

the Postmaster General similar to that which was given in 1925. That request has not been made. I wonder if I am not justified, therefore, in saying as I said the other night that the Postmaster General is dodging this question.

Mr. VENIOT: I do not wish to prolong the discussion, because this subject has been pretty well threshed out. I wish to say, however, that since the receipt of that communication from the Civil Service Commission the matter has been looked into to see whether the circumstances surrounding the case on which that order was granted in 1924 are similar to the circumstances to-day. If I mistake not, the conditions arising in 1924 were such that it needed pretty strong action on the part of somebody in 1925 to bring about a settlement of the postal strike, and it was only in 1925 that settled conditions were brought about. That order in council made the increase in salaries retroactive to include 1924. No such conditions exist to-day. The Civil Service Commission have full power, and they only have the power under the act, to grant the increase which has been recommended. The Civil Service Commission have no right to state to the government: While we have the power to grant an increase, as we consider that the granting of this increase is not justified, we will pass on to you the responsibility of telling us that we must do this. I do not think that the Civil Service Commission have the right to assume that position. I have been accused of having trampled the Civil Service Act underfoot, but now I am being asked to recommend that that act be trampled underfoot—

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Not at all.

Mr. VENIOT: —and that the power given to the Civil Service Commission under the law shall be exercised by the governor in council. That is what I have been asked to do.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The minister is not asked to do anything of the kind. All that he is being asked to do is to pass an order in council similar to P.C. 1644, and all that that order in council did was to ask the Civil Service Commission to consider the representations of these men and to make such representations as they saw fit.

Mr. VENIOT: The Civil Service Commission have before them now, and have had for two long years, the statement made by the Postmaster General that he and the government were anxious to give the increase, and we asked them to act in the matter and use their authority under the act and accept

[Mr. H. A. Stewart.]

the recommendation made by the government through the Postmaster General. They have said to the Postmaster General and to the government: We do not see the necessity.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): They do not say that.

Mr. VENIOT: No, they make it stronger.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): No.

Mr. VENIOT: Read the letter. The hon. gentleman has the advantage over me because he has the file before him.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): They say that they are willing to consider it.

Mr. VENIOT: The hon. gentleman ought to be fair and read all the letters. He should read the letter previous to the one he read, dated 1929. The hon. member for North Winnipeg read that letter, but my hon. friend did not. He is referring to only one letter, that of April 4, 1930.

Mr. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, if we required any proof that the minister was not sincere in his efforts in this matter we have had it in the last ten minutes. He says that in 1924 certain employees of the government, driven to extremes, were out on strike, and in order to get that situation cleared up an order in council was passed instructing the Civil Service Commission to do thus and so. He says that because such conditions do not obtain to-day, therefore the government are not justified in following the course adopted in 1925, when that order in council was passed. My hon. friend from North Winnipeg a few moments ago drew attention to that very fact. He said that through the action of the government and the Civil Service Commission between them these men were, to use his own words, being driven to desperation because of the conditions under which they were suffering. The minister now in effect says: We will hold our position until the men take the position indicated by the hon. member for North Winnipeg.

The minister in a letter to me only a short time ago says, "I have already on two different occasions recommended to the Civil Service Commission an increase in salary." He says further that he has no intention this session of doing anything further in the matter. The point is this. In the last two or three sentences that the minister has just uttered, and if he will read them carefully in Hansard to-morrow he will see that my interpretation is right, he said: It is the business of the Civil Service Commission to deal with this question, and I am not going to allow the commission to shuffle its responsibility off on to me. That was the gist of what he said.