

believe that to be the case with the Civil Service Act, especially in view of the fact that it deals with a matter of far-reaching importance. I take it, Sir, that all the members of this House—whether they belong to the Progressive party, to the Conservative party, or to the party that sits on this side—despite the fact that they may, perhaps, like to take a little political advantage or make a bit of political capital—that all the members of the various groups have at heart the true interest of the country in the matter of the Civil Service and that what we are looking for is real efficiency. If in the working out of efficiency we find that we cannot make a law so absolutely rigid as the present Civil Service Act, and if that involves some slight departure from the act as it is to-day—introducing, if you like, a slight degree of patronage—I, for one, would not be particularly alarmed at the word.

It seems to me, therefore, that the suggestion of the Prime Minister was quite in order, that the various members of the House might get together in committee with a view of investigating the difficulties and the disadvantages that have been exposed during the operation of the act in the last two years. It seems to me also that it does not at all follow, as was intimated by the leader of the Opposition, that it was the intention of the Prime Minister to return to the system of patronage, and I, for one, was glad to hear the Prime Minister say that he was not in favour of the resolution and that he has no intention of returning to the old state of affairs.

But even if that were true I would think that the same reproach could very fairly be made to the leader of the Opposition. He was the leader of the government in 1921 that brought in a government bill, which, in its provisions, went a great deal further than any suggestion of the Prime Minister could possibly be construed to go, and that is one of my reasons for rising on this occasion. When the Spinney bill was introduced in 1921—

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. member be good enough to tell the House how the bill of 1921 went further? The bill of 1921 was a bill simply submitting the question to a special committee.

Mr. EULER: I was just coming to that. The bill of 1921 was known as the Spinney bill, because it was introduced by a responsible member of the government, Hon. Mr. Spinney. I have not the bill before me but, as the leader of the Opposition says, it was referred to a committee of this House of

[Mr. Euler.]

which I was a member. According to Hansard—because not having the bill I cannot quote its exact terms—the measure made provision for the exemption from the operation of the Civil Service Act of certain classes and the result of these clauses if adopted would have been, as the chairman of the Civil Service Commission said, to drive a coach and four through the whole Civil Service Act. The Prime Minister to-day merely suggests an inquiry.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member knows that the government of that day when it presented the bill stated that the committee would be absolutely free. As to what was inserted as a schedule to the bill representing what was exempted, there was no restriction or specification. The government's action was merely a submission of the act to the special committee.

Mr. EULER: On that point I must take issue with the right hon. gentleman. The bill definitely and distinctly declared that professional, scientific and technical men were to be exempted from the operation of the act.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is not my point. I know that was in the bill, but the government in presenting the measure to the House stated that it was quite prepared to allow the bill to go to a committee without any restraint, restriction, or specification whatsoever, and that the committee should be sole judge as to how the act should be amended.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is not that exactly what I have suggested? What objection can there be to my suggestion?

Mr. MEIGHEN: As the act was amended there is ample liberty for exemptions from its provisions so there is no further object in submitting it now to a special committee.

Mr. EULER: In reply to the leader of the Opposition I would say there must have been in the minds of the government something very closely approaching what I am arguing; otherwise, why insert these words in what my hon. friend is pleased to term a blank bill, or why, indeed, introduce an amending bill at all? On the face of it, it was an indication on the part of the government that they felt that the law which they themselves had brought into existence was, in its working out, found to be impracticable and undesirable in certain directions. However, the bill was referred to the committee. It was very clear proof—proof at least to my mind—that the intention of the bill was, to some extent at least, to