

Government. I could hardly believe my ears when I heard that from my good friend from Muskoka. While I do not doubt that this is one of the crowning acts of incompetency, I will not go so far as to say that this is the crowning one. I think the hon. member for Muskoka would have to give some time and consideration to the question of which is the crowning act. He would find, I am sure, that he is surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses, a great cloud of actions vying strongly the one with the other as to which is the crowning act of incompetency. While I agree with him that there is not a great deal of competency shown in connection with this Bill, perhaps, after all, it is not the crowning act of incompetency. That is the only particular in which I do not agree with the brilliant young member for Muskoka. I am glad that he has the independence, clear-headedness and good judgment to express his views in connection with this matter, good party man as he is. I am sure that it is only when the evidence was overwhelming and when conditions were such that he could not do anything else that he would give voice to this opinion in respect to a Government that he would very much like to see doing better.

I am not going to criticize the classification very much further. The only thing to say is that we hope that as matters go along, as the commissioners will be experimenting with this measure and getting used to it from time to time, it may come a little closer towards perfection.

I have only one thing to say to the commission, if they will take my advice, and that is that they should take this work in hand themselves and keep absolutely clear of calling in other people to pass judgment upon the class of men they should bring into the service. If they will do that, they will find as they go along that they will gain in experience, strength, confidence, and courage, and will have the reward and satisfaction of the public having confidence in them; but so long as they continue to switch off the difficult part of their work to somebody else, calling in to do their work new boards and raw recruits, they will not inspire the people with the confidence which otherwise should repose in the Civil Service Commission.

Section agreed to.

On section 12—commencement of Act:

Mr. MANION: The few remarks I have to make do not bear particularly on this clause, but then I do not think any of the remarks made here this afternoon bore par-

ticularly on the clause under discussion. I am in agreement with my hon. friend (Mr. McKenzie), if I drew my conclusions correctly from the latter part of his remarks—and if I did not he will correct me. I understood him to criticise the details of the Bill but to agree with the principle, and if I was correct in drawing that conclusion I entirely agree with the view expressed by my hon. friend. The details I took exception to when the Bill was introduced in the House; I think very many of the details can stand correction. But I believe that the Appeal Board which will act in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission between now and the first of April next will correct many inequalities in the classification. I do not see how anybody can legitimately take the ground that the principle of this Bill is not correct. Nobody can defend the patronage system, the appointing of civil servants entirely on the recommendation of ministers of the Crown and members of a political party. So long as I can remember the whole people of this country have been arguing against patronage, and different Governments have promised to eliminate it. I believe that this is a very good attempt to eliminate patronage. The principle is correct, if the details are incorrect, it is not the fault of the principle but the fault of the executive, and while executives may change or expire, principles live. Therefore I think the principle should be carried out, even if the execution of the details may be imperfect in some cases. We can all hope that ultimately the details will be worked out correctly.

I rose particularly to say something to the Government and the minister in charge of the Bill in regard to a soldier being appointed to the Civil Service Commission. Unfortunately, the Committee appointed to consider the Bill, of which I was a member, did not see their way clear to bring in a recommendation that the Civil Service Commission be enlarged by the inclusion in its membership of a returned soldier. The main reason, I think, why returned soldiers are particularly entitled to representation on that commission is this: We will say the number of returned soldiers is 400,000; it is more than that. Multiply that by five, the usual method of computation to take in families, and we get these 400,000 men representing 2,000,000 people in this country. Thus a distinct class of 400,000 men to which the Civil Service Act has given a preference represents two million people or twenty-five per cent of the population of this