

this clause. The clause in question is to remove a disability that now exists in this sense: At present a man who resigned from the service to go overseas stands in exactly the same position as any other applicant for appointment to the public service—he has no preferred position. This is to give him a preferred position, so to speak, for eligible posts in order that he may be reinstated without having to compete with others who have not been in the service or did not go overseas, and it provides that he may be appointed either at the salary he was receiving at the time of his resignation, or the minimum salary of the class in which the position is classified, whichever is the higher. In other words, he may be appointed to a class higher than the one which he held when he went overseas, if he is qualified for it, and in that case he would secure a higher salary. If he is not qualified for a higher class, he becomes eligible for reappointment at the salary he was receiving when he went overseas. I have no knowledge of the particular case to which my hon. friend referred, but I do know that generally speaking the men who went overseas secured their promotions and increases during the period they were on such duty. That was the general rule and practice.

Mr. PEDLOW: I would infer from the minister's remarks that the clause implies a discrimination. As a matter of fact it is a discrimination against the young men who went overseas for the reason I have already stated. Those who went overseas in 1914 upon returning to Canada found that their associates who had remained at home had been promoted during their absence and were receiving a higher salary and enjoying higher rank than was vouchsafed to them. Then again there is the further point to be considered: Will these young men to whom I have referred—who resigned their positions and went overseas—obtain consideration in the matter of superannuation and retirement allowances? Will the years that they spent abroad be considered in the application of these features of the Civil Service Act?

Mr. STEELE: I would like to say a word or two in support of the point which my hon. friend from South Renfrew has raised. I was waiting until the Estimates came up to bring the matter forward, but seeing that it is already before the House perhaps we should express our views upon it. I quite agree with what my hon. friend (Mr. Pedlow) has said. There are a considerable number of young men in the service

[Mr. Rowell.]

who enlisted two, three or four years ago, and went overseas, and who, on coming back, find that those who did not enlist but remained at home, have received promotion as regards both status and salaries—in other words, the relations of the two classes have been changed by the enlistment of the first mentioned class. Had they remained at home they would have received promotion, but owing to their being absent other men have been promoted and on their return they have had to take inferior positions as respects work and salary. I have had several cases brought to my attention, and I think the matter is one that should be looked into and rectified either by the Government or by the commission. We know that the civil servants who enlisted in the early days of the war received their salary as members of that service during their absence, but that privilege was not accorded to those who enlisted in 1916. They went overseas without any salary from the Civil Service and have returned to find that they were put back, as it were, in their standing in the service. While not done intentionally it results in their being penalized for having gone overseas to serve the country, whereas the men who did not enlist, or did not cross the Atlantic, have received any favours which were coming. From the information that I can secure I am under the impression that the fault is largely due to the head of the branch. Where the head of the branch was willing to do justice to these young men no difficulty has occurred, but it has been entirely different in other cases where the chief of the branch had control over the promotions of these men. I think where the head of a department has been anxious to do justice to the young men who enlisted no difficulty has arisen. I would strongly advise the Government to see that the cases I have referred to are adjusted. I think it most unfair that any patriotic young man should be penalized for doing his duty at the front, those who stayed at home being rewarded at his expense.

Mr. ROWELL: I entirely agree with the sentiments expressed by my hon. friend. There are two classes involved: First, those who resigned and went overseas; second, those who went overseas and retained their membership in the service. The great bulk of the civil servants who went overseas are in this second class. Those who enlisted early in the war received their full pay in addition to their military pay; at a later date those who enlisted got whichever was the higher of the two scales