

Mr. TOMLINSON: I did not say that. I said if they stand in their place and say they never asked a favour on behalf of their constituents—

Mr. COLDWELL: A right.

Mr. TOMLINSON:—a right, whatever you wish to call it, they are not looking after their constituents. Correct? I say that.

Miss MACPHAIL: What would be the use of asking a favour when the defeated candidate in each constituency has complete control over even the smallest appointment?

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not know about the hon. member for Grey-Bruce—

Mr. TAYLOR (Nanaimo): If we are called upon to rise in our places I rise in mine and say that I have never asked any patronage favours for my constituents.

Mr. TOMLINSON: The hon. member can speak after I have finished. I am not in favour of this patronage system without proper qualifications. I try in every instance, and I think every hon. member does, to present a man who is fit, and work for that particular man. And I believe the civil service commission as it is now constituted renders a useful service. It has control of salaries, it has the recommendations for reclassification, one may say; and I think it renders a great service. As I have indicated, I sat on this committee last year, and I admit I brought in no recommendation or minority report as to the qualifications of the commissioners. But I did notice that in 1932—I see the hon. member is not present now—and in 1934 the committee recommended the removal of all the civil service commissioners. In our report did we recommend the removal of the civil service commissioners? No. Everyone knew there was one commissioner that I would remove if I had the opportunity; I refer to Mr. Potvin, and I stood in the committee and said so. I say that he is not capable of acting on the commission because of his own admissions in that committee. He admitted that when he was appointed he had no special qualifications. He admitted that he went to Montreal and charged \$125 for taxi fares. He was appointed in the spring of 1935 by the former government, and was supposed to represent the French-Canadians. His residence of course is Manitoba. This civil service commission should include a properly qualified person from the province of Quebec; it would save a great deal of the difficulty we are now having. The province of Quebec, the French-Canadian citizens of this country, are entitled to proper representation, but they

[Miss Macphail.]

are not receiving it. A man who would place a note on the files before they came over here, to the effect that "this young man cannot be appointed because he belongs to a drama league"—that was his reason for not agreeing to the appointment—how ridiculous it is that a man like that should be on the civil service commission! He should be removed immediately and a proper appointment made from Quebec in whom the French-Canadians would have faith. I say these things because they appear to me to be very important.

The chairman of the committee of last year did not agree with everything I said, and of course I did not agree with everything he said, but it was the first committee of the house on this subject, regardless of 1932 or 1934, that actually conducted its investigation without an eye to political expediency. I say that without fear of contradiction. There was no question in our investigations last year of pulling out files to try to affect the Conservative party. But we did try to ascertain what was the difficulty with the merit system as it now stands, and I was surprised when a certain witness—I may as well mention his name; it was Mr. Phelan, the head of one of the civil service federations,—admitted that he could not answer our questions properly because of certain effects that might follow. Is that the way the heads of these federations should present their case to a committee that is trying to investigate? They should be prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, without fear. That is why we are there; we are not sitting there for fun—at least I am not.

I shall be pleased to act on this committee and to carry forward the work of last year. And I want it to be known that it is not for patronage that I am sitting on the committee. It is a nuisance, but it will be done in the service of the country.

Mr. LAWSON: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the rules of the house do not permit me to accept the challenge issued by my hon. friend, but I shall be pleased to do so at the first opportunity. I would however call attention to a direct misstatement made by the hon. member. He stated that the committee of 1932 recommended the removal of all the commissioners. That is not so. We recommended the removal of two for cause, and that recommendation had the unanimous approval of the committee, including the two Liberal members of this house who were members of it.