

An hon. MEMBER: Under the civil service commission.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I will not say we have no measure of patronage under the civil service commission, but at least the setting up of that commission is an attempt to get away from party patronage. It would seem to me that the hon. member who just spoke is anxious to return to the old idea of party patronage. Why, only to-day I heard the possible appointment to a rather important post being discussed. I do not mind mentioning what it was—the appointment of a parliamentary librarian. What was the trend of the discussion? It was that we had always appointed a librarian who was a good party heeler, that the position was considered to be a reward for party services.

Mr. HOWARD: And have they not been very good appointments?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I will not say that.

Mr. ROGERS: What does the hon. member mean by "party heeler"? Would he apply that term to the late Hon. Martin Burrell?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: One who has given good party service. That was the trend of the discussion to which I listened to-day.

An hon. MEMBER: Where did you hear that discussion?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Never mind; let me finish my statement. I say that undoubtedly in this country the general feeling is that appointments, especially to certain classes of positions, are made because of party services. I would take that very library position as an illustration, if you like. Most of us liked the late Martin Burrell very much. We thought he was a fine man. He was a literary man, but I would venture to say that Mr. Burrell had no special training as a librarian. He was a splendid literary critic, and possibly it may be a good thing that we should occasionally give some sort of emolument to literary people in this country in order to encourage them to continue writing. I have no particular objection to that, but I have some objection to anyone being appointed to the position of librarian who is not a qualified librarian. That is my position. It is a technical post to which should be appointed a man with the highest technical qualifications.

Mr. POULIOT: I rise to a point of order. Mr. Burrell was a privy councillor; he is now dead, but he was a most able man.

Mr. HOWARD: May I ask a question? Just because—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. If the hon. member who has the floor does not give consent, he should not be interrupted.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Burrell's name was mentioned from across the floor. I was dealing with a general principle and as an illustration said that only an hour or so ago I heard that matter under discussion. It illustrates my point, namely, that to-day a great many appointments are made primarily in order that certain people who have given party service may be rewarded. That is my submission. I could give very many other illustrations; it just happened that this was the matter under discussion at the moment. My point is—and I think that I rightly interpret the feeling of the majority—that the people of Canada are sick of this kind of thing.

Mr. TOMLINSON: Did you ever ask for anything?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No.

Mr. TOMLINSON: Yourself?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No.

Mr. TOMLINSON: Your party?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No.

Mr. TOMLINSON: Any of your party?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Not that I know of.

Mr. POULIOT: The hon. gentleman is as firm as the civil service forms require.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I do not claim any particular credit for that, simply because we are not in a position where we can expect to get favours.

An hon. MEMBER: That is the simple reason.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It may be the simple reason, but I am speaking about a principle. I care not whether the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the Conservatives, the Liberals or any other party may be involved; the principle is that in this country we should have a system by which appointments should be made on merit after competitive examinations. That is the policy which I think ought to be maintained. We are constantly in danger of encroachment upon even the degree of non-partisan appointment that has so far been attained; for everyone knows that again and again in connection with certain appointments we have the phrase, "notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Civil Service Act." This matter is brought to our attention