

Mr. BELAND: I do not know that there is any specific time. The deputy head would in such a case make a recommendation to the minister that a certain employee who had rendered faithful service and had been at his maximum salary for a number of years should be promoted. That is submitted to the commission, and if they approve they classify him accordingly and he gets the higher salary; if not, he remains where he is. I know of cases where civil servants have applied for promotion and the application has been refused.

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): Were any of these promotions made by transfer to the higher grades from other departments, that is, other than within the department itself?

Mr. BELAND: No.

Mr. HUMPHREY: Do I understand the minister to say that this department has charge of the Housing Act?

Mr. BELAND: Yes.

Mr. HUMPHREY: What are the duties of that branch at the present time?

Mr. BELAND: I have not the details before me; that explanation was given when the main estimates were under consideration. It is one of the smaller activities of the department.

Mr. ARTHURS: How many officials administer the Housing Act?

Mr. BELAND: I do not believe we have any outside the accountant.

Mr. McQUARRIE: What proportion of employees in the Health department are returned men?

Mr. BELAND: I am unable to say. The department, of course, comes under the Civil Service Commission. As my hon. friend is aware, under the Civil Service Act preference is given first to returned men, disabled men being given the first consideration. This rule, I think, is applied strictly to my department whenever we have an appointment to make, but very few appointments are being made at this time.

Item agreed to.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Mail subsidies and steamship subventions—Atlantic ocean—Canada and Newfoundland, steam service or services between, \$35,000.

Mr. GARDINER: I suggest that the minister allow this item to stand. Certain members are much interested in these matters and would like to discuss them; they were unaware that the minister's estimates would be brought forward to-night.

Hon. J. A. ROBB (Minister of Trade and Commerce): It was intimated last evening that these estimates would come up to-day. I would like to make some progress: If there are any special matters that hon. members wish to discuss they can deal with them subsequently on items which we will hold over for the purpose. I imagine we will not get through them all to-night.

Mr. McBRIDE: I do not see why these items should be held over simply because certain members do not feel like attending here regularly. It is the duty of every member to be in the House when estimates come up.

Mr. CALDWELL: I believe the Banking and Commerce committee is sitting this evening, and a large number of members are in attendance. I just came from there myself.

Mr. STEVENS: There are no new items, are there?

Mr. ROBB: If we come to any new items they can stand.

Mr. STEVENS: I have looked over the first page and there do not appear to be any new items. If the minister will make an explanation of these, and, as is the custom, reserve an item so that any points that come up may be discussed later, that seems to me to be a reasonable way of dealing with the matter."

Mr. GARDINER: The committee could very well proceed with items 179 and following, "local services."

Item stands.

Local services—Charlottetown and Pictou, steam service between, \$8,000.

Mr. ARTHURS: Steamship rates and all prices along that line have been falling during the last two years, but the government are apparently asking for the same sum this year at last. Is there no reduction in any of these items on this account?

Mr. ROBB: In most cases the amount is the same as last year. As a matter of fact, representations were made that in some cases the amount should be increased. With respect to this particular item, No. 179, I imagine we shall have to give an increase for that service. They lost some money last year, in fact they have been losing money for a number of years, and were going to discontinue the service.

Mr. ARTHURS: Is that true of all these services?

Mr. ROBB: No, very few of them.