

provisions of the said agreement may be made and passed with the effect specified in any such Order in Council.

12. Upon the transfer to or vesting in the Government of the preference and common stock as herein provided for, the Government may, by Order in Council, provide for the discharge of the receivership of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway System and the termination and withdrawal of the proceedings in the Exchequer Court of Canada relating thereto.

CIVIL SERVICE ACT, 1918— AMENDMENT.

The House again in committee on Bill No. 18, to amend The Civil Service Act, 1918—Hon. A. K. Maclean—Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

On section 11—acts and powers with respect to appointment of certain employees and inconsistent provisions of any Act repealed.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no change in this clause.

Mr. McKENZIE: The minister who has charge of the Bill told us this afternoon, in reply to the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Fripp) that nothing could be conceived that would be more destructive of the efficiency of the Civil Service than the allowing of temporary employees to become permanent without examination. I am not saying whether that is a sound doctrine to promulgate or not; but I wish to bring to the notice of the minister that he will have to settle some radical account with his neighbour, the President of the Council (Mr. Rowell). Last session we had before Parliament a Bill to create a permanent Purchasing Commission. There is at present a temporary Purchasing Commission; at least I presume it is still in existence; but we were told last June or July by the President of the Council that its term of existence was about to expire and that it was necessary to formulate a new organization. I asked the President of the Council at that time as to the number of temporary civil servants employed in connection with the Purchasing Commission, and my recollection is that he told me that they had between two and three hundred. I asked the President of the Council what was to become of them—were they to become permanent servants at once if the Bill creating the commission went through. His answer to me was that they would become permanent civil servants when the commission became permanent. That is an entire violation of the principle laid down by the minister (Mr. A. K. Maclean) this afternoon. Temporary civil servants who are in the employ of the Purchasing Commission are

[Mr. Meighen.]

on no higher plane than temporary civil servants in the Militia Department, or the Public Works, or any other department; and if the principle enunciated by the minister this afternoon is good, that is, that it is and would be destructive and disruptive of the Civil Service simply by a stroke of the pen to convert temporary civil servants into permanent civil servants without their going through the process of examination, what has he to say as to the policy of the Government as no doubt agreed upon in connection with the Bill, which received entire support from the Government and some substantial support from friends of the Government in the House? The principle established there and announced to us was that something was going to be done entirely contrary to the views of the minister in charge of this measure. I hope the minister spoke with authority this afternoon, and that a proper system is to be established in connection with the Civil Service and that the same test by examination will be required of everyone who enters the Civil Service under the provisions of the Civil Service Act. I cannot understand that it will be fair, by reason of some emergency, such as war emergencies, that a large number of men and women should come into the service, and then without any examination at all be legislated into positions of permanency. That would be getting over the terms of the Act in a way which is not at all desirable.

I am not going into the details of the classification. I rather follow the advice of the minister and steer clear of it, because he says it is absolutely hopeless. He tells us that he made a few dashes at it himself and backed away from it in utter hopelessness, leaving it entirely as it is and trusting to Providence and to time to find an understandable solution of it. Nevertheless, we are paying sixty or seventy thousand dollars for this book, and the minister will have to excuse us if we ask him a few questions as to what we are getting for that expenditure. The hon. member for Antigonish and Guysborough (Mr. Sinclair) asked the minister some questions as to the very familiar and old-fashioned subject of an able seaman, and the definition given in the classification is not very satisfactory. I trust, however, that other definitions are better. Perhaps the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. P. McGibbon) has summed up the whole business as well as anybody who has been dealing with this Bill, and I almost agree with that hon. member. He says that this Bill and the commission constitute the crowning act of incompetency and insufficiency of this