

the people of Canada than to leave it in the hands of an irresponsible body, one which is not responsible to the electors in a democracy. I am entirely in favour of the merit system and of the educational test. I think nobody questions that, but I do say to those who approve that system one hundred per cent that at a time when we are appealing to our manufacturers and industrialists not to let men out because they are over age, thereby throwing them on the country for support, we have no right to limit the age for appointment to the civil service and say that because a man is over thirty-two he shall have no opportunity to get this or that particular position, especially when it is a junior position. When this matter is brought up I can submit two cases.

Let me say further that during my fourteen years as representative of the city of Sherbrooke I have been but twice to the civil service commission: once, when I first arrived here, to be introduced to the personnel, which has since changed; and once when I went down on an appeal in such a case as that to which I have just referred. In the administration of justice in this country we have courts of appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada and the privy council; but we have set up a civil service commission beyond which there is no appeal. In this respect, and it goes to the fundamental aspects of the matter, the principle is entirely wrong. I will give an example. Not very long ago an examination was set by the civil service commission in English, and quite properly so; then the English paper was handed over to departmental officers to be translated into French so that French-Canadian students could answer the questions in their own language. In the translation they used in one question three words which changed entirely the sense of the question, so that French-speaking candidates did not have the same chance as the English-speaking ones. I have been to the civil service commission three times, and they refuse to rectify the mistake, which they admit, saying "We will just take that question out"—but they refuse to hold a new examination.

I am entirely in favour of a civil service commission, but I think it has been going too far. I hope that the committee to be set up this year will see to it that there is a court of appeal from the commission, responsible to the parliament of Canada, where grievances such as I have just mentioned can be redressed.

Another thing: Let us not forget that, while the maximum age of appointees has

been limited to thirty-five years, and an educational test has been provided, there is another factor which to my mind is more important than any other, and it is the suitability of the candidate for the position he is to occupy. In the constituency I represent, which is eighty per cent French-Canadian and Catholic, I defy anybody, no matter what part of the country he comes from, to show that there is any one as well qualified to tell which man is best suited to a job as the elected member of the constituency of Sherbrooke, who at this time happens to be myself.

Mr. COLDWELL: What about the defeated candidate, if there was one?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. HOWARD: Well, he is not responsible. From 1930 to 1935, when the Tories were in power, I was still the elected member for Sherbrooke. Let me tell the hon. member who just interrupted that during that time I was perfectly satisfied that the defeated Conservative candidate, who happened to be a supporter of the then government, should make the appointments, and during those five years you will not find one single word of criticism from me of his having done so. But I do say this, that when it comes to the aptness of the candidate to suit the mentality of the people he is going to serve, whether you have a civil service commission or not, whether the choice is made by the elected member, Conservative, Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, Independent, Labour or Liberal, where is there as good a judge of the suitability of the candidate as is the representative of the people?

Several other points occur to me, but I am not now going to take time to discuss them. I hope that when this subject goes to the committee it will be considered from a non-political point of view, a businessman's point of view, and that we shall set up or increase the machinery in such a way as to render to the people of this country a service which will be more in line with real democracy.

Mr. WILLIAM HAYHURST (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I was not a member of the civil service committee, but as a new member of this house, after listening to the arguments which have been set forth, it seems to me that there are some factors which we must develop in the merit system administered by the civil service commission. The last speaker remarked that appointments should be non-political. Possibly most hon. members are in favour of non-partisan appointments, but they feel also that they can be