

services come under the Civil Service Act, there is every reason why this new arm of the service should also come under the act. I cannot see that any case at all has been made for exempting this particular branch that will one day be essentially a part of the service. There are professional appointments to be made, technical and other officers, clerks and other employees. Surely we at Ottawa have all these classes of appointments in the various departments of government. It seems to me that no reason has yet been given for exempting this particular service from the Civil Service Act. I regret very much indeed that by this measure, if it is carried through, the government is doing a great deal to undermine the principle of the Civil Service Act. It is doing this in two ways. First of all, it is creating a new department which is being exempted for no good reason. I am afraid that we shall have patronage there as we have had it in other departments again and again. Second, it is exempting this great field from the rightful ambitions, shall I say, of those who might expect to be placed in positions under this service. Further, it has an adverse effect on other civil servants.

I notice that the next clause provides that the Government Employees Compensation Act is to apply to the people appointed under this board. I notice also that the Civil Service Superannuation Act is to apply. The next subsection provides that all the benefits given under this act are to be preserved. A man may be taken out of the ordinary civil service and placed under the jurisdiction of this harbours board at a larger salary than he has been receiving or is likely to receive. He is taken out of the regular line of promotion and suddenly advanced to a good position. Is it possible for the great body of civil servants to observe that kind of treatment with equanimity? They know this man is advanced and if anything happens to him under the harbours board he can return to the civil service; he retains all the rights which he would have had had he remained in the service proper. This is undermining the principles of the Civil Service Act in a very subtle way; it is undermining the morale of those appointed to the customs, the post office and other departments of the government.

I appeal to the minister to reconsider this matter. I think the hon. member for Argenteuil (Sir George Perley) was right when he said that if a case could be made out for the exemption of certain classes of employees,

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

then that should be done, but that the others should come under the Civil Service Act. I cannot see where it would take more than a few hours to make the necessary classification in a matter of this kind. If this clause could stand and certain amendments could be introduced, we would affirm the principles of the civil service so necessary to the welfare of our nation.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: In order that we might get on, perhaps the minister would let this clause stand and try and provide for the beginning at any rate of permanency in this service. This bill cannot go through until the Department of Transport is set up, and I think the minister might give this matter a little consideration.

Mr. HOWE: We are only at subsection 1 of section 4 and we have had two long sessions of the committee. Section 1 has been allowed to stand and it seems to me that we should try to make some progress. I can assure my hon. friend that this particular phase has been discussed and we believe it is quite impossible. I am sure he would not ask us to place a vast organization like this under the civil service commission. There is a time and place for all things.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: I am not suggesting that it should all come under the civil service commission; I am suggesting that there are certain classes of the staff that could come under the commission. I think the minister should consider that. As I see it, this bill cannot go through this house until the Department of Transport has been set up and there is a Minister of Transport. We can consider it but it cannot go through under the rules of this house.

Mr. HOWE: I quite appreciate that, but I would point out that we should try to make some progress. This is the third month of parliament and we have debated this one section for nearly two hours. Surely we should try to consolidate the progress we have made.

Mr. McNEVIN (Victoria, Ont.): It seems to me that these employees are somewhat similar to the maintenance of way employees and running trades of the railways. I think you can eventually obtain the same permanency here as was obtained in the case of the railways. A permanent staff can be built up and I think we are only wasting time discussing the matter.