

creasing the cost of the service, and that if it were amended all the good that is in the act might be obtained and very much of the evil eliminated.

In view of that circumstance, I should like to suggest that it is in the public interest that some consideration be given to the necessity of amendment of the Civil Service Act as it stands. I would not for one moment support any proposal for the repeal of the Civil Service Act, but I do think it is in the public interest that that act should be made to serve the ends of economy and efficiency to the fullest degree, and as it stands I do not believe it begins to serve these ends as it should. What I would suggest is this: Instead of proposing an amendment to the resolution at the present time, as has been suggested by my hon. friend that some one of his colleagues might propose, it would be infinitely preferable that a committee of this House composed of members of all groups represented here should be appointed for the purpose of considering the Civil Service Act, hearing the members of the Civil Service Commission themselves, hearing the views of the deputy ministers, and after having carefully considered the existing measure, make to the government what recommendations may be deemed advisable in the matter of its necessary improvement. I would suggest that course should be adopted and followed by hon. gentlemen, instead of support being given to any motion to abolish the Civil Service Commission, or to any motion at this stage to amend the act in any particular. If a committee of this House thinks well to suggest an amendment as a result of the opportunities of inquiry it may have, the necessary amendment may be expected to meet with the general approval of the House.

I have a further reason for suggesting that a committee of this House should have an opportunity of going carefully into this whole matter of the Civil Service Commission. I believe the government has been put in a very false light before the country as to its relations with the Civil Service Commission. Looking at the reports that have from time to time appeared in the press one would gather the impression that in some way the administration had tried to influence the commission in the matter of appointments. I should like every hon. member of this House to have an opportunity before a committee of this House of asking the members of the Civil Service Commission just what the relations between the government and the Civil Service Commission have been. If there ever was a government that sought to work loyally with another body, this government has sought to do

that with the Civil Service Commission. I think the commission will be the first to make apparent to hon. members of the House wherein much that has appeared with respect to an alleged endeavour by the government to get back to what is called party patronage is entirely erroneous and misleading.

May I assert, speaking of patronage, that patronage cannot be abolished by statute. It is impossible to make appointments to the public service unless they are made by some body. The Civil Service Commission as constituted to-day is a body of three or four men. Hundreds of appointments—yes, thousands of appointments—have to be made to the public service. Those who favour appointment by commission must remember that these gentlemen have the determining as to who is to fill particular positions. They have patronage, as long as they have to make appointments. But while they have the patronage they are responsible to no one. The government is without patronage, as matters stand at the present time, but is held responsible for appointments with which it has nothing whatever to do. That is not in the interests of the public service. I believe that the act as it stands is working out in ways that were wholly unforeseen. I will support any measure that will help to free the Civil Service from anything in the nature of favouritism on the part of those who are at the head of departments, and in favour of anything that will give increased security to those who are in the service, to see that justice and fair play are carried out in the matter of appointments, promotions and the like, and I would favour strongly the maintenance of a body which would see that such appointments as are made are made on the basis of efficiency and on the basis of merit, but it does not follow that because some particular body with no ministerial responsibility sees fit to make an appointment in one way rather than another, that such is going to be the method that will produce efficiency or economy in the long run.

As an illustration, I draw the attention of the House to the facts concerning an order in council of which a good deal of mention has been made, under which a large number of positions were withdrawn from the operation of the Civil Service Act. I venture to say there are many hon. members who think that in some way the withdrawal of hundreds, possibly thousands, of positions from under the operation of the Civil Service Act was the result of some action on the part of the government. I have in my hand the order in council to which reference was made. It is not an order originating with the government,