

he has been making. The motion is that a special committee of the house be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Civil Service Act, and all matters pertaining thereto, and I do not think that up to the present moment the hon. member has discussed any matters that are irrelevant to the motion. I would ask him, however, to confine what he has to say to such questions as are strictly within the scope of the motion.

Mr. POULIOT: I am not going to go as far back as the deluge, but as we are considering the operation of the Civil Service Act it is important to know what progress has been made during the past twenty years under the merit system.

I was about to quote from page 703 what the right hon. Minister of Justice, who was then a back-bencher, said:

Here we have an exemplification of the advantages of union government.

The so-called merit system was brought in by two kinds of individuals. There were the big manufacturers who wanted to make more money by showing their devotion to the empire, and also the Liberals who had supported the Union government, and the Conservatives as well, who were much embarrassed by patronage and had become in one day statesmen, not bothering about petty jobs. They did not want to reward anyone. They were thinking of great and important matters concerning the whole world.

We still have the same kind of statesmen even among back-benchers. They are not numerous; some are front-benchers, and others are back-benchers; but they are not vulgar politicians. They are statesmen, statesmen, statesmen, going higher and higher. The merit system was created to satisfy the greed of profiteers who wanted to promote their own business outside Canada: the sale of bacon manufactured by the friends of Sir Thomas White, who was then minister of finance; starch manufactured by the minister of railways and canals, J. D. Reid; tinware manufactured by Sir Albert Edward Kemp, minister of overseas military forces; paint manufactured by the minister of the naval service, Hon. C. C. Ballantyne; the products of the Cockshutt plant, and so on and so forth.

On April 12, 1918, at page 707, no less a gentleman than that great Haligonian, Mr. Fielding, said:

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I think we are getting away from the purpose for which the civil service commission was created. It was never intended to be a patronage distributing body, but a body with distinct purposes, a body to hold examinations

and to take means of guaranteeing the qualifications of applicants for the public service. That, I think, is a correct statement of its original purpose. But now the government seem to be obliged—I am not saying they could do otherwise—to make this commission a patronage distributing body. Now say to A, B and C, who are members of parliament, that they shall have no right to nominate anybody, but that D, E and F, who are called the civil service board, shall nominate and appoint the men, does not seem to me to be abolishing patronage; it is simply transferring it from a number of gentlemen who, whatever their faults may be, have some knowledge of local conditions, and turning it over to gentlemen who have no knowledge of local conditions. It seems to me that is the effect of it.

So spoke Mr. Fielding. There is something further that is interesting in the working of the civil service commission. In my humble view it is a hoax, it is a farce; they are passing the buck. No one is responsible. We ask the government, any government, who is responsible and we are told, the civil service commission; and if we ask the civil service commission the answer is, "We have no responsibility whatever; the responsibility is on the shoulders of the government." Therefore no one knows where he is at.

If hon. members will look into those most interesting publications called blue books they will see the names of prominent people who do not belong to the civil service commission and who have been thanked in every report of the commission since 1908 for their valuable services in sitting on examining boards. Mr. Justice Angers of the exchequer court is not a member of the civil service commission, and there are many others. I have not the last one, 1938, but I direct attention to page 29 of the report of the commission for 1937. They will see a formidable list of men who are supposed to be competent when the civil service commission is not. In the organization branch there are self-taught men. Perhaps there are a couple of sensible men there; the others are fools, and they direct the organization and classification of all departments, the classification of all civil servants. They are the big men of the civil service commission, the "number one" men; and then there are the examiners who, most of them, could not successfully teach in primary schools; and yet they pass upon questions put to applicants regarding astronomy, geology, engineering and every other science for which civil servants may be employed. Most ridiculous!

If the house has no objection, may I table some figures? They give a classification of those persons acting as advisory examiners on civil service boards, divided into civil servants from Ottawa on the one hand and