

where women have had small superannuations coming to them, superannuations which had been earned and paid for. These were not enough to keep them and they had to go to work, sometimes as charwomen and sometimes in some other capacity. In such cases the superannuation was taken away because they had gone to work for the government. I submit that that is not just. A superannuation which a person receives when he is superannuated or, in the case of a woman, when her husband dies, is something which has been earned. It should not be taken away merely because the person in question enters the employ of the government.

That covers the case of the person who goes to work for the government, but everything I have said with reference to that case applies with much greater force to the person already in the employ of the government who has a notice served upon her that she will lose superannuation or be discharged from employment. That is definitely unjust. It is simply a case of a strong employer using economic force upon a weak employee and I cannot condemn that too strongly. I do not think the consequences were adequately observed in such cases. It is wrong to use your strength to effect what you desire to effect because of some general policy.

That is practically all I have to say in this debate. I again say that I welcome this bill most heartily. Every once in a while matters concerning the civil service are up for discussion, and for some members this is of great concern. I believe the best way to keep a satisfied personnel and, what is even more important although it amounts to the same thing, have justice rendered to your personnel, is to encourage active and intelligent trade unionism. I believe if you had a trade union in each department of the government service you would find that the grievances which are always being publicized and made much of in the newspapers, grievances that are lowering the general standard of work in the services, will largely disappear. I have seen trade unions at work for a long time. I have been a member of a trade union for many years and I am still an honorary member of the trade union with which I was associated. I know that in all the intricacies which an employer faces the assistance of a trade union gets him out of trouble and generally keeps him out of trouble. I believe the most salutary thing this or any government could do would be to encourage trade unionism among its employees.

Mr. J. R. MacNICOL (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a word to what has been said, mostly by way of questions.

I have not studied the bill particularly to see whether it covers what I have in mind. In Toronto, and perhaps more so in Montreal, there is a large number of civil servants. Sometimes the local members here in Ottawa get the idea that all the civil servants in Canada are in Ottawa, but that is far from the case because there are a great number in Toronto and Montreal. Civil servants have come to me on several occasions with their troubles and I should like to give one case which illustrates many. This condition may have been changed lately, but I do not know.

Under the civil service regulations pertaining to postal employees an employee may obtain permission to retire on annuity, but that annuity dies with the man. I know of many cases where men have retired and accepted an annuity which was fairly substantial. But after a year or so they died and their widows then received nothing. That certainly is not the intention of the government or any government. If this bill does not cover such cases I hope an amendment will be made or another bill introduced to cover such cases. Men who have served in the civil service for twenty-five, thirty or forty years should not have their widows left destitute merely because their husbands accepted an annuity which died with themselves after a year or two.

Mr. McILRAITH: I did not quite understand why the widow did not receive the superannuation payment.

Mr. MacNICOL: I qualified that by saying that the situation may have been changed. I do not know whether the situation has been changed whereby in the case of a postal employee who had retired on annuity and who, as happens so often in all walks of life, the railways and elsewhere, died shortly after, his widow would be left without an annuity.

Mr. McILRAITH: I am interested in the point raised by the hon. member and I cannot understand from what he has said why the widow would not receive the superannuation benefit.

Mr. MacNICOL: The husband had accepted an annuity. I had these cases up with the postal authorities and they tell me there is nothing they can do about it. The husband, when living, accepted an annuity. He took what he thought was the best at the time. He died and that left the widow without anything, for the annuity expired with the husband.

Mr. McILRAITH: Was that prior to 1927?