailon; in that letter the attention of the government was directed to his evidence given at the city of Quebec, together with facts showing that evidence to be false. It is shown that a man with a salary of \$2,300 a year had \$69,000 on deposit at a certain town, and that the evidence he gave at Quebec to show how that money came to be there was so ridiculous as to be ludicrous; that he had added his debits and his credits together in order to make up the deposit of \$69,000. This is all shown in the letter; many other things are adduced and then Mr. Sparks says, "If this is not enough to warrant Mr. Bisailon being dealt with, then tell me if you still insist that I must make specific charges." That letter was never answered save by an acknowledgement written by the clerk of the Privy Council a month less four

5 p.m. days after the letter was despatched, and that reply merely said that it would receive "due consideration."

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, but it was answered verbally as well.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes; now we are again getting "parliamentary" evidence which was not given before the committee. I am informed by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre—and this will be in the evidence without a doubt, although I cannot recall it myself—that Mr. Sparks was asked in the committee to disclose these conversations with the Prime Minister, and was refused the privilege of doing so.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not know why the privilege should have been refused.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I made a mistake; he was not refused the privilege but he declined to do so because he felt these conversations to be confidential. But Mr. Sparks gave this evidence; if the Prime Minister felt that the evidence was not a fair representation of the whole truth it was his duty to go before that committee and so correct and modify that evidence by his own that the truth would be faithfully revealed. When he has failed to do that he cannot be heard in parliament; he cannot in a speech to this House say, "No, the evidence is not right; it is not a just reflection of the facts, I will tell the facts now when I cannot be cross-examined and when Mr. Sparks cannot contradict me." I leave this point, as to the knowledge of the government, merely with a request to hon. members of this House who want to deal with this subject on the evidence and on the facts to read the various communications which passed between the government and the Commercial Protective Association. They will find there, it is true, commendation of the early course of the government; they will find a friendly disposition on the part of the association and its president, Mr. Sparks, towards the government; they will be convinced without doubt that Mr. Sparks and his association approached this task in the friendliest spirit to the administration. But they will soon be convinced also that Mr. Sparks and the association came to the conclusion that the ministry was either powerless or wanted to be powerless, and would do absolutely nothing to enforce the law and so purge the service of those who were engaged in its prostitution. The Prime Minister says Mr. Sparks was against the government in the last election. So he was, and I venture to suggest that if any hon. member of this House, be he as strong a Liberal as Mr. Sparks has been all his life, had the same experience with this government as Mr. Sparks had, he

would probably turn against the administration also.

Now I wish to proceed to a discussion of the evidence which peculiarly affects an hon. gentleman who is in this House, and who has already made his defence and may do so again. I am going to speak on this matter not without kindness, I hope, and certainly with no personal animosity; I am also going to speak with all the frankness in my power. When I sought to assure the minister of the good opinion personally which hon. gentlemen on this side of the House have always held of him he was pleased to hurl back what I thought a rather coarse jibe, but in what I have to say I shall not be influenced at all by any recollection of that incident. The minister is in the House, and one always feels more free to speak of hon. gentlemen who are in the House and able to defend themselves.

May I first make a few personal references to the minister. He entered this House some fifteen years ago after a brilliant record at the bar, a record which maintained its brilliancy in parliament. So highly was he regarded that under the late administration, there being unfortunately no French speaking member on our side of the House, he was entrusted with the honour and charged with the duties of the position of Deputy Speaker. I recall this by way of tribute, because my purpose is to give the House some idea of his ability. I doubt if the chair was ever filled with as great capacity as respects to complete command of the rules of parliament as was the case with the minister; certainly in the efficiency of his discharge of that work he never was exceeded. He is a man of extraordinary ability; on that score no stone can be cast against him, and no excuse can be made of his conduct on the ground of simplicity or inexperience. If he has done wrong he has done so knowing the right as perhaps very few hon. members of this House would know it; if he has sinned against the light it is not because he did not see the light. There is none more capable and none of a clearer mind.

Now, what is alleged against the minister which, in our judgment, it is the duty of parliament to pass upon? There is much but chiefly—and I dwell on those which are chief only—his conduct in connection with the barge Tremblay liquor and his conduct in connection with Moses Aziz. These have been most to the front, but I do not want the House to come to the conclusion that the evidence of the degeneration of the department insofar as the present minister is affected