

Mr. McLLRAITH: It is no reversal of form. I do not quite understand the hon. member's remark, nor do I think it has the merit of brilliance or humour. I suggest it is not of much value, either to the person uttering it or to those listening to it.

No bill that has come before this house this year has given me the personal gratification that this present bill to amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act, 1924, has given. It provides for the extension of the principles of that act to a large number of employees of the public service who hitherto were not entitled to contribute to the fund set up under the act. The experience of the last twenty years has shown the value of this, both to employees and employers alike.

Perhaps it is fair to say that because of the location of the constituency which I have the honour to represent I have had more opportunity than most hon. members to see the actual working of this act. That experience has given me a great appreciation of the act. At the time the act was introduced it was the most advanced piece of legislation of its type in existence in the country. While I have no means of obtaining accurate information on the point or proving it, I genuinely believe that the act had a considerable influence upon private industry across Canada and was followed widely by private employers to the benefit of those employers and their employees.

The 1924 act was the result of recommendations contained in the report of a special committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the operation of the Civil Service Act, which committee was headed by the late Hon. James Malcolm. I should like to read two brief paragraphs of the report of that committee which was made in 1923. The first reads:

It is admitted by all who have investigated civil service conditions, not only in Canada, but in other countries as well, that a superannuation scheme is an essential part of the regulative machinery. This conclusion is in accord with the experience of private corporations in dealing with large groups of employees.

And again:

The general principles on which modern superannuation schemes are based appear to be fairly definitely agreed upon. The basis most favoured is that under which both the employees and the employer contribute to the support of the scheme, the entire cost as a rule being borne approximately equally by both. The benefits provided for include allowances on retirement after attainment of a stipulated age; allowances to widows and minor children in the event of the death of the employee during service or after retirement, the widow's allowance being usually one-half of the employee's allowance; and allowances to the employees on

retirement from disability regardless of age. There is also usually provision made for the return of the employee's contributions without interest in the event of his voluntary retirement after a minimum period of service has been rendered.

Your committee is of the opinion that the adoption of a superannuation scheme substantially on the lines of that above described would remove one of the greatest deterrents to efficiency and curtailment of staffs in many of the departments of the public service and it therefore recommends that such a scheme be adopted by parliament at the earliest possible date.

That was the purpose of the original superannuation act of 1924. It is not my intention to deal with the history of retirement provisions prior to that time, but if anyone is interested in that matter the various references are well summarized in the speech of Mr. Malcolm on the 1924 bill, and they will be found at page 3977 of the 1924 *Hansard*.

The twenty years' experience in the administration of the act has shown its absolute soundness in principle, as viewed not only from the standpoint of the employees in relieving them from the worries and fears attendant upon separation from their employment in whatever circumstances, but also from the point of view of the employer in bringing about increased efficiency in the various government departments. I spoke on two previous occasions about some particular classes and some particular aspects of the matter. But particularly was it true that the benefits of the act were not applied to a wide enough number of employees. The existing act, in its definition of "civil servant" to be found in section 2 uses this language referring to employee, "who is in receipt of a stated annual salary." That provision had the effect of excluding large numbers of employees who were paid otherwise than by a stated annual salary, although generally speaking they were in the same position as these receiving a "stated annual salary." That point, I am very happy to say, is adequately dealt with in the new bill.

Another important effect of the bill now before us, is to give opportunity to come under the superannuation act to persons contributing to the old retirement fund, who, although given an opportunity at the time of the passage of the act in 1924 so to elect within a limited period, for some reason or other did not do so—these reasons are many and varied and there is not much point in going into them at the moment. That is adequately dealt with in the new bill.

Then there is the question of the minimum return of contributions. That is a slightly more technical part of the subject. There was considerable difficulty about groups of contributors who were not entitled to receive any