

had. He has helped to make Canada autonomous, a fact we are proud to acknowledge today. Among the component parts of the British commonwealth of nations he has placed Canada on a parity in all aspects of its domestic and external affairs. Under his guidance not the party in power but parliament, of its own free will, was permitted in 1939 to declare a state of war against our enemies. This is a fact which will always stand to the credit of our nation. Who among Canadians to-day has not been proud of Canada's war effort since that fateful year?

Now Canada rates as an adult nation among the countries of the world. During all this time the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has been able to keep Canada united, a task which in this country is not easy of achievement. We know the problems we have to face in our country, with its immense expanse of land, and with the different schools of thought found within its borders. But unity has been maintained by this nation-builder, our present Prime Minister.

Perhaps I would make my point stronger if I were to state that in world war I conscription had brought this nation close to civil conflict because of Quebec's stubborn opposition to that policy. At that time the rest of Canada favoured conscription.

Then, when world war II came along, despite the measure of conscription sponsored by the King government, he retained the confidence of the Canadian people at the election on June 11. Quebec had changed its mind to the extent of sending, to stand behind this man, nearly sixty supporters.

In the speech from the throne one could find many points which might be developed at this stage. However, as I do not purpose speaking at length I shall touch upon only one or two of them. I would first direct the attention of hon. members to a subject which I believe engages the attention and interest of all hon. members, namely, that having to do with the civil service. My further remarks will be directed to the matter of taxation.

Since 1918 we have had on the statute books of Canada a chapter known as the Civil Service Act. This is a statute which has received the approval of the whole of Canada's population, including that of members of the House of Commons, despite their criticism of it. At intervals it has been under review by a special committee of the house. The last report was made by a committee having as its chairman the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Fournier), who at this time holds the portfolio of Minister of Public Works.

I believe all of us will find that the work done by the several committees has been

[Mr. Bertrand (Prescott).]

useful, first because of the publicity the committee meetings have been given in the press and, second, because of the suggestions made in those several committees to improve the working and the administration of the Civil Service Act. The publicity given the committee meetings has had the effect of making the public better acquainted with the vast amount of work done by and the difficult problems confronting the civil service commission.

All hon. members hope, as they grow older, that other days will bring new and even better ways of understanding among all concerned. At this point may I commend the wonderful work accomplished by the civil service commission since its inception, in giving to the public that type of service expected by the vast body of taxpayers.

It is because these taxpayers are at times hard to please that I should like to bring two or three points to the attention of the house. A. What preference or what is the preference which should be given in the future to our men who were in the service of His Majesty either in world war I or world war II? To my mind their status could be made much clearer than it has been made.

Looking over the Civil Service Act one would readily find that, under the provisions of section 28, those who resigned their positions to join the service of His Majesty in either war must be taken back into the service in a position at least equivalent to the one they left upon resigning to join the military service. It will be found in another section that men who had served overseas are to receive preference in respect of positions given under the Civil Service Act.

Section 30 of the regulations in the act states:

30. The names of persons in the service of His Majesty placed upon eligible lists under the provisions of section 28 of the Civil Service Act, shall be placed in the order of merit above all successful candidates at the examinations—

That means above civilian candidates.

—and above persons whose names are placed upon the eligible lists under the provisions of section 54 of the Civil Service Act.

Section 54 refers to the abolition of positions in certain sections of the civil service. Consequently it means that men who have served in the services of His Majesty will have to be given preference over them. I really think this situation should be clarified in order that there may be a better understanding of the act on the part of hon. members of the House of Commons and the public generally.

B. The amended sections 20 and 32 of the Civil Service Act provide that local positions

shall be filled by those possessing a knowledge of the language of the majority. That provision is easy to understand and it has been put into practice with a great deal of satisfaction in the last few years. However, nothing is said about positions at headquarters or at important branch offices or in senior positions of the service.

C. Do we know that when a department makes a requisition for personnel to the civil service commission it stipulates that a knowledge of English or French or both is required? It would appear that the civil service commission has very little responsibility in connection with these cases.

For the reasons I have just given, and many others, and for the benefit of hon. members and of those who expect to obtain positions in the civil service, I would venture to suggest that at the earliest convenient time during this session, or during next session if this is to be a short one, a special committee should be appointed to study and review the Civil Service Act and its regulations. This is a time when many changes will have to occur in order to establish a new order in the world and there should be a clear exposition before this committee of all that is to be expected from the civil service commission under the operation of the Civil Service Act and its regulations. This would be conducive to a better understanding by all concerned.

The second question I wish to deal with is just as ticklish as the one upon which I have just touched. Probably it is more so because it affects a greater number of persons. I refer to taxation. Something of taxation was said this afternoon and I should like to deal with just one phase of this matter. As was mentioned this afternoon by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken), the speech from the throne contains a paragraph which reads as follows:

You will be asked to make financial provision for all essential services, also to meet expenditures arising out of the war, and for the purposes of reconstruction. My ministers' proposals with respect to taxation measures will be disclosed in the budget.

I am sure that all members of the house will be ready to approve the provision of all essential services, especially those having to do with the repatriation of men who are in the services. I know they will be ready to approve all measures necessary to help in establishing these men in civil life as well as for the purpose of reconstruction. I know they will be ready to approve any measures that will help agriculture and other primary industries. No doubt at this stage the most

imperative duty of the government of Canada is to preserve the reputation that this country gained during the last war. However, to do this the battle will have to be fought more at home than anywhere else.

We shall have to assure our population of the rational development of our national resources. We must make sure that the wheels of industry are kept humming. We must assure fair revenues to our primary industries and, above all, we must assure our people of jobs, as has been so well said this afternoon by the leader of the C.C.F. (Mr. Coldwell). Above all else, we must provide that high standard of living and the necessary social protection that will make for a satisfied population.

All of this will require expenditures and I think we all realize that this parliament is ready to approve such expenditures. I should like to repeat what the speech from the throne states with regard to taxation:

My ministers' proposals with respect to taxation measures will be disclosed in the budget.

As we all know, when the budget is announced it immediately becomes law. It is then rather late to make suggestions. I listened this afternoon to the remark of the leader of the opposition in answer to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley). I think we all must realize that with the contribution this country has made toward the winning of the war there will be a future need for taxation. It is of no use to leave the people under the impression that taxation will be greatly reduced because to do that we would be using our influence as members of parliament to mislead the people. Our problem in the future will be much more delicate than the problem we had to face during the war. After the war our problem will not be one that can be answered by expenditures; it will be a problem that must be solved through the ability of our citizens and the use of our natural resources.

Mr. ROWE: We told them that before the election.

Mr. BERTRAND (Prescott): We made an appeal to the country on that basis and were elected.

Mr. ROWE: No, you did not; you said you would reduce them.

Mr. BERTRAND (Prescott): It is true we said that we would reduce taxation, but as the Minister of Finance told the house to-day this reduction might not be just as much as the people expected.

Mr. ROWE: In other words, he changed it right after the election.