

Government Orders

the facts. Has this government appointed Liberals? Yes, it has and I can give this House a good list of them. Has it appointed people of other stripes? Yes, and I can give this House a good list of those as well. However, that ought not to be the governing criterion as to what the person's party label was.

I will return to my example again. If that minister is selecting a person for a board only on the basis of his label or on the basis of who he knows versus who he does not know rather than on the basis of the competence of that person to do that job, that is where it becomes corrupt patronage. I do not agree with that and I will give notice that when I see it and as I see it I will do my bit to blow the whistle.

However, do not ask me to subscribe to a dictum that says all persons of the same party label as the party in power are hereby disqualified for appointment however qualified. That makes no sense. Nobody in this House in their right mind would subscribe to that kind of dictum. It would be unfair. As much to the point it would be counterproductive because we would be robbing ourselves of the opportunity to appoint some competent people.

Let us look at something off the record. This is not particularly an attack on the Tories. There are no Tories left around here to attack. I want to draw a couple of recent example and it just so happens that the last government that was in power in this country federally was the Tory government. Let us have a look at comparable periods.

The big bad Liberals, I will pick two equivalent periods, from November 4, 1994 to February 3, 1995 in the one case and an earlier set of years in another case. In the first case, the present case, the big bad patronage infested Liberals over a 15-month period from November 4, 1993 until February 3, 1995 have made 700 appointments. The *Globe and Mail* with a research team looking into this for days and weeks, we saw the article last weekend, managed to identify that fewer than 80 of those appointed had Liberal connections. That is only 80 out of 700. I have to talk to the Prime Minister. That is discrimination. The balance ought to be a bit more than that.

• (1725)

I say to my friend from Delta when he was a card carrying Liberal he would not have stood for that kind of unfairness.

Let us look at the period November 4, 1991 until February 3, 1993. These are not conveniently chosen dates. They are the last dates I could choose within the mandate of the last government that would parallel the 15-month period we are talking about and that is why I chose that period. In that 15-month period the Conservatives made 1,819 appointments, about two and a half times as many as had been made in this period.

One of the realities of being in government is that there are agencies, there are boards that need to have personnel appointed to them. We cannot ignore that. This government under the minister responsible did undertake a review. As a result we have made a lot fewer appointments but some of them have to be made.

The very people who stand in this House and decry appointments have themselves been patronage appointments in past times. I will not follow in the footsteps of someone else who spoke earlier and name names. I do not believe that is fair in terms of making the case. It is half fair in the sense that the individuals whose names I have there are now members of this Chamber and would have an opportunity to respond. However, others were mentioned today who have never sat in this Chamber and more to the point do not sit here presently and have no recourse and cannot protect themselves.

I submit to my friends who were dragging out names today that we can make the point that somebody may be the grandson or the son or whatever relation. I did not have any say who my grandparents were. I did not have much say who my parents were. Should it disqualify me because my dad was a humble carpenter, because my mother came from a family of shipbuilders and worked as a domestic before her marriage? Does that disqualify me? Should I carry those labels and somebody should decide that I have to be pegged here because my mother was a domestic and my father was a carpenter? How far do we carry this thing in order to make some point about patronage?

I guess my last sermonette could have been entitled "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" because some of them sitting in this Chamber right now had patronage appointments from the former Tory administration.

There is one other issue that I would like to talk about. I am not referring to the gentlemen from Charlevoix, Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Elk Island, Red Deer, Fraser Valley East, Calgary North, Port Moody—Coquitlam or Delta, nor to the members for St. Boniface, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Kitchener, London West and Oxford, not to mention the members for Niagara Falls and Stormont—Dundas. Are there other offers—or the member for Louis-Hébert. Just to pull together what I have said on that issue, if there is something wrong with the patronage system, it is the system that is wrong.

• (1730)

There is no need to make scapegoats of individuals to make one's point about what needs to be done with the system. That is the only point I am making. I give notice. I have in front of me the names of present members of this House but unless I eliminate everybody and by extrapolation name the person, I cannot go any further.