

with the Civil Service Act, but if we are to break that act at every opportunity why not be fair and say we will repeal it?

This session we had a civil service committee which sat for many days and laboured long and diligently. A report was presented. I was rather proud of that report, which received the encomiums of a number of newspapers, and with which the civil servants were highly pleased. Now, however, it appears that no action is to be taken on it. That is rather discouraging to those who have supported this act.

I do not think I can do better than quote the words of the right hon. Prime Minister of to-day, then the leader of the opposition, on April 14, 1927. He said:

We as law makers should not be law breakers. As those who framed the civil service law of the country we should not be the first to break it. Our right to ignore the act is undoubted, but the exercise of that power is injurious to the people of this country—

The right hon. gentleman used those words on an occasion absolutely on all fours with this occasion.

I do not believe the Prime Minister would consider that justice was being done by the selection of one or two of these officials to the exclusion of others who, to the certain knowledge of the oldest members of the house, have greater claims.

The right hon. member for Argenteuil knows what I mean.

This is a disagreeable thing to stand up and speak about; yet in the very nature of things we must see to it that the House of Commons shall not become an instrument of injustice to its servants. The Speaker may err in his selections, because we have striking evidence over his own signature of his strong partisanship in the removal of thirty-four postmasters in Gaspé.

With all due deference to His Honour let me say that if that statement was true he has followed nobly in the footsteps of his predecessor. Of all those whom I succeeded in having appointed when I came to the house, as vacancies occurred through illness or dismissals for cause, only a corporal's guard remain. I should say that Mr. Speaker has followed very well indeed in the footsteps of his predecessor in this respect. The records will show that when the time came for me to make these appointments in 1926 I was not responsible for the removal of one man, one woman or one page boy. The replacements I had appointed filled vacancies created on the instructions of superior officers; as these men, women or boys became inefficient or died or were removed for cause, the vacancies were filled. Then I should like to

[Mr. Chevrier.]

quote the concluding words of the present Prime Minister:

Men in high, responsible positions may sometimes become partisans and it is because of that fact that I rise now, as my last act at this session—

See how history repeats itself.

—to protest against this injustice which is being done deserving public servants through discrimination. I ask the house, regardless of politics, to assert our ancient authority—which is ours, and not the Speaker's—and to determine that we who have made the laws will not break them. That is all I intend to say regarding this matter.

As a result Mr. Robb then said:

I beg to move, seconded by Mr. Dunning, that in item 452 all the words after "hereby appointed" down to and including "or amendments thereto" be struck out, and that the item be reduced by \$13,500.

My advice to Mr. Speaker is that he would be well advised to follow the same line of conduct that was followed on that occasion.

Hon. GEORGE BLACK (Yukon): As Speaker of the house perhaps with propriety I may say a word or two on this item. It is true that the civil service commission has the power to make such an appointment, but it is also true that this house has power to make the appointment. By investing authority in the civil service commission the government is not divested of the power of making such appointments. The office of chief parliamentary messenger and housekeeper is one peculiarly under the House of Commons and under the Speaker. Under the Sergeant at Arms that officer is responsible for the furniture, fittings and movable property of the house. He oversees the parliamentary messengers and the char service. He sees that this chamber, the corridors and the peace tower are all kept clean and in order, giving particular attention to members' rooms. I am sure there is not a member of the house who will not acknowledge that they have had splendid service from the man who has been acting in this capacity for the last couple of years. On his staff as messengers he has upholsterers, carpenters, joiners, painters, paper-hangers and so on. The work of reupholstering the furniture of this house is done here, on these premises, and is not sent out at very great expense as was the custom in former times. During the recess the walls and ceilings of many rooms are cleaned and retinted at very small expense. Close attention is paid to purchasing. Wholesale rates, with special discounts for the government, are arranged, and to my knowledge in the two or three years the man has been here he