

sent situation, I would like to say a word as to my own attitude with regard to the civil service, and to justify my support of the proposals now being brought forward. I think it will be easy to demonstrate that the criticisms which have been levelled, whether in this House or out of it, against the increasing of civil service salaries can be shown to be very wide of the mark, and that the whole question of civil service reform, of which this is an integral part, cannot be received with too serious attention or dealt with in too sympathetic a manner.

"The origin of the present bill is to be found in circumstances with which every member of this House is familiar. They really require no explanation. There is not a citizen of this country who does not know by personal experience that the rise in prices of the past ten years constitutes little short of an economic revolution. Every householder in the Dominion can tell you that his living expenses have increased by a quarter at the very least. I know mine have, and I think every honourable member can say the same. But, fortunately, we do not need to rely upon opinion in this matter. I have here a copy of the memorial which the Civil Service Association of Ottawa presented on this subject to the late royal commission. The work of that committee has attracted wide attention. I do not think anyone has challenged or could challenge the figures which it brought forward. This committee after a most painstaking and thoroughly scientific investigation, proved that it cost the man of low income in Ottawa practically 30% more to live in 1907 than in 1897. The memorial in which these facts were presented in full detail, and which is throughout a strong testimonial to the calibre of the men who are to benefit by this act, con-

cluded with the following statement: 'The serious nature of the situation is expressed most clearly in the terms of salary, when it is said that the man receiving \$900 in 1897 would require fully \$1,200, and the man receiving \$1,500 fully \$1,900, to live with the same degree of comfort in 1907.'

"As to the way in which these conditions have been met in the outside world, every employer in Canada can tell you that his wages bill is from 20% to 40% higher than it was ten years ago. I hold in my hand some statistics published by the Department of Labour as to wages tendencies in the City of Ottawa between 1897 and 1907, which are very much to the point here. I find that printers who got \$11 a week in 1897 get \$14 to-day; that tailors have been advanced from \$8.50 to \$11 a week; bricklayers from 33 to 47 cents per hour; street car men from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day; firemen from \$500 to \$650 per annum, and so on. These are only three or four samples of a list of 60 or 70. The same is true of clerical and other help. Up to the present time the government is about the only employer who has not joined in this movement. Of course, in the payment of its manual labour it has kept pace with the time—because it has had to—and the I.C.R. employees, mechanics and other labourers of the government receive the same pay as in the outside world.

"It was in appreciation of these universally admitted facts and tendencies that the earliest action of the government looking to a change in civil service salaries was taken. This was the resolution introduced by the Hon. the Minister of Finance in April, 1907, appointing a royal commission for the purpose, primarily of dealing with the problem of the adjustment of civil service salaries. I do not find