

constantly, and I am really surprised that my good friend from Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) should have the courage, at this stage in the development of our political institutions, actually to plead or demand that we should go back to an earlier state of affairs from which we thought we were at least beginning to try to escape. I regret exceedingly the speech of the hon. member for Témiscouata and I desire to dissociate myself entirely from the sentiments that have been expressed.

There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. I submit that in so prejudging the work of the committee the hon. member has definitely disqualified himself from acting on the committee to which he is to be appointed for the present session. It is not so long since the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) quoted from Beauchesne's parliamentary rules and forms, as follows:

It shall always be understood that no member who declares or decides against the principle of a bill, resolution, or matter to be committed, can be nominated of such committee.

The Prime Minister went on to say:

Each hon. member of the committee will be expected, on his honour, to investigate fully the matter which has been referred to the committee of which he is a member. He will be expected, as one who is privileged to sit on the committee, to form his judgment with respect to what should be reported to the house.

And again:

—no hon. member who had expressed views in this house which prejudged the situation would be entitled to sit on that committee.

That seems to me fairly clear. This motion is distinctly with regard to a certain special committee. We have the chairman of last year, who according to frequent custom would naturally be the chairman this year, prejudging the case. I would say that he has absolutely disqualified himself from serving on that committee.

Mr. POULIOT: I have refused to act as chairman.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: From sitting on the committee, I said.

Mr. C. G. MacNEIL (Vancouver North): Mr. Speaker, as a back-bencher who served on the committee last year, I cannot let this occasion pass without saying a word or two. May I remind the house that a very searching inquiry was made into the operations of the Civil Service Act by the committee under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot). As the hon. member has indicated, a report which was unanimously assented to by all members of the committee was tabled in this house last

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

session. It was our expectation that there would be a motion for concurrence in the report and that on such motion there would be a debate with regard to the principles involved. It is a matter of personal regret to me that the hon. member should seize this occasion to anticipate the decision of the house with regard to the report and draw his own conclusions with reference to the evidence heard before the committee. May I make this point, and make it most emphatically: The conclusions which he has presented to the house this afternoon are not incorporated in the report of the committee as unanimously assented to by all the members of the committee.

Mr. POULIOT: If my hon. friend will permit me? The report of last year is not before the house. I am simply expressing my personal views on the motion of the minister, which is entirely different.

Mr. MacNEIL: The report was agreed to by the hon. gentleman as chairman of the committee and it appears on the records of the house, although it is not formally before us at this session. I draw the inference from the motion of the Secretary of State (Mr. Rinfret) that it is the intention to proceed with the inquiry where we left off last session.

I have just this point to make, and other members of the committee can express their own personal opinions. Since the matter has been opened up this afternoon I submit that the weight of evidence indicated that during the past few years the staff of the civil service commission had been making a very honest and efficient endeavour on the whole to carry out the merit system of appointments in the civil service. That was the impression I gained personally as a result of listening day by day to the evidence presented before the committee. No charges of inefficiency or irregularity were made, and certainly there was nothing in the evidence to indicate that there was any less efficiency in that department than in any other department of the government. After hearing the members of the staff of the civil service commission, it was the general impression of members of the committee that after all they were efficient, that they had integrity of purpose with regard to the work entrusted to them, and that they were doing a first-class job.

May I make this point? The chief handicap imposed on the commission has been imposed by hon. members of this house who are determined to force political patronage upon the civil service. One of the most