

Mr. FOSTER. But with that condition it gives absolute power of nomination to the government. That is a power that the English civil service reformers in 1855 started out to fight against and to put down. That was the dominant evil, and the basis of the proposed legislation to-day is to do away, as far as possible, with nomination by the Crown, that is, nomination by the minister, or by members of parliament supporting the minister. Now, take this large class of appointees, including messengers, porters, sorters, packers and such other positions in the lower grades as are determined by the Governor in Council. That is a very important part of the public service, and you absolutely shut out from it the beneficent features of this legislation. You fill these positions entirely at the nomination of the party, and you exclude the Canadian citizen from the free right of entrance into that part of the service. I think that is a great blemish in the minister's Act, as well as a great trouble to everybody who hates the power of patronage, and believes that in the end it is not beneficial, even from a party point of view. Take my hon. friend the member for Ottawa, does he look upon the patronage power as he finds it developed in his daily life as a desirable thing? Are his hours his own? Is he not pestered almost unbearably by applicants of every kind for office? Is not nine-tenths of his public time taken up with looking after, or pretending to look after, matters of patronage. Now, if he proposes to sit after the next election for Ottawa, does he not see what he is storing up for himself by supporting the minister in passing this section? And does he not see what great trouble he would avoid if he supported me in inducing the minister to give up this power of patronage? There are hundreds and hundreds of this class, and with every one of them it will simply be pitching upon the representative, the representative pitching upon the minister, and the minister and the representative fighting it out so as to get the best results they can from the party point of view. In Great Britain it is not so, in the United States it is not so; they have put these positions entirely out of the power of nomination and patronage, and it can be done here in some such way as I will suggest. I will read what I have drawn up:

After the words 'deputy head' insert 'and such appointments shall be made in order of merit from a list of successful applicants determined by the commission through examination and inquiry, to be provided for under regulations made by the commission and approved by the Governor in Council.

That allows the commissioners to proceed upon proper businesslike plans and, after competition and examination, to prepare a list, and the applicants in their order of merit shall be placed upon that

Mr. FISHER.

list. Then when the minister requires such an one all he has to do is to apply to the commissioners, and from that list they select the person who is fitted for the kind of work the minister requires, according to his order of merit in that particular line. Then the member for Ottawa has nothing to do but to say to the applicant: That is all in the hands of the commissioners. Show your capability to go on that list, and you will get fair and equal treatment.

Mr. BERGERON. But how can he get votes?

Mr. FOSTER. I venture to say that the experience of every member is that he has lost more votes than he has gained.

Mr. FISHER. I do not think I can accept that proposition. I agree that the idea of competitive examination must be extended to all entrants to the civil service. But at the same time such a proposition as my hon. friend outlines there is one which would have to be worked out with the greatest care, because it does not mean an ordinary competitive examination.

Mr. FOSTER. I did not say it did, and I would not have it so.

Mr. FISHER. He would not have it so; in other words, he wishes to provide a machinery which I should think, from his description of it, would be a very unworkable one. My hon. friend wants to put that into the statute now so that in future the commission shall do such a thing whether they think they can make regulations to accomplish it or not. It is a continuation of the reform which, if the commission recommends it, may be adopted. But until it is in a complete form before the House, and before those who are responsible for the working of this Act, I do not think it would be advisable to accept it. I take direct issue with my hon. friend on that point. I am as desirous as he is of taking away from the government and from members of parliament this class of patronage. I appreciate it perhaps more than my hon. friend does, because my experience has been much more recent than his. The whole object of this Bill is in that direction, but at the same time I do not want to undertake to do something the successful working out of which I cannot perceive. What my hon. friend proposes would require a great deal more consideration than can be given to it here on the reading of the amendment before the committee, and until the commission has been consulted, have discussed it and have outlined some scheme after their experience and observation of the working of the Act, I would not undertake to accept it.

Mr. FOSTER. I cannot follow the minister in his reasoning. What he proposes