

separate from the reform act of the past year, is essentially a part of the same movement—an integral part of civil service reform. Though it will cost something, it will cost less in the end than a chronically dissatisfied and demoralized body of employees. That is the view I advocated on the hustings, and I am taking now the first opportunity that offers to repeat it in the House.

“And here I would like to say one word in reply to the criticism already voiced in this debate, that the new act does *not* carry out the recommendations of the royal commission, which specifically stated that the increase was *not* to be general, but to be based on rigid examination for merit. Now my answer to this is not in terms of reprobation of the hon. member who voiced that criticism, but of reprobation of the commission for bringing forward such a monumental piece of stupidity as the paragraph of their report which bore reference to the increase. In the name of common sense, how can a *cost of living* increase be anything else, *in the essence*, but a *general* increase. It is an economic, not an administrative, situation it is facing. No doubt every clerk of the 2,700 who will benefit by this bill does not present an exactly equal claim on the score of work and character. But if the inequalities amount to anything, it is nothing but an evidence of the vicious system of appointments which has prevailed in the past. It can be corrected easily by the new machinery; it will even correct itself in time if the machinery is what we expect it to be. In any case, I think it high time that this silly throwing of stones at the civil service should cease. Where are these lazy overpaid men we sometimes hear about? It is up to the critics of the service to specify. I myself have never met one such

case where the fault was personal and not due to the system. But to return. That a commission appointed for the specific purpose of helping the government on so delicate and intricate a matter should have been guilty of the egregious confusion of ideas that saturates their finding in this connection throughout is a marvellous thing to me. They did not even foresee the mere paysheet difficulties of a percentage increase. Let us frankly declare that we know more of the real nature of this situation than the commissioners apparently did, and so throw their paragraph overboard *holus bolus*, in at least the literal side of it, without regret. The spirit of it is another matter—and the spirit of it is simply that the economic wrong should be righted, and the administrative wrong corrected at the earliest possible moment.

“We have heard it said, too, that the civil service at Ottawa was offered a bribe at the late Dominion elections, and that, not by one party, but by both. For my own part, knowing well the high character of the class I represent, I make light of these charges. If, as has been said, both parties made the attempt to bribe the Ottawa service, then I believe that the service acted like the darkey in the story who, when the Republicans gave him \$5 for his vote and the Democrats \$4, took both—but voted for the latter, “because they were less corrupt.”

“What is needed in this whole matter of civil service reform is that a consistent and carefully thought out line of action should be followed from the start. The present act is in accordance with that principle. When it becomes law, as I trust it may at the earliest possible moment, a tardy act of justice will have been rendered to a deserving body of employees, and the way paved for an enlightened pol-