

than it is in Canada. Do we want our penitentiary administration to become more corrupt in Canada than it is in the United States? Do we want it to become more inefficient? If we do, says the national secretary of this organization, then all we have to do is to adopt this legislation. Thirdly, Mr. Knowles asks what the results will be. He says the results will be that prison guards will be chosen as a reward for political services by those locally in charge of patronage, and that guards so chosen, owing to graft and inefficiency, weakness and loss of morale, will become a burden to the penitentiaries rather than a help; moreover, there will be wholesale dismissals on every change of government, and the extravagance and added cost will be paid by the people of Canada. Surely if these statements are sound we do not want to add to the cost of government in this country to any greater degree.

May I before closing put before the house the point of view of General Hughes, at one time superintendent of penitentiaries. General Hughes was a witness before the Spinney committee in 1921, and at page 234 of the report of that committee it is stated that he emphatically opposed the suggestion. At page 243 he is reported as having said:

We have got away from political appointments, thank goodness, and we are getting into our service men who in years to come will be a credit to the institution.

General Hughes, then, is of the opinion apparently that if we take the course we are about to adopt to-day we are doing something that will not be creditable to the country. Then the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), the leader of the government of which my hon. friend opposite is a responsible minister, has something to say on this question. What does the right hon. gentleman say? On May 8, 1928, as reported at page 2775 of Hansard, speaking against a measure of this character, he said:

It means the recurrence of the patronage system, which should not be tolerated in this country. It is not conducive to good service, or to the public weal. While there have been many defects in connection with the administration of the civil service, the fact is that it is a great advance over anything we have heretofore had in this country. We protest against any effort being made to return to the old condition of patronage.

That is the point of view of the present Prime Minister, and we have also the opinion of the present Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens) as reported in Hansard of May 15, 1928, at page 3017-18:

Undoubtedly the patronage system had more evil attached to it than merit. Appointments

under the patronage system are made for the purpose—I think I can put it simply and plainly—of giving jobs to those who are in favour with the ministry of the day, whatever ministry it is. . . . I am opposed to this bill to the extent that it departs from the principle of appointment by the Civil Service Commission.

Lastly, may I put on record the opinion of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Mackenzie King), who now leads His Majesty's loyal opposition in this House of Commons. On May 2, 1921, speaking against the Spinney bill, which aimed at exempting a portion of the outside service from the provisions of the Civil Service Act, the right hon. gentleman said:

It is a step entirely in the wrong direction.

Well, if the Spinney bill of twelve years ago was then a step in the wrong direction the principle of this bill is equally so to-day. We have the views of these leaders of public opinion which I have quoted, and I think it would be well for us to take their advice. If we followed their opinions we would scrap this piece of legislation now before the house and see to it that the appointments I have mentioned should come under the provisions of the Civil Service Act, thereby insuring to this country, so far as our penitentiaries are concerned, men who will know their duty and and do it in a way that will be a credit to the dominion.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE PERLEY (Argenteuil): May I say to my hon. friend from North Battleford (Mr. McIntosh) and to my hon. friend from Ottawa (Mr. Chevrier) that there is no intention whatever of returning to the system of political patronage in a general way. This government is just as much in favour of appointments being made through the Civil Service Commission on merit as my hon. friends opposite can possibly be, but this is a peculiar situation. All that the Minister of Justice is asking the house to agree to is that the appointment of guards and officers of our penitentiaries shall be made practically in the same way as is the selection of constables for the mounted police force.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: This is going away beyond that.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: That is the intent of this act, and the Minister of Justice might repeat to my hon. friend from North Battleford the opinion which he has already given on this subject. The selection of guards for the penitentiaries under the Civil Service Commission has not been a success. In my opinion, they should be selected as