

ister must not forget some of the appointments which have been made under patronage. There is nothing more essential to the country's future welfare and proper development than the administration of the civil service, under, I shall say, principles that have elevated the civil service of Great Britain and placed it above all others, so far as I know, in the matter of personnel and ability. The only way we can hope to improve the civil service is by adding all our strength and force to the prestige of the present commission, and not by appointing such men as have been placed in their positions by patronage. Let us work in this direction, not from the bottom up but from the top down. We are taking a very serious step if we open the door to patronage in the matter of appointments in connection with this board. It is going to be one of the most vicious forms of patronage. The Liberal whip grunts and groans at this suggestion.

Mr. CASGRAIN: No.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): The hon. whip would be better employed in studying the terms of the Civil Service Act and making it a little better, instead of sneering at it. The attitude assumed by the other side of the House in this matter is regrettable. I do not wish to antagonize hon. members in this matter, but frankly I cannot agree with the minister, and I cannot allow this matter to pass without a protest. I cannot support the proposition to place the appointments of the stenographers, the appraisers and everyone else, the huge personnel of this federal loan board, at the door of patronage. I am opposed to it and I record my protest against it.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): I think the minister has made some serious statements in the last few minutes, and I do not think that they can be correct, if I understand what has been the procedure of the Civil Service Commission in the past. He says that the Civil Service Commission do not look for character, that that is the last quality which they consider. I know of no position filled by the Civil Service Commission where the applicant has not been asked to furnish references, and these references are always communicated. They are in nearly every case I know of. How can the minister say that character is one of the matters that is not touched upon by the commission, when, as far as I know, the practice that is followed by the commission is to look into the matter of character? I

should like to know it, if they proceed in one way in one district and in another way in another. The minister should think seriously before that statement is broadcast.

Mr. McGIBBON: I think it is quite evident from the minister's remark of a few moments ago that the government must do one of two things; either they must have the courage of their convictions and bring in a bill to get rid of the Civil Service Commission—

Mr. ROBB: We do not want to get rid of them.

Mr. McGIBBON: You do not want to get rid of them openly, but you are taking this means of getting rid of them so far as these appointments are concerned. We have a Civil Service Commission two members of which were appointed by this government, and what does the minister say? He cannot trust this commission, with two of the government's own appointees on it, to appoint the officials who are to work under this act. The thing is absurd. If the minister believes what he says, he should have the courage to bring in a bill to get rid of the Civil Service Commission, for that is what he is doing here in an underhand way so that the people of this country will not get wise to it. For the minister to say that he cannot trust his own commission to make the many appointments necessary under this act, to say that the commission may appoint gaoil birds and cannot be trusted to choose men even for minor positions, is a serious charge to make against the Civil Service Commission. The minister has said either too much or too little.

Mr. ROBB: I have nothing whatever to withdraw. Unfortunately, we have had the evidence within quite recent weeks of exactly the kind of thing I frankly stated to the House to-night. My hon. friend must not try to convey the impression, just because I pointed out a certain condition, that we are opposed to the commission. Nothing of the kind. We are in favour of it. I am in favour of exactly the same system of civil service administration as they have in Great Britain; but we have not that system in Canada. My hon. friends would try to represent that we are departing from the system of appointments by the Civil Service Commission in creating this very small organization to administer this act, for it will be very small. From letters coming in I notice that there is an idea that we are going to build