

was repealed only in part. The proviso was not repealed but it was thought better to put it back in the amendment. There is no change whatever in the clause.

Mr. CAHILL: Is it the intention of the Government to put railway employees under the Civil Service Act?

Mr. MACLEAN: Not at present. We discussed that on many occasions in the House, and I do not see how it would be possible to do it at the present time.

If we ever decide to place the railway employees under the Civil Service Commission, I fancy that it can only take place gradually, as it will require very elaborate machinery, there being many complications in the way. But at any rate I hope there will be no ground for complaint that the manning of the government railway service is affected by political influence. Certainly so far as the Government is concerned, there is no desire to allow political influence to be a factor.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, there will be more political influence exercised through the commission than there would be if you allowed the managers of the road to make the necessary appointments. I have great faith in the man who has men under him being made responsible for their appointment and conduct. If we undertake to put the railway employees, fifty or sixty thousand of them, under the Civil Service Commission, we will be making a great mistake. I am firmly convinced that the proper policy is to give the district superintendent instructions that the department will stand by him when he makes appointments, and that no one will be allowed to interfere. That is the way in which commercial enterprises are conducted, and that is the only way to run our railways. I am sorry to hear the minister suggest that the business might be brought to Ottawa and dealt with here.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: No, I did not intend to suggest the possibility of such ever being the case as far as my view is concerned. I think it is an absolute impossibility. I merely endeavoured to say, in answer to my hon. friend's question, that if that condition ever came about, it could only be after a considerable time and the establishment of very elaborate machinery to carry it out. Personally, I do not see how it could be carried out. In fact, having said that, there is nothing further to add.

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

Mr. McKENZIE: I suppose the appointment of men on the railways has very little to do with what is under consideration now, but incidental reference is made to it here. The Minister of Railways (Mr. Reid) is not in his seat, but I trust the leader of the Government (Sir George Foster) or the minister who has charge of this Bill, may tell us why on that important section of the Intercolonial railways east of the Straits of Canso the old patronage system is still in force. I received a letter from the Minister of Railways some time ago saying that that system was not in force, and I sent a copy of his letter to every section foreman in my district. But I received a reply from them that they had never received any instructions to the contrary, and they paid no attention to the minister's letter to me. Their answer to any Liberal who says that this should not be the case because the Government has no patronage now is this: "We have had our instructions long ago to employ supporters of the Government, and supporters of the Government only, and we care not what is in the air, those are our instructions, and until we receive instructions to the contrary, we are going to stand by them." We have repeatedly brought this condition of things to the notice of the minister, but, so far as I know, he has never instructed those under him to tell those foremen that any man who was willing to do an honest day's work was entitled to do that work on the Government railway regardless of his politics. When a man is willing to take a pick and shovel and work hard on the railway, his politics should not count. But sad to say that is the condition in that part of the country—an applicant for a job must be a supporter of the Government or he will be turned away. I respectfully wish to bring this condition of affairs to the notice of the Minister of Railways so that he may take whatever steps may be deemed advisable to remedy it, and let the foremen have a free hand to employ anybody they think capable regardless of what his politics may be.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not interrupt the hon. member, but this discussion is absolutely out of order in connection with the present clause. The rule is very clear, that the subject introduced must be absolutely relevant to the clause under discussion, and I do not see how the appointment of employees on the Intercolonial has anything to do with the Bill now before the Committee.