

astounding revelations made before that committee was that which showed the growth of political patronage in connection with appointments to the civil service under the present administration. We were presented with long lists containing thousands of positions which had been exempted from the provisions of the Civil Service Act, first by statute, again by the estimates, and again by orders in council. This has had a demoralizing result within the civil service, since we have attempted to merge two systems, a merit system under the civil service commission, and a political patronage system, with all the conflict and confusion thus involved.

Those of us who sit in opposition have knowledge of the method by which appointments are made by defeated Liberal candidates. We know of the antagonistic public opinion that has been aroused by reason of the interference of political patronage with regard to appointments to the civil service. The civil service commission has made an honest attempt to establish the principle that appointments to the civil service of Canada should be available to every citizen of the dominion, and that appointments should be secured by open competitive examination. There is no proper system of qualification, there is no suggestion of competition, when appointments are secretly made on the recommendation of a sitting member, a defeated candidate or a political committee. We have a sad state of affairs in the civil service, but that sad state of affairs is due to the determination to foster political patronage. I should like to refer again to the evidence given by Sir Francis Floud, then high commissioner for the United Kingdom. He spoke very eloquently and very convincingly of the British tradition of appointments now maintained in the United Kingdom. I think that when we heard his evidence many of us desired that the day should come soon in Canada when we would have a similar tradition in the Canadian civil service and get away entirely from all the miserable intrigue that is associated with political patronage.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I did not wish to interrupt my hon. friend when he was speaking, but there is just one statement I should like to make in order to make clear a certain situation. He referred to orders in council which had been passed taking a number of employees out from under the jurisdiction of the civil service commission, and the impression that might be left with the house would be that

the government itself had initiated that procedure or that particular course of action. I think I am right in saying that wherever that was done, and it has been done in some cases, it was at the instance of the civil service commission itself. The commission reported to the government that in its opinion there were certain classes of appointment in connection with which it would be much better for the government to accept responsibility rather than the civil service commission, and action was taken accordingly. I am certain I am right in that.

Hon. J. E. LAWSON (York South): Mr. Speaker, before the Secretary of State (Mr. Rinfret) speaks I feel I should make a comment or two with respect to the subject matter under discussion, in view of my past experience in connection with the civil service. I was originally a member of the committee which sat last year, but I had myself replaced because of the fact that other committees of which I was a member were meeting at the same time as the civil service committee. So I was not a party to the report made last year.

In 1932 I had the honour to be chairman of a small special committee of this house which conducted a somewhat extensive investigation into the administration of the Civil Service Act. I will be frank to confess that when I first entered upon that inquiry, representing as I do a constituency some 275 miles from Ottawa, I had the general impression which seemed to prevail in that part of the country from which I came that a civil service job was something of a sinecure, and that the best-off people in this country were the civil servants. From my experience in that exhaustive inquiry and from experiences I have had before and since in departments of government, I would be unfair and unjust did I not say that, taken by and large and all round, I think we have in the civil service of Canada a group of men of whom we can well be proud. I will admit quite frankly that I have gone into offices in some departments of the government service here and seen practices prevailing which would not be permitted or tolerated in private enterprise, but such cases are very few and far between. I am always—I was going to say amazed, but I will put it in this way—I am always surprised at the ability and the energy displayed by a great many of our civil servants in the course of their duties, having regard to the comparatively small remuneration which many of them receive.