

approved by the governor in council. When the Civil Service Act was passed it provided that the civil service, so far as practicable, should be "classified and compensated in accordance with the classification of such service dated October 10, 1919, signed by the commission and confirmed by chapter 10 of the statutes of 1919, second session, with any amendments or additions thereto thereafter made." Then any new classifications and any new rates of compensation were governed by section 12, which provided that from time to time, as might be necessary, "the commission should recommend rates of compensation for new classes that might be established, or might propose changes in the rates of compensation for existing classes."

The answer of the minister is that, notwithstanding the fact that there is a statute which says these civil servants shall be paid in accordance with the classification of 1919; notwithstanding the promise of the Prime Minister that a statute would be brought down in order to make a change and reduce salaries by 10 per cent; notwithstanding that the Civil Service Commission have themselves made recommendations and fixed the rate for each classification, and notwithstanding that these are the rates in force to-night throughout the Dominion of Canada, no action has been taken by the government, no action has been taken by the Civil Service Commission. These are the salaries to which the civil servants of the country are entitled at the present time; yet the government proposes to put upon parliament, in this left-handed manner, the onus of cutting these salaries by voting 10 per cent less than the amount required to fulfil the obligation which exists in pursuance of these statutes and orders in council. In other words, they are just putting the cart before the horse. If they want to take the responsibility of reducing salaries let them do as the Prime Minister suggested—bring in a statute to change the Civil Service Act, which prescribes that civil servants shall receive the salary provided by the classification of 1919. If they want to change this, in view of that statute, let them pass an order in council accordingly and get the recommendation of the Civil Service Commission, if they can, and then come to this house and say: The salary of this particular civil servant is so much and we want the money to pay it. In that way we can have an opportunity of discussing the principle. But at the present time the onus is put on the house, in a clandestine vote, to cut down salaries, to make it possible for the government to say to the civil service, "We

[Mr. Ralston.]

are sorry we cannot pay you because the house has not voted the money," notwithstanding the fact that they are not taking the responsibility for changing the salary rate as provided by the act.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes) who is not in his seat at the moment, suggested that if this house realized anything about the matter it would know that unless the government brought down these estimates the civil service could not get a cent. Well, no one will listen to such a threat. The civil service understands that it is not likely the government will hold up this vote or their pay because there is some discussion of a 10 per cent reduction. That is no answer to our contention that the government should first give an opportunity to discuss the principle in reference to the general cut. That is quite beside the question. The question is not a constitutional question as to whether a money vote can be submitted to the house in any other way than through the government. The question is a plain one whether you can change a statute by simply refusing to vote supply to the full amount which the statute requires, instead of the government going at it man fashion, reducing salaries, and coming to parliament with the statement, "That is all the salary we will pay and that is all the money we ask you to vote." The procedure is absolutely wrong in the face of the Civil Service Act and of the practice that has been followed. The government are employing these public servants and they are the ones to take the responsibility for bringing into the house a statute regarding the salaries so that it may be discussed and then asking for the vote that is necessary to pay them.

Mr. STEVENS: My hon. friend (Mr. Ralston) says that we are putting the cart before the horse; I submit that in his remarks he has placed himself in precisely that position. The resolution before the committee at the present time asks for the provision of a certain sum of money for the electricity and gas inspection service of the dominion. In presenting this vote to the committee I am simply asking the committee to vote that sum of money for that particular service. Incidentally I was asked whether it was the intention of the government, in the payment of the staff comprehended in this service, to reduce salaries to the extent of 10 per cent. I replied that in harmony with the announcement made by the Prime Minister some days ago it was so intended. Now the question whether or not the whole civil service should

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