

NO CHANGE NEEDED IN CIVIL SERVICE

Members Vote Down Competitive Examinations Resolution.

DEBATE TO END TO-DAY

Hon. W. H. Hearst and Mr. N. W. Rowell Will Speak on the Budget.

An old friend put in his appearance in the Legislature yesterday, when Dr. McQueen, Liberal member for North Wentworth moved a resolution urging the creation of a non-partisan Civil Service Commission, with competitive examinations for appointments to positions in the civil service of the Province.

The Wentworth member did his best with a somewhat threadbare subject, but interest was at low ebb, and when the expected wind-up was reached with voting on a Government amendment, the Liberals accepted defeat on division, and for the first time this session did not call for the yeas and nays.

The House put in a quiet afternoon. With the civil service resolution disposed of, J. C. Elliott, of West Middlesex, moved a resolution directing that the Clerk of the Public Accounts Committee call a meeting of the committee forthwith, explaining that last session the Opposition members had not been able to complete their investigation of the accounts, and that an early start this session was desirable. Mr. Elliott withdrew his resolution later, when Hon. I. B. Lucas explained that it was not according to procedure to start the Public Accounts Committee before the completion of the budget debate, but that if the Opposition allowed the debate to wind-up to-day, there was no reason why the committee should not meet for organization on Friday.

With this out of the way, the House settled down to listen to Allan Studholme, the East Hamilton Labor member unburden himself. It was the second to last lap of the debate budget, and this afternoon N. W. Rowell and Hon. W. H. Hearst will wind up.

In moving his resolution, Dr. McQueen declared that one had only to look at many of the officials in the Government service to realize how unfit for their positions they were. Dealing with the appointment of asylum superintendents, the Wentworth member said there were some of them who got their appointments solely because of their political affiliations, and not because they came up to any medical standard. Other party supporters were appointed who had no executive ability.

He held that a system of competitive examinations would secure superior men for the province service. It would relieve the Ministers of worry about appointments, and in this way leave them free to devote their whole time to their administrative duties.

Present System is Best.

In replying for the Government, Hon. W. H. Hearst declared that Dr. McQueen had failed to make out a case. He did not attempt to argue with the Wentworth man about the appointment of asylum superintendents. "But," he said, "I leave it to the people to say whether there has not been improvement in the management of the public institutions of this province."

The Minister pointed out that while a system of competitive examinations might work out in the Dominion service or in the service of Great Britain, it was not practicable for Ontario, with a small service spread

over so many varying branches.

"I have yet to find," he said, "a better system than that of appointments recommended by the local member for the constituency where the appointment is to be made, who appreciates the situation better than anyone else, who knows the qualifications of the man for the position and who is responsible to the Government, which in turn is responsible to the Legislature and the people."

In the inside service, competitive examinations by an outside commission would not give the good results of a system of appointments recommended by the deputy Ministers or heads of departments, who knew the work to be done and the class of man required.

"It is a better service I know," he said, "than any in the Dominion of Canada." The Minister said that there had been generous treatment of the service without regard to political affiliations, and cited the fact that his two deputy Ministers and the Northern Road Commissioner—the three chief officers in his department—were appointees of the former Government.

Hon. Hearst then moved an amendment, congratulating the House that under the present administration no such system as the spoils system exists, expressing the view that with the small number of officials in the Ontario service, a system of competitive examinations under a Civil Service Commission was unwise and practically impossible, and recognizing the wisdom and fairness with which the Government has dealt with appointments and promotions in the service.

Keep Politics Out.

Two Liberals then took a hand. W. E. N. Sinclair, of South Ontario, strongly advocated appointments on a basis of merit, and criticized the Government for not having advanced upon the matter. They were supporting almost exactly the same sort of an amendment that had been offered before. T. Marshall, of Monck, took a broader view of the subject than others of his colleagues. The main question was not so much the necessity of competitive examinations, as it was one of getting the very best men, without regard to political connection. The best men were very often men who were not party workers and who would not work party influence to get positions.

A. H. Musgrove, of Huron, followed, paying attention particularly to the record of the Minister of Education in carrying on the work of his department without regard to partisan considerations, while Dr. McQueen wound up with a few back thrusts at Hon. Mr. Hearst.

The amendment was carried on division.

With the Elliott resolution for an early meeting of the Public Accounts Committee out of the way, Allan Studholme got busy. He criticized the Government for its immigration work, claiming that immigrants were brought out here and then left to shift for themselves. He gave credit to the Government for its prison reform work, but wanted to know why, if so much could be done for prisoners, why something was not done for honest men to save them from drifting into crime through unemployment. The Government, he declared, treated the matter in a jocular way, and did not consider it seriously at all.

Mr. Studholme talked until six o'clock, when the House adjourned.

WANT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS HELD ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

YORK COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES ASK FOR CHANGE AFFECTING WHOLE PROVINCE.

It is likely that legislation will be introduced during the present session of the Legislature to change the act to permit municipal elections to be held on New Year's Day generally throughout the Province. In most places the custom is to hold them on the first Monday in January, which has given rise to an agitation to have all placed on the same footing as Toronto.

Yesterday a number of representatives of municipalities in York county called upon the Provincial Secretary to ask for this amendment to the municipal act. In many cases thirty or forty per cent. of the electors are employed during the day in Toronto, and it is impossible for them to get home in time to vote.

Mr. Hanna did not commit himself to any action, but it is understood that he is not unfavorable to the change.