

administration by the adoption of a system which would enable appointments to be based on competence was powerfully re-inforced by the increasing irritations of having to parcel out a limited supply of jobs to meet the unlimited demands of party adherents and hangers-on. Successive reports recommended that political allegiance and the will of local patronage committees be replaced by competition and selection by an independent authority on the basis of merit. Over these years, a number of bills were introduced and enacted by Parliament with a view to the adoption of these principles. But their provisions were frustrated by amendment or circumvented in practice. It was not until 1918 that the statute by which we are presently governed became law. From that year, we can accurately date the elimination of the old patronage system from the regular Civil Service of Canada and the beginning of the existing "career" tradition. Patronage died hard. For, even after 1918, efforts were made, and vigorous efforts, inside and outside Parliament, to emasculate the law and to bring back, in one guise or other, the old spoils system. But the main battle had been won and, fortunately, the proponents of a permanent Civil Service - on the British model - were many and powerful in Parliament and in the country. Attempts to reverse the trend have proved futile ever since.

The establishment of the merit system was a notable victory - won over many years by the efforts of illustrious Canadians in both the great political parties. It was a victory we should not forget, one which has borne important national fruits ever since, for it laid the foundation of our national administrative services on the basis of competence, impartiality and permanence.

Recently we have had impressive evidence of the strength of the tradition established then. Last summer you will recall we had a somewhat dramatic change in Ottawa. After twenty-two years of governments of the same party, the Capital awoke to find a Ministry of the principal opposition party about to take office. In this novel situation there were some who wondered whether the civil servants, all but a handful of whom had known only the former Government, would be able to adapt themselves to new Ministers and new policies. And there were some who wondered whether the new Ministers would be content to have as their principal advisers and executive arms those who had been so intimately engaged for so long in the affairs of their political opponents. In the event - as many of you will be aware --but it bears repeating I think - the changeover from Liberal to Conservative rule in Ottawa, was accomplished with extraordinarily little administrative disturbance and little or no fuss. And now, after many months of the new Administration - and they have not been placid months in either national or international affairs - the working relations between the principal civil servants and the Ministers at the head of the departments of government are, I believe, firmly established on a basis of mutual confidence, respect and understanding.