

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TUESDAY, May 10, 1921.

The Special Committee appointed to consider Bill No. 122, an Act to amend the Civil Service Act, 1918, met at 11 o'clock, Hon. Mr. Spinney, the Chairman, presiding.

Mr. ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, sworn.

By the Chairman:

Q. You are the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries?—A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been in that position?—A. Since 1910. Eleven years.

Q. The object of calling you is to give the Committee your experience in regard to the appointment of officials in your department under the present system, also to deal with the question of promotions. We will be glad to have your report?—A. Well, Mr. Chairman, I had the advantage of hearing the testimony given by the Deputy Minister of Justice and by the Deputy Minister of the Interior. They so correctly and accurately represent my view with respect to the Civil Service Commission that I would be almost wasting your time if I were to repeat, because anything I would say would be in substance a repetition of what they have said with respect to the general operation of the work of the Commission. I am prepared to repeat, as I say, in substance, what Mr. Newcombe and Mr. Cory have said, that in my judgment, the operations of the Commission while they may be beneficial in some respects, that is, in so far as appointments of a clerical nature here at headquarters are concerned, it has very great advantages and has my own approval. Interference by the Commission and the extension of the powers of the Commission to other branches of the service, outside and inside, has not at all events in my judgment resulted in any benefit to the public service, but on the contrary, in my view at all events, it has been disadvantageous to the public service. I was going to suggest, if I might, that this Bill now engaging the attention of the Committee should be enlarged to include some classes of employees that do not seem to be covered by the proposed amendment. If this is the proper time to make that suggestion I will make it and give my reason for asking that certain employees, more particularly in the outside service should be included.

Mr. CURRIE: I think, Mr. Johnston, that this is the time. We are dealing with the Bill now. I was going to ask in respect to section 1 of the Bill, subsection (a), subsection (b) and subsection (c); that completes the subsections of the Bill. I was going to suggest that a further subsection (e) should be added to cover lighthouse keepers and engineers on the fog alarms, if it should be decided that the latter are not covered by subsection (c).

By Hon. Mr. Calder:

Q. Engineers of what?—A. Engineers of fog alarms. We have at various places on several coasts and on the lakes, fog alarms, the keepers of which must necessarily have some qualifications. Now whether this would be sufficiently covered by subsection (c) or not, but if it is not I would ask that lighthouse keepers and engineers of fog alarms—they are usually combined. Fog alarms are usually attached to light stations under the jurisdiction of some one particular person.