



Customs and Waterguard Preventive Officers.

Mr. Newton asked the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury the number of appointments made since 1st January, 1906, to the Customs and Waterguard Preventive Officers' service; and how many of the persons so appointed were nominated by Members of the Opposition and by all other Members of the House respectively?

Master of Elibank (Mr. Murray) : Since January 1906 - the date referred to in the hon. Member's question - 537 preventive men have been appointed by my two predecessors and myself. The Patronage Secretary, prior to 1906, left no record of the distribution of his patronage amongst Members of Parliament, nor have I any record available of the recommendations made to my two predecessors to which effect was given. During the years 1910-11-12, for which I am responsible, 122 appointments have been made. In the last batch of twenty appointments made in March, twelve of the candidates were specially recommended by Liberal Members, and eight by Members of other parties in the House. The applications annually number several hundreds, and the task of selection is an invidious and difficult one. I have endeavoured as I think my correspondence with Members of the Opposition and other parties in the House will attest, to give careful and fair consideration to their recommendations. I may say that recommendations from this side of the House appear to preponderate over those from the other side, and no doubt the same tendency



was observed by the Patronage Secretary prior to 1906. A Departmental Committee has been considering the whole question of the Waterguard service. In any case, Members who are inundated with applications for these appointments will be glad to know that, with the approval of the Prime Minister, I am taking steps to waive, in the public interest, the patronage attached to my office, and to transfer the work to suitable permanent officials directly in touch with the requirements of the service. But in the meantime I will continue to do my best carefully to consider any special recommendations that may be put forward by hon. Members from any quarter of the House.

Mr. Newton : Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the possibility of dispensing with necessity for nomination by a Member of this House ?

Master of Elibank : That, I think, I have answered in my reply.

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