

out hurting some person who did not get the position? How could it happen that somebody would not be hurt and that some one has not been stopped in his line of promotion, unless such people were appointed to unnecessary positions for which there was no competition. I cannot understand how any person could be picked up outside of the service and put into some high position in it without hurting everybody from that position down.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

The committee resumed at three o'clock.

On section 11—Retired private secretaries not to be entitled to positions in civil service.

Mr. CAHAN: Mr. Chairman, this bill is in accordance with the report of the select special committee, and the government has introduced the bill in order to carry out the views of that committee, but I think this discussion has led to a reconsideration as to whether section 2 of the amending act which was passed in 1929 should be amended in the form now proposed.

In selecting a private secretary I think there is no member of a government, entering upon his duties as minister of the crown, but has found very serious difficulty in procuring in the civil service men who are thoroughly competent and qualified for the position of private secretary. I do not reflect at all upon the members of the service who are subject to the direction of the Secretary of State when I say quite frankly that, excepting women in the service, it would have been impossible for me to find in that branch a man who was thoroughly qualified, or rather who had the qualifications which I desired, for appointment as private secretary. In the first place, the private secretary to the Secretary of State must be thoroughly competent in two languages. He should be a man of education, preferably a graduate of one of the colleges. He must be of a mentality and temperament which qualify him to deal not only with other departments and their officials but with the general public as well.

When I sought to obtain a private secretary I was disposed to retain the secretary of my predecessor in that office, who was a thoroughly qualified man. But in conversation with him I found that he felt some diffidence in remaining as my secretary. He had been carrying out the views of my predecessor in office who, to a certain extent, was a political organizer, and he felt that perhaps his political views somewhat debarred

him from receiving my full confidence as my private secretary. When I sought to obtain another I asked at least four or five young men whom I thought were perfectly qualified, but each refused to accept the salary which would be available to the private secretary of a minister of the crown. A private secretary must attend to his duties from at least half past nine in the morning until midnight or later. He has no such hours of leisure as those which are allotted to the ordinary civil servant. In the course of two or three years I think he becomes more competent and more efficient to fulfil creditably the duties of a member of the civil service than any other class of men appointed to that service. Some of those who were appointed under the statute as it exists at the present time were induced to accept employment as private secretaries, and to carry on the duties pertaining to that office, at comparatively low salaries because they knew that under the statute, if they were not guilty of misconduct, they would be qualified for appointments, in the civil service, to the position of a chief clerk, when the minister should retire.

In discussing this matter with some of my colleagues and with other members of the house it was suggested that the public service could be adequately protected if a slight amendment were made to the statute passed in 1929, which is chapter 38 of the statutes of that year, making it necessary for a private secretary to serve not one year before qualifying for appointment to the service, but to serve at least three years before being eligible for such appointment. The section of the Civil Service Act as it now stands reads:

... in the event of the minister or other member of the government, or the leader of the opposition for whom he is acting as secretary, ceasing to be a minister or member of the government or to be the leader of the opposition, as the case may be, the said secretary shall thereupon be appointed to a permanent position in the public service classified not lower than that of chief clerk, provided that the said secretary has been acting as such for a period of not less than one year.

It occurs to me that in justice to those who have already accepted appointment, and to insure that this section is not made use of for the purpose of qualifying for first-class clerkships men who have been placed temporarily in the office of private secretary, for the present every good purpose might be served if we simply amended that section by striking out the word "one" and inserting in lieu thereof the word "three," so that three years would be sufficient.