

tive of that law ; and then to turn around and say : I have economized in my department. How ? By violating a well understood agreement with the men who had entered his department : by violating a distinct understanding. Whether it is an absolute legal contract or not, I am not prepared to say ; but it has been a well recognized understanding for years and years. But the hon. gentleman comes here and tells us that he does not approve of the Civil Service Act and thinks it unwise that he should not be allowed to select certain gentlemen whom he fancies, from among the officers of his department, to whom this increase shall be given, and to deprive others whom he does not approve of, of this statutory increase, which, when they were induced to enter the civil service they believed they were entitled to. I think that this is not just, I think it is such a course as no Government ought to be prepared to defend. I heard what my hon. friend (Sir Richard Cartwright) said with regard to the determination the Government had come to as between two alternatives. One alternative was to dismiss a number of men, and the other was to strike off the statutory increase, an increase to which the civil servant was entitled if he had not done anything improper. Surely my hon. friend does not mean to say that it was contemplated by the Government or that they ever allowed it to cross their minds, that they should turn out bodily without compensation a whole host of gentlemen who had entered the service with the understanding that as long as they conducted themselves properly in their positions and showed themselves to be efficient civil servants they would be retained there.

The **MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE**. No such understanding has ever existed.

Mr. McNEILL. I think the understanding has always been that, except in special circumstances, the civil servant, when he was put upon the permanent list was really a permanent civil servant. Of course, we may go into technicalities and split hairs upon this matter, but what is the broad understanding with these men ? The broad and distinct understanding is—and every member of the civil service has always held it to be so—that when they are put on the permanent list, they are there permanently ; and if they are removed for special cause, if a man be superannuated for some special reason, the Act contemplates that (as I understand it), and provides that that shall not be done without giving to the civil servant a compensation therefor. I think that nothing more unfortunate for the best interests of this country could be imagined that it should be supposed that the permanent members of the civil servants are not permanent. I think that permanence in the civil service is one of the most essential

Mr. McNEILL.

principles that we can insist upon in the interest of the country—in the interest of any country. I am satisfied that you can do nothing more damaging to the best interest of any country than to instill into the minds of the civil servants of the country that they are not secure in their positions so long as they discharge their duties properly and well. And I think my hon. friend must admit that that is so. I think he will admit that every writer on the subject whose views are worthy of consideration has laid down that proposition and urged it as strongly as possible. That a good permanent civil service has been at times the salvation of a country, when the Government of the day has not been discharging its duty, is a fact that every one knows. I think that nothing could be more fatal to the best interest of Canada than that the principle should be laid down that our civil servants shall not be able to regard their positions as secure to them if they discharge their duties faithfully and well.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES** (Mr. Davies). I should regret that hon. gentlemen opposite should come to any hasty conclusions on matters of this kind. I fear that my hon. friend (Mr. McNeill) in the kindness of his heart has driven himself to adopt conclusions which his better judgment will not sustain. He is stating a proposition here evidently for the purpose of having it promulgated through the country that there has been an attack upon the permanence of the civil service.

Mr. McNEILL. I am sure my hon. friend does not wish to misrepresent me. I was simply referring to what the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) had said, and it was in regard to his observation alone that I spoke as I did. I think he said—and he will correct me if I do not represent him accurately—that two alternatives were open to the Government : one being to strike out statutory increase as it is called, and the other to dismiss a number of civil servants, in order to effect economy. And when I went on and referred to these gentlemen as being permanent civil servants, my hon. friend (Sir Richard Cartwright) corrected me and said he did not understand that there was any such understanding. I hope my hon. friend (Mr. Davies) will not say that I was discussing a question in order that what I said might go to the country. I called attention to it in order that it might be brought to the mind of the Government, and I am glad that it has been so forcibly brought to their minds as my hon. friend (Mr. Davies) shows it to have been.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES**. I cannot further follow the point, the hon. gentleman (Mr. McNeill) having stated that he had no such idea as I thought he had. I wanted to point out that the facts of the last year have proved the