

Civil Service Act

that in that we had a very good illustration. I do not propose to say any more at this time, Mr. Chairman. We will be dealing with various matters as they come up item by item and I will reserve any further comments until later.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I have a few brief words to say on this interesting bill because the civil service in relation to government, in relation to industry and in relation to the public as a whole has been an interesting study of mine throughout the years. It is one of those studies one undertakes when there is not something more pressing.

As I understand it this bill is based on the civil service commission report of 1958 and replaces, generally speaking, the Civil Service Act of 1918. I believe it is generally satisfactory. I followed the work of the committee and I think that regardless of party the committee is entitled to the commendation of the house for carrying on this lengthy study of a very important piece of legislation. There is one clause of this bill in particular in which this group is very interested. We believe further measures should be provided in recognition of the principles of collective bargaining. However, I will have more to say about that subject when we come to discussion of the various clauses of the bill.

There are many people in the country who fail to realize the great importance of the civil service of Canada. Our civil service has made a great contribution to the welfare of the state in war and in peace. It performs essential, valuable and faithful service to the nation at this time. But there are changing circumstances in our society because of increasing industrialization and the widening activities of government which make the responsibilities of the civil service different from what they were some decades ago.

I think it is of increasing importance that we should recognize the necessity of having an efficient and loyal civil service. For that efficiency to be maintained and for that loyalty to prevail we must have circumstances and working conditions that will maintain a high morale in the civil service. I believe we have to give the civil service justice in two particular fields. First of all there must be justice to all applicants. All persons who apply for positions in the civil service must have confidence in the fairness of the examinations and the fairness of the allocation to positions, and things of that sort.

Second there must be a sense of security in their employment and also in their retirement, as compensation for long and faithful service. They must have this security to compensate them for the opportunities which exist in private industry and which in some

[Mr. Macdonnell.]

respects are lacking in the civil service. Civil servants should have the same freedom, with economic equality, as industry: We in this group believe they should have a greater opportunity to practice the principles of collective bargaining, but as I said before, we will leave the discussion of that particular question until we deal with further clauses of the bill.

I have always been particularly interested in the protection of the rights of the civil servant as a Canadian citizen; in particular in political activity. We think that when a civil servant has that right it indicates a mature and highly developed nationhood and civilization. This problem is one that has concerned some of the parliaments of Europe, and particularly the parliament of Great Britain, for a number of years. In Great Britain they have been able to resolve a number of these questions which are still unresolved in somewhat newer nations such as ours.

In Great Britain they have accepted certain basic principles and certain practices as a result of debates in the House of Commons, as a result of reports of several committees which made a careful study of this question, as a result of experience with a developing civil service and as a result of public opinion.

I think we could very well follow with interest what has happened, particularly in Great Britain, in making provision for the greater majority of civil servants to participate in politics without in any way being questioned as to their loyalty to the government and the proper carrying out of their duties.

In that connection, Mr. Chairman, I wish to quote a few paragraphs from a book written by Harold J. Laski, who is well known as a professor at the London school of economics. This book is entitled "Reflections on the Constitution". Professor Laski deals fully with civil servants, both at the administrative and other levels. He deals with their economic rights and their political rights. I wish to quote briefly from this work because I believe Professor Laski makes some rather cogent remarks on this question.

I shall refer, first, to page 188 of this book. I might say, Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to see I have the rapt attention of the hon. member for Medicine Hat. I am sure he is as interested in this subject as I am.

Mr. Brunsten: May I assure the hon. member that he has my undivided attention.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the question.

(Translation):

Mr. Tremblay: Mr. Chairman—