

crease? Probably the Government says: There are the usual statutory increases. Nobody questions it, nobody questions whether the man deserves it or not, whether by his diligence and attention to his duties, he was entitled to it; it went as a matter of course. We said that kind of thing is unjust to the civil servants themselves, unjust to the hard-working section of the civil service; and I have the greatest possible pleasure in saying, after nearly a year's experience, that there is a very large proportion of the civil servants who work honestly, and work for long hours, and deserve at the hands of the Government special recognition from time to time. Now, we determined that this perfunctory system of adding \$50 a year to every man, whether he was good or bad, should stop; and we determined that if there was a special case deserving recommendation, the head of the department should come into Parliament each year, give his name, and be prepared to give the reasons for the increase. I have no hesitation in telling the hon. gentleman that in my own department I have recommended two or three increases—they will come up directly; but I have recommended them after very careful examination into the merits of the different gentlemen. It is no reflection on those whom I have not recommended, for this reason, that the men whom I have recommended—and I assume it is the same in other departments—are men who, for one reason or another, were doing a very large amount of special work and were not receiving anything like adequate pay for it.

Mr. COCHRANE. Had they not been doing it without?

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Yes, they had. I won't anticipate the discussion which may come up when my department is under review; but I will show the hon. gentleman that there are men who, by this automatic system, were kept down to a scale of salary altogether disproportionate to the work they discharged for the public. I say that kind of thing ought not to exist. The Minister ought to be responsible to the House for the proposed increases he makes, personally and directly responsible. He ought to be able to explain to the House the why and the wherefore; and although it is open to the criticism which the hon. gentleman opposite makes, that sometimes partiality may creep in. I say that, taking it altogether, it will be found that if fair-play predominates in the mind of the heads of the department when he makes a proposition of that kind, I will venture to say that in nine cases out of ten, such increase will be found to be well deserved.

Mr. COCHRANE. You did not see the matter in that light when you were in Opposition.

Mr. DAVIES.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. The hon. gentleman fails to follow my argument. I was pointing out to hon. gentlemen that when I was in Opposition there was no basis of criticism. We were told the man was entitled to his increase, whether he worked well or badly. There was nothing to criticise, the law gave it to him, it was the statutory increase, therefore we could not say a word, and no word was said. Now, we do not think that that was fair. Not only was it not fair to the taxpayer on the one hand, but it was not fair to the better class of the civil service on the other. I say that if you do not recognize merit in the civil service as you ought to recognize it, you won't get the same return that other businesses do where merit is recognized and appreciated; and we have got to put our civil service as much as possible upon a business basis. Let men who do the work, and do it well, and do the best work, be paid best, and let their services be recognized; and if there are other men who, from inferior education, or other causes are not as capable, not as qualified to do the work as others, of course they won't get the same recognition at the hands of the Minister, whoever he may be. I think it will be seen by the hon. gentleman that, taken as a whole, although it is open, as I frankly admit, to some criticism—you cannot conceive of any system which is not open to criticism, and in which some evils may not creep in—but take it as a whole, it seems to us the fairest and the best way of recognizing merit, and giving a deserving officer some recognition for the service he renders the public.

Mr. COCHRANE. I am somewhat at a loss to understand the hon. gentleman's retrenchment when I look at another item. The Minister of Trade and Commerce informed the committee that \$1,400,000 was too much to expend on the civil service, and we should call a halt. But in looking on page 20, I find another item in connection with the Department of the Interior where the retrenchment goes on in the same way. We have retrenchment by asking the House for \$897 which, added to the \$1,430, makes \$2,327 all through.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. If the hon. gentleman will turn to page 12, at the foot of the civil service estimates, he will see how much increase there is for the past year in what we ask. There was a total increase during the year in the whole civil service of \$1,635, and the decrease is \$35,016; in other words, the decrease this year according to those estimates, is over \$33,000. Now, what is the use of carping about \$800, or \$400, in one particular branch, when the decrease as a whole is what I have stated to the hon. gentleman.