

*Civil Service Act*

the veterans' preference was applied to crown companies we would have a much larger percentage than that.

There is another point I wanted to mention. I understand that quite a number of civil servants enlisted during the war without the consent of their departments.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): That is being covered by this act. The same provisions are being extended to them that were extended to those who resigned from their departments during the first world war.

Mr. BROOKS: Up to the present time I know that these men have not been reinstated in the civil service with the seniority to which they felt they were entitled. I am pleased indeed to hear from the minister that that situation is being corrected. I shall say nothing further about it at the moment.

The third matter on which I wish to speak is the merchant marine. As the minister will remember, it has been discussed in the house before. Speaking in the house yesterday on another bill I said that the merchant marine is generally considered by the people of Canada, as it was considered by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) in his speech the other day, as being on the same footing with the army, the navy and the air force. Here, then, it seems to me is an opportunity for the minister to do justice to these men of the merchant marine by giving them a preference in civil service appointments. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) yesterday was very much grieved, according to his statement, that nothing had been done for these men. The circumstances had been unfortunate. I feel that it was the intention of the veterans affairs committee to see that these men received their due. Unfortunately we thought that a bill would be brought in by the transport department, which is looking after this matter, but nothing practical was done. I suggest to the Secretary of State that this bill be amended to do justice to that extent at least to the men of the merchant marine.

Another matter I would bring to the minister's attention concerns returned soldiers who have written an examination for appointment as postmaster or some other civil service position and who, after the examination has been held and the successful candidate named, have been informed that the position was being opened up again, for different excuses. One that I would refer to particularly is the excuse that another examination was being held because all the returned men were not

[Mr. Brooks.]

back home. This excuse does not seem altogether right to me. The case I have in mind has to do with the appointment of a postmaster in Milltown in my own province. The examination was advertised and a good number of returned men applied and took the examination. One of their number was successful, and understood that he was to get the appointment, but apparently that was not satisfactory to certain powers that be in the constituency. Apparently he was of the wrong political stripe, if I may put it that way, and a demand was made for another examination. The excuse which was offered, and I contend it was an excuse, was that all the returned men were not back home. I would ask the minister if it has been the general practice of the department to wait until all the returned men were home before these vacancies were filled, and if second examinations are held, after a candidate has passed successfully the first examination, on the ground that all the returned men were not back home. In this particular case the examination was held on December 3, 1946, and it seems to me that by that time there would be at least sufficient returned men back home to fill a position of this kind.

Mr. MACKENZIE: If I may interrupt my hon. friend, we endeavoured as best we could to meet that situation which my hon. friend very properly brings up. I arranged to visit the troops in Holland and we went through all the divisions and other corps organizations with two representatives of the civil service commission, who held examinations in the field, so that those who were there would not feel that they were being ignored in civil service appointments by the examinations being held before they got back home.

Mr. BROOKS: I am not criticizing the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am satisfied that they did what they could and what they felt was necessary. What I do criticize is the fact that after these examinations are held—and in this particular examination there were ten returned men who applied—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I just called the hon. member for St. Maurice-Lafleche (Mr. Hamel) to order because he was discussing an individual case. I would ask the hon. member to discuss only the general principle of the resolution. He will have an opportunity at some other stage of the proceedings to discuss individual cases.

Mr. BROOKS: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this particular case I was asking if it were the general principle to act the same way in