

*Employment in Public Service*

I would wish, however, to utter a word of caution or admonition to the new Public Service Commission. Appointment by paper-work will not be satisfactory in the prevailing rates field. There must be the human touch, the understanding interview and words of counsel and advice. In my view, the existing examination procedures will not work. It will not be enough merely to hand an applicant a form of application tell him or her to complete it and then test his or her qualifications from paper.

Many of the best potential candidates for prevailing rates employment do not have qualifications which will stand up on paper and could never pass conventional examinations, however simplified they might be. The process of selection for many prevailing rates employees must include personal and individual counselling, a genuine measure of humanity and compassion. Politicians in their so-called patronage recommendations did keep these factors in mind. I can say that never have I asked a widow or an afflicted person seeking prevailing rates employment what her or his politics were. Many widows, long removed from the employment market, many afflicted persons who have suffered major illnesses or other reverses and hardships in life, have the will and incentive to succeed, but they could never qualify in examinations or conventional tests designed primarily for youngsters just out of school. That is why I am this afternoon asking the new Public Service Commission not to institute the coldness of paper in the selection for these positions but to retain what politicians brought to the task, the warmth of personal interview, the compassion and humanity which can come only from face to face dealings.

My major reservation about this bill, Mr. Chairman, relates to the power of delegation. I realize that in large measure this stems from the Glassco commission report, but personally I have never been a worshipper at the feet of Glassco. Unless the delegations are monitored with the greatest care—and indeed even then—grave dangers of a return to political patronage are evident. I say even then. How can any monitoring system really ascertain the real reasons for the appointment of one person and the elimination of another?

I hope the power of delegation will be used most sparingly and only when there is the clearest and most incontrovertible evidence that a deputy head will not be subject to ministerial pressure. I have confidence in the

[Mr. Bell (Carleton).]

independence and impartiality of the Civil Service Commission and I am sure the same will apply to the new Public Service Commission. But a deputy head is subject to pressures. To return to a system where a deputy head simply confirms a list of prospective appointees that he receives from the minister or the minister's staff would be a most retrograde step.

I have no desire to be unduly suspicious but I do know that a strong minister will normally dominate his department, and indeed to that I have no objection. But I do want to avoid a return to the days before 1918. Let us assume, for example, that the commission delegates the appointment of certain classes of officers to the undersecretary of state for external affairs. Is there any member of this chamber so naïve as to believe that the most politically-minded man in the house, the genial but politically tough Secretary of State for External Affairs, will keep his political fingers out of that appointing role? I think it stretches credulity too far to believe that he would. Or, on a delegation to the deputy minister of agriculture, does any hon. member believe that the Minister of Agriculture, who breathes and sleeps politics, would keep clear?

I believe this is a serious matter, particularly when I draw attention to the fact that there is still the right under clause 6(4) for a deputy head to delegate further his own delegated authority to some officer in a department. There are special dangers in this when the delegation is on a local or regional basis. I say that ministers must be prevented from instructing local officials to whom the power is delegated to consult with local or regional party officials.

It is true that the special joint committee made some limiting amendments to clause 6 and inserted in clause 45, dealing with the report to parliament, a specific provision requiring special attention in such report to the nature of any action taken under clause 6 pursuant to these delegations of authority. My question is: Is that sufficient? I doubt it. I say that the Public Service Commission has a duty to parliament and a high obligation to the public to prevent a return to political patronage through the back door route of delegation of authority for appointment. I for one, as a member of this chamber, intend to check with the greatest care at regular intervals to ensure that the Public Service Commission is fully discharging this duty and obligation.