

admit that he would not be alarmed even if a little element of patronage entered into the changing or amending of that act. I quite clearly recall that two years ago in speaking on this same question, while protesting against the very slight change that was made at that time, my hon. friend said that he was afraid that that slight change would do away with the vital principle of the Civil Service Act, which was the abolition of political patronage. Evidently, he is of the same mind as the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power); he is not afraid of political patronage. But he instances the case of country post offices, small unimportant positions in outlying districts, and he contends that the member for that constituency, who knows his constituency and the conditions surrounding his locality, is in a much better position to choose the proper man for a position of that kind than is the Civil Service Commission sitting here at Ottawa. That may be true and it may not; but we have the evidence of men in the Post Office Department, for instance, evidence which was given under oath two years ago before the special committee, going to show that the system now in vogue of making those appointments by the Civil Service Commission is working out fairly well.

Mr. CARROLL: That is not in vogue now.

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): The post office inspectors say that they are getting good appointees and good service under the present system.

Mr. CARROLL: Does the hon. member say that appointments to small country post offices are to-day under the Civil Service Commission?

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): Of course, there are a few of the very small ones that are not, but very many of them are. It is a small post office, indeed, that does not give a remuneration of \$200 or more.

Mr. CARROLL: There are many.

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): I am speaking only for my constituency and I know that to be the case there. I do not know that there is in my constituency one that is in the category of which the hon. member speaks.

The outstanding feature, to my mind, of the discussion this evening was brought out by the hon. member who just preceded me (Mr. Euler). He said that two years ago, when the bill which is commonly known as the Spinney bill, was introduced in this House, it was done because such pressure was brought to bear upon the administration of that day by

many of their prominent supporters in this House, that the government submitted a bill. Is that not the situation that we have here to-day? I suspect that to be the situation, that such pressure is now being brought to bear upon the administration, and has been for the last year, that they are feeling their way as to whether it will be wise to bring in a bill to amend the Civil Service

11 p.m. Act or not. That is why I am taking the ground that I am opposed to the suggestion that a committee of this House should be appointed. I was rather surprised to hear some prominent members across the floor state that the Civil Service Commission were an autocratic body; that they had power without responsibility, and that the government, who shoulder the responsibility, should have the power. The present administration have not shown until the present time any particular anxiety to assume responsibility. If they are willing to assume responsibility, why not submit a measure for our consideration?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A good deal has been said by my hon. friend and his friends as to the desirability of the government consulting parliament or a committee of parliament before taking matters into their hands. I have intimated, on behalf of the government, that we desire to do that, to as large an extent as possible. Would we not be proceeding more in accord with that spirit if we asked parliament or a committee of parliament, after examining the whole situation, to give us the benefit of their views, and then acted upon their views, rather than if we took the matter into our hands, making an arbitrary suggestion and leaving it to parliament to decide?

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): I can see there are many cases in which the Prime Minister is correct. I agree in general with the principle that he has laid down, and I think it is quite proper for the government to consult this House on many questions. But it is not two years since we had an investigation of a similar nature, an investigation as wide as one could possibly make it, by a special committee appointed for this very purpose. All the information that was collected by that committee is available for the present administration.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A very different parliament.

Mr. EULER: Does the hon. member not think that an additional experience of two years in the working out of that act would tend to throw light on it?