

CIVIL SERVICE IS DISCUSSED

Ontario Government's Plan Severely Criticized in Legislature

That the Ontario Government's plan for Civil Service reform is only abortive, and does not do away with party appointments, is the opinion of Liberal members of the Legislature, who yesterday vigorously protested against what they termed a "half-measure," and made earnest appeals to the Government to give the new Civil Service Commissioner a free hand in making appointments to the public service.

The Liberal Leader, Mr. Proudfoot, said the Government should take Civil Service appointments out of politics. The act had some good features, he said, "but this order in Council business" destroyed much of its usefulness. Mr. Proudfoot pointed out that no examination test was provided, nor was any standard fixed respecting what the qualifications of applicants should be. He also objected that the Civil Service Commissioner would have no real authority, because the Government would have power to override his decisions. He thought the Commissioner should have a free hand, and appointments should be made through him after full investigation by him as to the merits of the applicant. If they failed to do that they were failing in the duty they set out to perform. They should have either competitive examinations or a standard.

System at Ottawa.

Hon. G. Howard Ferguson said it had been found at Ottawa that the competitive examination system was a failure. Dealing with the suggestion of Mr. Carter, South Wellington, he declared that the Executive Council had to take responsibility for the Civil Service Commissioner, and it was therefore impossible to make the Commissioner independent of the Cabinet.

"How will the Commissioner be free from Government control?" asked Mr. J. C. Elliott, West Middlesex. "Unless the Government are trying to give this man a free hand they are not getting anywhere with this bill. The Commissioner's wings are so clipped that he is absolutely powerless."

"We have a Civil Service Reform Bill at Ottawa," said Mr. Lucas, "but apparently it did not work out as many people thought it would, and it may be that the proposed Civil Service reform here may not accomplish all that it is hoped it will accomplish." Mr. Lucas denied that the civil servants of Ontario were a lot of slaves cringing to the powers that be, as the member for South Wellington had described them. He said there was no spoils system in Ontario, and when the present Government came into power all the civil servants appointed by the old Government were allowed to retain their positions, and had given royal service to the new Government. Dealing with Mr. Proudfoot's remarks, he said that before the Government could set standards it would be necessary to make a classification of those in the Civil Service. He added that there were 400 or 500 inside servants.

Criticizes Musgrove.

Mr. Carter thought the Govern-