

did not answer them all. I am told that he has forwarded to the government a memorandum to the effect that the civil service commission has already implemented most of the unanimous recommendations of the committee last year—which of course is untrue: the commission has made very little progress since the last sitting of the committee.

Here is a point of which hon. members should be informed. In spite of the arduous work of all members of the committee, without exception, some official of the professional institute used unparliamentary language in public about members of the House of Commons. I shall not read all that was said, but it appeared in the press; it appeared in the *Ottawa Journal* of November 29, 1938, as a front-page article, and it was also broadcast by the Canadian Press. The then president of the professional institute has sent a satisfactory apology and withdrawal of the language he used; so have other civil servants who belonged to the Department of Mines; another connected with the Department of Agriculture sent a withdrawal which was rather an apology and which may be considered in due course by the members of the committee if they think that is the thing to do; and another one has done nothing, because his minister was unwilling to act. The correspondence is confidential, but with the permission of the minister I will show it to hon. members concerned and they will do what they please with that.

We hear a lot about the merit system. Does the merit system really exist, or is it only a catchword? I have received from Mr. Bland, of the civil service commission, a list showing the number of the employees of the commission from 1908 until now. Here are some of the earlier figures:

Year	Number of employees
1908..	5
1909..	8
1910..	10
1911..	13
1912..	20
1913..	20
1914-15-16..	17
1917-18..	25

At that time the civil service commission was not such a huge body as it is now.

Before giving the figures for succeeding years, may I say this. It might be interesting to hon. members to know what happened in the house in 1918 when a real merit system, as some hon. members believe in it, was brought into force. One must consider that at the time of the Union government there were some Conservatives and Liberals who did not know at all by how many Liberal

[Mr. Pouliot.]

and how many Conservative votes they had been elected. Therefore, of course, they did not know whom to reward by giving them positions in the civil service. Those prominent amongst the advocates of the merit system were: Mr. Justice Maclean, of the exchequer court, who was a prominent Liberal of Nova Scotia; the Hon. Newton Wesley Rowell, a former Liberal leader of Ontario, and Mr. Fred Pardee, who died a senator and who was the chief whip of the Liberal party in power and in opposition from 1909 until he supported the Union government. In *Hansard* of April 12, 1918, page 697, I find that Mr. A. K. Maclean, then acting minister of finance, spoke as follows:

This reform could only be possible under present political conditions. Had my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) been returned to power, I have no doubt that he could not have inaugurated such a reform in the public service. Moreover, had the present Prime Minister been returned to power at the head of a Conservative government, it would have been impossible for him to institute such a reform as this.

Very interesting: the thing could not have been done by any party, but it could be done only by a unionist government. It was one of their accomplishments. To prove that it was one of their accomplishments may I quote the words of one of the most distinguished front benchers of the house, the right hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe).

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I rise to a point of order. If I understand aright the motion, it is to appoint a committee. What is being said may be very interesting indeed from the political point of view, but I cannot see how it can bear on a motion to appoint a certain committee to consider civil service matters.

Mr. POULIOT: Speaking to the point of order, we have only to see that the motion is for the appointment of a committee of the house "to inquire into the operation of the Civil Service Act, and all matters pertaining thereto, with power to call for persons," et cetera. It is the operation of the Civil Service Act that is being inquired into, and the foundation of the Civil Service Act is the merit system. Therefore I am perfectly in order in continuing to relate what happened in the past.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I ask for your ruling. Do we need to have the history of the Civil Service Act from time immemorial brought before the house on this occasion? I fail to see it, and I ask for your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am of the opinion that the hon. member is in order in the remarks