

administration and its relation to the civil service, and particularly to bring to book a gentleman whom I fear he considers "an undesirable citizen,"—the Principal of Upper Canada College—to bring him to book and make him pay dire punishment for some alleged offence. Well, that is a wholly different thing. If there are charges made inside this House or outside this House which the Prime Minister wants to inquire into nobody here is going to stand in his way. Let him have an inquiry made into Dr. Grant's charges, into the Globe charges, into the Star charges, into the charges of all these other offenders who he says are trying to undermine confidence in the administration in connection with the Civil Service Act. That is one thing. But to start on the pathway to the return of patronage is something wholly different. To appoint a committee whose commission from the government will be to so amend the act as to bring about the results which the Prime Minister describes is another thing altogether.

Now let me make a confession of ignorance while I am on my feet. If there is a movement on foot to organize dissatisfaction and accumulated grievances arising out of the civil service law and its operation—to organize those in an attack on the administration and consequently for the benefit of the opponents of the administration I am bound to confess such is a phenomenon that I never knew of at all. I do not think I ever met Dr. Grant—to the best of my knowledge I never have. I never knew Dr. Roche had delivered the address in question; I never knew Dr. Grant had written the article referred to. I never read anything of the kind in the Globe or in the Star. I never knew of any Civil Service Reform League in Canada—never heard such a league suggested. If all these are movements of the opponents of the administration they have managed to display their support of the party which I lead without any knowledge of mine.

Now let us come back to the concrete matter which from the speech of the Prime Minister, is before this House. It is necessary to go some years into the past in order fully to understand just the course that has been traversed, just the mountains that have been scaled in the long pathway of civil service reform. I do not know that I can give it to the House with particularity. I am certain I cannot give it with accuracy—but so far as I give it at all I will endeavour to be accurate. Patronage was unrestrained, until an act was passed, under the Laurier administration, applicable to the Civil Service at Ottawa—applicable to what was known as the

inside service, which, I think, in practical residuum meant only a part of the Civil Service in this city. A commission was then appointed which had very limited power even as regards that limited section. I think in essence the law was this—that the government made the appointment, the government looked around and chose its man, they got such recommendation as they desired, but before the appointment could be confirmed—that is before the man could be really permanently in his office—he had to have the imprimatur of that commission. Perhaps I have done the law over-justice, perhaps I have done it under-justice—but such is my recollection of its main provision. An agitation became—I will not call it an agitation—a feeling became pretty general throughout this country that there should be an extension of that principle. An extension of it not only to the inside service—an extension of its applicability and operation there, but,—as well, that the outside service should be covered by the reform, and that political patronage as such should disappear from the service of this country.

The road was not an easy one to travel. It was surrounded with difficulties of an almost insuperable character—difficulties that for years proved insuperable at the hands of purely party governments. No matter how desirable a party government might have been of ridding itself of the incubus of patronage, it found itself powerless to extricate itself from the bondage because of the strength of the influences which surrounded it. But on the formation of Union government—and I am not saying this at all to boast of Union government—a juncture of circumstances took place which, under the stimulus of the war feeling, enabled the government to reach its goal. I doubt, whether if there had not been a war such a course would have been possible, but political patronage took on a darker hue before the public of this country, in the light of the war itself, and as a consequence the government of the day, formed in 1917, took the courageous, the final step. In this regard I want to say that one of its chief proponents, one of its most determined advocates, was the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar), lately the leader of the Progressive party in this House. Another of its foremost defenders through every crisis—because you cannot get these reforms without crises—one of its foremost defenders was the hon. member for Halifax, the senior member from that city (Mr. Maclean). He is absent from this House to-night. I wonder what would have been his feelings had he