

Printing Bureau was moved by the hon. member for St. Anne since I have had a seat in this House. The hon. member for St. Anne did move a resolution calling for a general inquiry into the affairs of the departments generally.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). The spending departments.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, the spending departments, but the terms of that resolution did not particularly apply to the Printing Bureau. In fact, a reference to 'Hansard' shows that the members who supported that resolution had in their minds the spending departments, as the leader of the opposition has just said. But the fact still remains that when my hon. friend from St. Anne's division moved that resolution on the 1st April, 1909, I had already begun an investigation into the Printing Bureau. I had begun it on November 27, 1908, four months prior to the introduction of the resolution in question. It would therefore, have been absurd for me to have handed over the Printing Bureau to any committee, or commission that might then be appointed after an investigation into the Bureau had already been begun, and was considerably advanced by the minister in charge, who was responsible to parliament, and the country.

Mr. PORTER. Do I understand the hon. minister to say that he began that investigation in October, 1908?

Mr. MURPHY. In November, 1908.

Mr. PORTER. And continued it until Gouldthrite ran away. How is it in those two years Gouldthrite's defalcations were not discovered?

Mr. MURPHY. I began the inquiry in 1908, and continued it at such intervals as my other duties would permit me to carry it on. That inquiry extended over two years, and why Gouldthrite's dishonesty was not sooner discovered is also set out in the report. I could amplify and go into details, but I do not think it is necessary on the present occasion.

Mr. NORTHRUP. How is it that when the work was begun in 1908, the hon. minister has suppressed in his report every word of the inquiry between 1908 and 1910?

Mr. MURPHY. I do not know what political company the hon. member for Hastings has been in the habit of keeping, but I have only to say to him that I have suppressed nothing which ought to appear in this report. The hon. gentleman has never been charged with such a duty as that which, I may say unluckily, fell to my lot in connection with this department. If by any unlikely accident of political fortune, such a duty should be cast on him, he would

realize that, in the multitude of details with which a minister is called on to deal, in the hurry of business transacted from day to day, it would be impossible for him to collect and note down everything he does, or to summarize every inquiry he has to make and keep a record of the thousand and one things that go to make up the daily routine of his duties. For that reason thousands of things done in connection with this inquiry do not appear in the report. No record was made of them, and it was impossible that any record could be made. But let me turn to the subject I was pursuing when my hon. friend the leader of the opposition interrupted me a few moments ago. I was referring to the motion introduced by the hon. member for St. Anne (Mr. Doherty) on April 1, 1909, and debated in this House on that day, and the day following. I refer to that again for the reason that the duty of the government and of its individual members in regard to just such matters as we are now discussing was very clearly set out by the right hon. the Prime Minister in the course of that debate. Let me quote his words. They will be found in 'Hansard' of 1909, pages 3861 and 3862:

It is our duty to administer the affairs of Canada, it is our duty to manage the departments of the government. Our intention is to discharge that duty efficiently. If we do discharge that duty efficiently, well and good; if we do not, we are open to censure.

Further on the right hon. gentleman added:

I deny that it is the right of the parliament of Canada to look into the administration, that is a thing which is the duty of those charged with the administration, and for the proper discharge of that duty they are responsible to the people.

The position taken by my right hon. leader on that occasion is sustained by all constitutional writers, and more particularly by Todd in his work on parliamentary government in England. In volume 1, page 418 of that work Todd says:

In fact the ministry of the day are responsible for everything that is done in any department of the state. While it is true that the House of Commons ought to have control and supervision of every such department, its functions are those of control and not of administration.

The House can interfere with great advantage in prescribing the principle on which the executive government should be carried on. But beyond that it is impossible for the legislature to interfere with advantage in the details of the administration of the country.

And the same author, in the same volume, at page 419, says: