

a body of men sitting in Ottawa will know more about the qualifications of a man out in a little place in British Columbia, or in the northern part of Ontario, or Nova Scotia, for the position of postmaster than the men who come directly from these places. If this means consulting the member of parliament, and to that extent a return to patronage, I am quite willing to say that I would be in favour of it. If ten thousand have been restored, and if as the leader of the Opposition says, that was done with exceeding promptness, I would merely like to say that, if that were done in June, I think the very same thing would have been done in 1921, after the change was made in the act. The change was made in the act enabling the commission to divest themselves of these powers in June of 1921. I think it was about the month of September when the leader of the Opposition, who was then Prime Minister, made the announcement that he was about to make an appeal to the country, and he had not very much time, and the commission had not very much time, to deal with matters of that kind; so that to my mind that is no reflection on the good faith of the government in the matter.

I would in conclusion make an appeal to the Progressives that it is perfectly reasonable and logical that a committee of this House composed of members of all the parties get together, review the whole situation and honestly and fairly make their recommendations to this House on the whole question.

Mr. J. W. KENNEDY (Glengarry and Stormont): If it is perfectly logical and natural for the members of this group to whom the last speaker appealed to agree to the appointment of the committee that has been suggested by the right hon. the Prime Minister, is it not just as logical and just as natural, and far more in accord with parliamentary practice, that the government itself should submit certain proposals, if they feel those proposals to be in the public interest, to this House, and then have us consider these proposals, instead of the general question as to whether these proposals should be made or not? I submit, Mr. Speaker, that that would be more in accord with parliamentary practice in this House than the procedure which they are taking. I must confess that it was with a good deal of surprise that I saw this resolution on the order paper, and with a good deal of surprise that I saw coupled with this resolution the name of the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power), because I was of the opinion that not long ago he was very much opposed to any change being made in the Civil Service Act. He admits that two

[Mr. Euler.]

years ago he was very much opposed to any change in the Civil Service Act, and he is quite frank in saying that he opposed the change at that time because he did not trust the Tories. I might just say to the hon. gentleman that there is a large body of public opinion in this country which, in respect of the appointment to the public positions, has a very profound distrust of both Grits and Tories, and why should the public trust either Grits or Tories, or Progressives for that matter, in regard to making public appointments.

The people of Canada desire to see an efficient Civil Service. They desire to see the administration of our public affairs carried out not only economically but proficiently and in the best possible manner, and, recalling what was said by the hon. gentleman from Brandon (Mr. Forke) about patronage being the system that was in use in this country in making public appointments for a good many years, the struggle that there was in this House to get away from the evils of patronage, and the impossibility under either political party of any substantial measure of civil service reform being enacted which would absolutely get away from party patronage, I cannot help thinking that if we go back in the very slightest degree towards that old system and recognize party patronage at all in the making of public appointments, it will be a very grave mistake for this House, it will be a grave mistake for the members of this parliament, and it will be only getting ourselves into difficulty and will not lend itself to efficiency in public administration.

Mr. PUTNAM: Is the hon. gentleman opposed to the government in power making the appointment of Superior Court judges, or would he like that to go to the Civil Service Commission?

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): Whether I would be in favour of the appointment by the Civil Service Commission of Supreme Court judges and that kind of thing, or whether I would not, is a question I am not prepared to answer offhand. I am quite frank in answering my hon. friend in that way. But I think it has been generally recognized in this country, even in days of patronage, that appointments to the Supreme Court should not be regarded as patronage, and should be above patronage. Whether that has been true in practice or not I am not prepared to say. I was somewhat surprised to hear the hon. gentleman from North Waterloo (Mr. Euler), whilst stating that there were some phases of the Civil Service Act that might require change and improvement,