

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

to get both the competence and the necessary ability to do the work, then I think there is no patronage.

• (10:00 p.m.)

However, I wish to make it clear that I am not as competent as the hon. member for Lapointe, whose absence I regret, to define patronage, because I think that as the close friend of Joseph D. Begin, he has more experience in that field.

However, if such an attack from the hon. member for Lapointe is valid, Mr. Speaker, it would be necessary to criticize the whole of our judicial institutions whose members often are former active members of this or that political party.

Then, each time a government appoints a judge, it would be necessary to talk of patronage because, quite by chance, the judge appointed to a superior court, even to the Supreme Court of Canada, is of such a political allegiance. It would be necessary to ask the government to explain its stand; it would even be necessary to ask the judge to resign because he seriously engaged in politics. That is stupid, illogical, to quote the very words the hon. member for Lapointe used when he deplored a situation in the house, namely that scandal mongering was always popular. He was the first to raise a scandal and he was the first a while ago to deplore that the House of Commons has reached such a point that nothing is discussed here but scandals.

Mr. Speaker, one often sees the straw in one's neighbour's eye but fails to see the beam in one's own. I say that there was no patronage in the appointment of the commissioners because all those who were appointed—the parliamentary secretary will answer me—passed examinations.

They took the required examinations. They took the tests provided for at the time. If the officials accepted them as being sufficiently competent and sufficiently qualified to fill the post of commissioner, there is no patronage.

There were even cases of people who had been recommended and who were turned down because, according to the tests, they did not have the necessary qualifications. That happened in my own riding and I would like, incidentally, to pay a special tribute to the census takers which have been appointed; they are people of extraordinary devotion and competence, of unusual ability in the riding of Lotbinière and I am convinced, they will do a wonderful job, truly efficient and worthy of the position they hold.

[Mr. Choquette.]

Under such circumstances, Mr. Speaker, there is no patronage. Finally, I would like to make an appeal for a stop to efforts aimed at discrediting politicians needlessly. Every time a member makes a suggestion, it becomes subject to suspicion, Mr. Speaker; because a politician suggests a name, it is naturally suspect.

There is always something suspicious about it, always something crooked about it, always something dishonest about it. That is how the prestige of politicians is destroyed, how the prestige of parliament is destroyed.

Because a member of parliament makes a suggestion, it does not mean that the idea is necessarily and fundamentally wrong. In the mind of the member for Lapointe, because ministers have made suggestions for the appointment of census commissioners, we must be wary of those suggestions.

This is the best way to discredit politicians. As for me, Mr. Speaker, I must say that, at times, I feel that if we persist in this,—I hate to use the word "patronage" because in this case we are not dealing with patronage—instead of political patronage we are heading for bureaucratic patronage. Often this type of patronage, and union patronage is far more suspect than that practised by the members who, at times, are entitled to show some gratitude toward people who have fought the good fight, provided that gratitude is not at variance with the fulfilment of one's duty, provided it is not at variance with the competence required in the performance of one's duties.

I therefore ask the parliamentary secretary, although I have almost answered the question myself: have the commissioners appointed to take the census scheduled to start on June 1 next passed any tests? Are there among them people who did not get the position because they failed the test? And finally, did the minister intervene personally to secure appointments for unqualified persons, when the director of the D.B.S. had made such and such recommendation?

Yet, Mr. Speaker, under section of the act pertaining to the D.B.S., the minister has full jurisdiction to make all the appointments he wants. The minister has absolute jurisdiction, under the act, to appoint whomever he wants.

I do not see how there can be any question of patronage. I suggest once again that the false charges made by the former friend of Joseph D. Bégin are demagogic and unfounded.