

powers which the Civil Service Act conferred upon this commission. As stated by the Premier, we beheld the members of that commission humbly come and beg the Privy Council to release them of such responsibility which was unbearable to them and consisted in having blacksmiths and copper-plate polishers employed in the Department of Public Works, in Montreal, pass examinations on mathematics, geography, and on many other scientific subjects.

I fully understand that it was humiliating to them to be forced to apply so ridiculous a law as that of the present Civil Service Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I submit that all these commissions based on administrative autonomy, have exactly all the same weak side. I see here amongst my notes that some time ago a member questioned the late Minister of Railways, Mr. Kennedy, about a scandal relating to the Canadian Northern Railway which was managed last year, as all know, by an independent commission. To obtain the required information, the minister met with all kinds of obstructions. However, to comply with the request of the member—whose name I beg to be allowed not to divulge—the hon. Minister of Railways instituted an inquiry, placing the matter in the hands of a group of federal detectives under the supervision of Mr. Page. These detectives, after some clever work, discovered an embezzlement of funds amounting to more than \$100,000. This only goes to prove that after all it is always the representative of a riding who is the best judge of what takes place in his own county. It also proves that the principle of governing the country through independent commissions is a false principle. Again I say a member is the best judge of what is going on in his county and these independent commissions are wrong when they inform members who seek for information through the minister, that it is not in the interest of the country to give out the facts. In the case just mentioned, if I am well informed, proposals of reimbursement by the embezzler were made to the government. That goes to show that a member can do something besides drawing his sessional indemnity and giving during twelve months of the year, letters of recommendation, three quarters of which are useless; he would be in a position to save the country hundreds of thousand dollars, if he were not tied down in carrying out his duties by these independent commissions.

Although, Sir, I am willing to give the officials of these commissions credit for their ability, it is not the less true that it is impos-

sible for them to control and supervise their subordinates. They do not know their employees and their various duties, they cannot economically look after the affairs of the country, and, the minister leaves himself open to criticism, each session, by asking unwarranted and entirely ridiculous appropriations as it happened last year. For instance, the Civil Service Commission have under their control the Department of Public Works, at Montreal, so far as salaries above \$200 are concerned, if we except the trades people. We now find in the Report of the Auditor General, for the year ending March 31, 1921, volume 3, page 178-V, that a person named A. W. Sullivan, junior engineer in the Department of Public Works, at Montreal, has been so classified that he drew, for the year 1920-21, a salary of \$2,040, plus a bonus of \$240 and an extra sum of \$240 for arrears, making a total of \$2,520. Nevertheless, it is admitted that the department does not need his services, because, being a resident of Valleyfield, he practically only appears at the department to draw his salary. Although the Civil Service Act prohibits any employee receiving a salary of more than \$1,000 to engage in any other work irrelevant to his civil occupation, this gentleman carries on, in Montreal and Valleyfield, with the knowledge of the Civil Service Commission, a private business totally foreign to his duties. Here is the proof: I hold in my hand a copy of the newspaper *Le Progrès*, published in Valleyfield, in which we find the name of Mr. Arthur W. Sullivan (successor to J. H. Sullivan) land surveyor and civil engineer, Valleyfield, P.Q., offices at 59 St. Peter Street, Montreal. This goes to show how this commission, from its high pedestal, in the Hunter building, can administer and watch over the interests of the country. It would be much preferable if the members received a more cordial hearing when they have recommendations to make to the commission, but better still, in the interests of the country, that the exclusive privileges of members be admitted.

The Civil Service Commission might possibly be able to tell us what amount they recommended to be paid to a person named Mousseau, so-called inspector of heating installations in the Department of Public Works, at Montreal, an employee who only called at the department to draw his monthly cheque of \$115, when no inspections were being carried out. This employee, at the same time that he was drawing a salary of more than \$1,000 per year, had, to the knowledge of the Civil Service Commission, a butcher's shop at Ahuntsic, a trade which took up all