

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prolong this discussion, but I, too, wish to dissociate myself from many of the remarks made in this house this afternoon in criticism of the civil service commission and the present method of making appointments apart from political patronage. The hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Tomlinson) criticized hon. members of this house and said that the taxpayers expected us to assume our responsibilities as members. I do not wish to assume responsibility in connection with appointments for the making of which I have no particular qualifications, and about which I may know very little. But I would point out that to-day, under the patronage system, very often neither the sitting member nor the defeated member, men who enjoy or have enjoyed the confidence of a majority of the electors of the constituency, is responsible for appointments that may be made. I look at page 955 of *Hansard* for February 15 of this year and find, according to the reply to a question which I asked the Postmaster General (Mr. McLarty), that an appointment in my constituency was made on the recommendation of Mr. W. Richardson of Rosetown. Mr. Richardson is an estimable gentleman, but he was never elected as a member of this house. Mr. Loucks, the former member, is not consulted regarding appointments, nor is the sitting member; a gentleman who could not secure election to this house recommends the appointments in the constituency which I represent.

I do not believe that the member, the previous member or the defeated government candidate should make appointments. As has been pointed out, there are minor appointments in regard to which competitive examinations are perhaps not satisfactory, but there are ways, other than political patronage, of making such appointments. As regards promotions, I believe the merit system should be followed where possible, though I realize that there are positions in connection with which seniority ought to be the determining factor. When we talk of the responsibility of members of this house, I am amazed that hon. members should want to exercise political patronage. After all, I think the recommending of appointments frequently makes enemies for a member. Moreover, I believe there are other matters of greater importance to our constituents and to the country than the matter of making petty appointments and having our time taken up in that way.

I should like to see our civil service placed upon the same basis as the civil service of Great Britain or New Zealand. I remember when the Minister of Finance of New Zealand,

[Mr. Marshall.]

Hon. Walter Nash, was here several years ago. I had met him when he was in Canada on a former occasion. His last visit was in 1937, and at that time his secretary told me that he knew Ottawa because of the previous visit he had made as private secretary to Mr. Nash's predecessor. He told me that in New Zealand civil servants were not changed when a change in government occurred. He told me also that only seven changes had been made in the service of that country since the new government took office in 1935. We are told that the civil services of Great Britain and New Zealand are efficient.

The other evening I was glad to compliment the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Ilsley) when he said that he had not used his powers under the national revenue act to make appointments. I think that is something which should be commended by all those who desire good government. In my opinion political patronage is a form of corruption. Promises of jobs are made prior to an election, and to my mind that is only a form of bribery.

Mr. TOMLINSON: That is just the hon. member's opinion?

Mr. COLDWELL: It is my opinion that the promise of a position as payment for support is bribery and corruption. I do not think you can get away from it.

Mr. O'NEILL: Who does it?

Mr. COLDWELL: I ask the hon. gentleman to ask some of his friends.

Mr. O'NEILL: Did the hon. member ever make such a promise?

Mr. COLDWELL: No, I have never done it and I am very proud of that fact. I have been in public life, municipally and provincially, for a long time and I have made no promises of jobs.

Mr. FLEMING: I heard the hon. gentleman make several promises last year.

Mr. COLDWELL: The hon. member for Humboldt (Mr. Fleming) says that I made several promises during the provincial by-election in his constituency. He is quite right, but they were not promises of appointments; they were promises of good government and promises to further certain policies. That is entirely different from political patronage. I want to place myself behind those who support the civil service commission and the merit system. In my opinion patronage is a baneful influence in our public life. A few years ago I had the privilege of looking into the working of the civil service of one of our