

agents as will eventually happen without a doubt. One competent official is all that should be required for that department.

Mr. ROWELL: My hon. friend apparently overlooks the fact that we already have in the several departments approximately 300 employees engaged in this work. The task of purchasing the various classes of supplies required by all the departments is an enormous one. After those supplies are purchased, they must be inspected. The officials must see that all the supplies purchased are in accordance with specification; that they are up to standard in quality and quantity. Then they must accept. The officials are responsible for those three things, purchasing, inspecting and accepting, and that is a very large undertaking when not less than \$40,000,000 worth of goods of all kinds are being purchased in all sections of the country. I do not think we would be justified in cutting down the number further than we have. This leaves it open to the Government to review the whole situation and decide what is most advantageous.

Mr. PETER McGIBBON: I can quite understand the hon. minister's object if he is going to make these commissioners inspect everything and be an authority on everything. They will have to have proper inspectors, no doubt, to see that the quality and the standard of these goods are right. I cannot conceive of three commissioners being so qualified on everything that they can pass judgment after having inspected every line of goods this Government is going to buy. That work they will have to delegate to proper inspectors. Taking that into consideration, I do not see why it is necessary to have three commissioners.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: Will the headquarters of the commission be in Ottawa?

Mr. ROWELL: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: The hon. member for Algoma-East (Mr. G. B. Nicholson) is apparently satisfied about this change. I am not, perhaps, as keen a lawyer as the President of the Council (Mr. Rowell), but I do not think his commission is properly constituted unless he has three men. The clause says that the commission shall consist of three men, not more, but I do not think he has any authority to have a commission of less than three.

Mr. ROWELL: If you provide, with the change I have made, for not more than three, that would permit the appointment up to three, but it would not compel the appointment of three.

[Mr. McGibbon.]

Mr. McKENZIE: I think it does. Supposing this had anything to do with the administration of justice, or anything in the shape of magisterial jurisdiction, or anything the selection of which could be questioned—perhaps the jurisdiction will never come into question,—when you say that a certain body shall consist of not more than three, I would think you must have three to constitute that body. I can quite understand it would be otherwise if you say “not more than three and not less than one.”

Mr. ROWELL: Much as I respect the opinion of my hon. friend, I am afraid I cannot agree with him on that as a matter of legal interpretation.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: The minister has waxed very eloquent to-night over the abolition of patronage, but it looks as if this Bill was conferring on the Government a little bit of patronage, and as the Civil Service Commission is to be entrusted with the appointment of all Government officials, and as the Civil Service Commissioners are the only experts we have in selecting men, they ought to have something to do with the appointment of these commissioners. I do not say that the Government should ratify the selection of the Civil Service Commission, but should we ignore it altogether?

Mr. ROWELL: The hon. member will recognize the fact that the Civil Service Commission does not appoint deputy ministers.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: I understand that.

Mr. ROWELL: Similarly as regards a commission such as this, which is entrusted with these responsible duties, and for which the Government must be responsible, the Government must make the appointments of members of the commission, but the staff come under the Civil Service Act as will be seen further on in the Bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Section as amended agreed to.

On section 5—director; Transfer of any of Staff of War Purchasing Commission; Other officers, clerks and employees.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is this Director of the Purchasing Commission for Canada one of the three commissioners that are to be appointed, or is he an extra man?

Mr. ROWELL: As the Bill is drafted, I think it is contemplated that the commission should have an extra man.