

Exchequer court judge or the president of the railway commission properly go and ask men to accept the office who according to their own view would be the best qualified to administer the Canadian National Railways? How could they go after those fellows and ask them whether they would accept the office or not? They would have to form a panel of the persons who would be best qualified according to their views, but how would they know whether those persons would accept the office? My own experience is that for an office of this kind the minister who is responsible and his colleagues are seeking out the man who would accept, and I think that is the best way. Even in the appointment of the board of trustees we should maintain ministerial responsibility, and not entrust the task of forming a panel to those gentlemen who will merely put names down without knowing if the men will be available for the office or not.

Mr. MALCOLM: I should like to say that I appreciate very much the attitude of the Prime Minister in dealing with clause 7, in leaving the question of a panel or ministerial responsibility to the judgment of the house. I thoroughly agree with the remarks made by my hon. friend from North Waterloo, but I should like to submit to the members of the committee that there are worse kinds of patronage than political patronage. Very often there exists a good deal of executive patronage within organizations, which is harder to deal with than political patronage. If an executive is appointed with any feeling of entire independence of the government of the day, I do not think that such a relationship is desirable. I believe that whoever is appointed, if appointed by the government in power, will be the very best selection that can be made from the material available. I believe with my leader that parliament has made some of the best selections for commissions that could possibly be made, as is evidenced by the lack of criticism of many selections. Nor do I think that in a matter as important as the administration of the national railway any government of the future will select a man who is not competent and capable of administering this great trust.

My object in rising, however, was to point out to hon. members of the house what was pointed out by the senior member of the house, the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Maril) only a few days ago, and to which I referred the other evening. There is no reason why we should run Canada like a soviet. There is no reason why we should put the most important department of administration in this nation under men over whom this house would have no control.

If we are going to administer the affairs of Canada according to British parliamentary practice, we are certainly going to have parliamentary control over the administration of government. Someone said only recently that in a very few years we could turn Canada into a soviet, just by appointing a chief commissar, and that there were already commissars for every department of government. I believe the people of Canada will trust this government; I believe they will trust succeeding governments to make as good selections as can be made. If a panel were to be appointed to select names for submission to the government I can see no reason whatever for the existing commissioners having any say in recommending their favoured friends. The remaining commissioners will no doubt make friends. If future appointments were to be made by a panel, I think the chairman of the railway commission and a judge of the exchequer court could make recommendations to the government. I do not see, however, how even they would have any better opportunity of knowing the men available than would the Prime Minister and his Minister of Railways.

I do submit that the hon. member for Quebec East brought out the very point to which the Prime Minister referred only a few days ago, namely, that the men who are wanted will have to be sought after. It will not be the men who are applying for the job that the Prime Minister will want. No doubt to-day he and his Minister of Railways are canvassing the situation to see what men are available who would meet the necessary requirements. I do not believe anything is to be gained by parliament or the government giving up its responsibility for a great national asset and appointing men who do not owe their appointments to parliament, which after all represents the owners of the road, and who do not owe their appointments to the administration in power, which after all must be responsible to the people for expenditures of money on the railroad.

I believe the government will be following the wishes of the country if they maintain British parliamentary institutions, and make appointments by governor in council of the men who are to be appointed in the first place, and the men who are to succeed when the original appointments expire.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Mr. Chairman, I wish to be brief and to avoid covering the ground which has been previously covered by hon. members from this side of the house. When speaking on the introduction of the bill I remember the Prime Min-