

regard to the retention of the Civil Service Act and the maintenance of the prestige of the Civil Service Commission. I do not see how the government can very well get away from it. As I stated in my introductory remarks, I have no objection to the government providing in this bill for the appointment of the federal board, the provincial boards and an advisory council, in whatever way they consider will get the best results, but so far as the subordinate positions are concerned, I ask that they be placed under the Civil Service Act. I hesitate to move an amendment. I do not wish to embarrass the minister, but I think this is only a reasonable request which should be acceded to by the government.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I think we could all agree with the Minister of Trade and Commerce and leave these appointments to the senior officer of the department concerned if only we could be sure that that officer would control these appointments. To my mind, that is the question for us to decide in discussing this matter. I do not know that the minister himself would have an absolutely free hand in making the appointments. We all know the pressure that is brought to bear in the making of political appointments. There would be pressure from every point of the compass and the minister himself, if he were frank, would state that he did not have an absolutely free hand in making the appointments. I heard the former leader of the official opposition, the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, say on one occasion that a minister who tried to enforce the merit system in his own department would be defeated by his own party on the floor of the House, and I do not think I could put it in any stronger language my condemnation of the patronage system. I would not go so far as the hon. member for Bow River and suggest that we should amend the act, thereby tying up the matter at this time. I realize that we spent a lot of time on this bill last year, as we have done this session, and I would hesitate to do anything that would interfere with the progress of the bill at this stage. But when the question of the Civil Service Commission versus patronage is under discussion we ought to state exactly where we stand. The observations of the minister with regard to certain men in his own department appear to me to be hardly applicable in a general way to the Civil Service Commission. If a man of questionable character is found in the service under the present system, I venture to say that for every one of that type under the commission I can point to two or three men

appointed under the patronage system who are a good deal worse; not perhaps in the employ of this government, but men who have been in the service of various governments of Canada, provincial or federal. I know that very often ministers of the crown, whether provincial or federal, have not a free hand in the matter of appointments. Men come along who have given their services in an election and who are looking for their reward, and the minister is unable to resist the pressure brought to bear upon him. The object this parliament had in view when the Civil Service Commission was created was to relieve ministers of the crown of this very pressure. Why, the present Speaker is on record in Hansard as saying, after the Civil Service Act had become law, that he walked home from this House that night feeling for the first time in his political life a free man. Surely that statement ought to be considered.

Mr. DUNNING: I have just a word to say in reference to the manner in which this legislation will work out in practice. I do not think that due regard has been paid by some hon. gentlemen to the provincial board feature of the bill now before the committee. Provincial boards are provided for, three of the members to be nominated by the government of the province and two other members by borrowers within the province. Then provision is made in the section under discussion for the national board to make regulations with respect to the employment of the officers of the board. I expect to see it work out in this way: the provincial board having to do with the work on the ground will necessarily have a very large say as to the officers who are to operate within that particular province. If that is not the case we certainly shall not get, in the various provinces coming under the act, men who will be willing to assume the responsibilities for administering the act in those provinces. The provisions of the bill are sufficiently elastic to facilitate coöperation between the Dominion and the provincial governments, not only as regards the financial aspects of the measure, but as well with respect to its administration directly within the limits of the respective provinces. Personally I think the method now suggested in the bill should be given a trial rather than it should be insisted upon that the Civil Service Commission of Canada at Ottawa should make appointments within the provinces in relation to a matter with which the provincial governments are concerned. I do not think it wise, because of the joint liability created under the terms of the bill, that the commission