

things dispel this idea. All these appointments to this second category should be by competitive examination. Now I come to the third containing those that I term technical, professional and administrative positions. For those positions I unhesitatingly say that the deputy minister should assume the responsibility. Again, if the deputy minister listens to the recommendations of a defeated candidate, or to a member of parliament, he may go astray or may go right. If he goes wrong there will be no more harm done anyway than there is at present, when Mr. So-and-So makes a recommendation to the Civil Service Commission and is responsible to nobody, and if he is right there is no harm done.

Mr. LADNER: I should like to ask the hon. member, divesting his remark from any confusing words and returning to plain language, does he favour a return to the old party system of patronage?

Mr. CHEVRIER: I have endeavoured to state my position. Probably I cannot use the King's English to the satisfaction of all hon. gentlemen, but I have endeavoured to make it as plain as I can. True it is that there is no legislation in this or any other land that is absolutely perfect, but we would be getting nearer to perfection, and I think we should get away from the present system. We can modify our system. There is no law that cannot be modified with a view to making it better, and when a modification is suggested hon. gentlemen say it is a return to patronage. It would not take the hon. gentleman very long to find out—I do not care where he places the responsibility—that to-day there is much more patronage under the present system of irresponsible patronage than there would be under the old system, and those who are familiar with the working of the Civil Service Act, as we are bound to be, living near the seat of government, can understand how it works out. You can only ascertain that by a very close study of the act and by coming into close and daily contact with the administration. I am not going to enter into any personalities, and I am not going to cite individual cases in order to prove that, but I make the assertion, to use a word which is very familiar and highly prized by hon. gentlemen, that there is distorted patronage to-day, and no responsibility attaching thereto.

Mr. GOOD: Would the hon. gentleman give us some idea as to how the patronage is operated at the present time? I cannot quite grasp his meaning.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Mr. CHEVRIER: If the hon. gentleman would investigate all of the appointments to the Civil Service that have been made—I have named a few and I might go a little further—he would grasp the idea. When a postmaster is appointed, the subagent himself makes a recommendation. Is that not patronage? Let him call it patronage, or by a better word if my hon. friend wants to use a better word. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." When Mr. So-and-So, Mr. So-and-So and Mr. So-and-So, three legally trained gentlemen are used in Ottawa, or Montreal, or Toronto to appoint to the Civil Service a legally trained man, the Civil Service Commission do not make that appointment by a test of skill or competitive examination. That is patronage. When a technical officer is appointed, and the recommendation for his appointment has been made by Mr. So-and-So of the Royal Institute of Architects, that is patronage, and it is not responsible patronage. Last year I spoke for over an hour on this question, and the word "patronage" never crossed my lips or entered my mind. I would not have mentioned the word "patronage" to-night, but that hon. gentlemen are full of it.

Mr. BIRD: I understand the hon. gentleman wants the responsibility placed with the deputy heads. I notice in paragraph 13 and also in paragraph 16 of the act that a very considerable selective power is conferred upon the deputy heads; also in paragraph 28 a very considerable selective power is conferred upon the government.

Mr. CHEVRIER: From what act is the hon. gentleman quoting?

Mr. BIRD: An act respecting the Civil Service of Canada, chapter 12.

Mr. CHEVRIER: What is the date?

Mr. BIRD: Assented to on the 24th May, 1918. What is the hon. gentleman's opinion as to those sections of the act?

Mr. CHEVRIER: My hon. friend is a year behind, and the portion of the act to which he is referring is repealed. We are operating now under what may be called the 1919 act. If my hon. friend had followed my reasoning, he would have understood that the 1918 act was amended, and that, Sir, is another proof why there ought to be a committee of this House.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Is the hon. gentleman right? The act of 1921 is an act entitled, "to amend the Civil Service Act of 1918." If the Civil Service Act of 1918 was repealed, the act of 1921 would not read that way.