

GOVERNMENT BALKS AT PATRONAGE REFORM

Hon. Mr. Lucas Does Not Admit Evil Exists

LIBERALS CITE CASES

Mr. Rowell Calls for Agreement Upon Great Principle and Quotes Sir George Foster—Attorney-General's Reasons Against.

The patronage system was attacked in the Legislature yesterday afternoon by the Opposition, and a call was made for a non-partisan Civil Service Commission, appointments and promotions by merit, and that the purchase of supplies for the public service should be by tender in open competition after due public notice. The Liberals who took part in the discussion were Messrs. N. W. Rowell, S. Carter, J. H. Ham, T. Scott Davidson, Nelson Parliament, and Allan Studholme, Labor, while those who spoke on the Government side were Hon. I. B. Lucas, A. E. Donovan and ex-Speaker Hoyle. The Attorney-General denied that there was any spoils system in Ontario, and remarked on the absence of a practicable plan to improve existing conditions. The Liberal leader, on the other hand, desired an approval of the principles embodied in the resolution, and after that a united effort to reach a practicable solution.

The Resolution.

"That in the opinion of this House the patronage system is inimical to the highest efficiency of the public service and to the best interests of the country; that the public interests demand (1) the creation of a non-partisan Civil Service Commission, with ample powers, and that all the appointments and promotions in the public service should be by merit; and (2) that the purchase of all supplies for the public service should be by tender in open competition after due public notice."

Patronage is Foe of Liberty.

Speaking to this motion, which stood in his name, Mr. S. Carter (South Wellington) said he would never attach himself to a party which did not make it a fixed policy to remove, root and branch, party patronage. "I have reached the conclusion in my own mind," he said, "that while we may prate about liberty and the liberty that has been given us as an Empire, no community, no nation, and no Government can have real liberty till we have reached this point. There can be no real liberty of the subject while there is a patronage system practised which insists that a man who gets any office must belong to the party in power before he can get it. So far as I can see, for the last twenty-five years the machine of about 100 men on each side in every riding, linked up with the liquor traffic, has dominated politics; the rest of the people have not had the slightest show. When we get rid of the liquor traffic there is some prospect of real, solid government by the people and for the people. All men should stand equal in the privilege of voting and serving the State."

Mr. Carter stated the party in power went into battle with more than 25 per cent. advantage on account of the patronage system than the party on the other side.

Attorney-General's Sarcasm.

Hon. Mr. Lucas, who followed the member for South Wellington, was sarcastic, making what Mr. Studholme later termed "a lawyer speech." The Attorney-General said that on paper the motion looked well. As to the abolition of the patronage system, if his honorable friend could show how it could be done and be practically