

to be worth something, if he had only confined himself to the subject before the House.

Turning to the Bill I may say that I had hoped its scope would be rather wider than appears from the hon. gentleman's (Mr. McMullen) last explanation. It is twenty-two years now since I first asked this House to agree to the principle that appointments to the service should be made by some other means than political patronage, and although circumstances ever since have been rather adverse to the adoption of any such principle, my opinion remains unchanged. Of course, there are a number of appointments such as country postmasters and small collectors of customs and so on, which must always remain matters of local patronage, because the offices are so trying that they must be filled by people in the locality, and those who fill them cannot form part of the professional civil service. Our object ought to be to create, at headquarters, a professional civil service, which should be selected, in the first place, on business principles, in which dismissals, when necessary, should be made on business principles, and in which promotions should be made on the same principle. If that were done, I am satisfied, as my hon. friend from Wellington (Mr. McMullen) is, that the number employed could be greatly reduced, while at the same time, the salaries of those remaining could be kept quite adequate to their duties. In some cases the salaries might be increased, because the fewer men employed, the more would have to be done by those who are employed, and the more money they would earn. I am not in favour of a cheap and nasty civil service, but want men properly selected and well paid.

The root of the whole trouble in connection with dismissals by an incoming Government is to be found in the manner in which appointments were made. The service was overloaded by the late Government, and no doubt would be overloaded by this if it stayed in as long as the old Government did. A number of men, who have practically no duties to perform, are put on to suit the exigencies of politics, and I do not believe that any Government could possibly be proof against pressure of that kind. For that reason, I always advocated the principle of a non-political civil service, in which admissions, promotions and dismissals should be under the control of a Civil Service Board, who should not be members of the civil service themselves, but appointed, like the judges, during good behaviour, and as independent of the control of the Government as the Auditor General is. A great many modifications would be required in the details of the plan, but the great principle has been in force in England for nearly fifty years, that men should enter the public service as they do the service of any private corporation, on account of

their fitness for the work, and should be retained, promoted or dismissed on the same ground.

I know a great many hon. gentlemen would feel the loss of patronage involved in this reform, but I am sure that those who support this Government and those who supported the late Government, must feel that the possession of that patronage is a most serious weakness to them. They must feel that more enemies are made by its exercise than by almost anything else they can do. I shall reserve any further remarks on that point until the Bill comes up for its second reading, when we can discuss its provisions more intelligently.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

ATLANTIC FAST SS. SERVICE.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to ask the attention of the Government to an article which appeared in the Toronto "Globe" on Saturday, the 10th instant, from which I extract the following:—

Another proposal for a fast Atlantic service has been laid before the Government within the last few days, and it is so entirely novel and striking that, if it is considered, it may put a new phase upon this important question. The proposal made by the promoters and their associates in England is to establish a twenty-knot service for the conveyance of mails, passengers and express freight from Milford Haven, in Wales, to Middle Milford, in the Strait of Canso, N.S., these two points having been ascertained to afford the shortest, safest and quickest service on the basis of the idea upon which these proposals rest, which is an Imperial idea, as well as one calculated to meet the wants of Canada. The English syndicate which is to furnish the capital, is offering to put on four express steamers of the requirements of the Imperial and Canadian governments that will make the trip from Great Britain to Canada, from port to port, in four days, representing a saving, as compared with the fastest passage between Daunt's Rock and Sandy Hook, applied to the proposed route, of three days and eighteen hours.

I would ask the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce whether such a proposal has been submitted to the Government as indicated in this article.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Sir Richard Cartwright). I would say that no proposal in due form, having reference to such a project, has been made. Some suggestions and letters were laid before us. As I understand, this article, which I have not had the opportunity of reading, refers to communications between Milford Haven and the Strait of Canso, but the hon. gentleman is aware that the statute under which alone proposals could very well be considered does not contemplate that at all.