

ful investigation he was satisfied that the system was as good as it could possibly be in the interests of the boys themselves, bearing in mind that all the younger boys leave at half-past nine.

Mr. McMASTER: What is the maximum age?

Mr. SPEAKER: Sixteen years. Perhaps it might be worth while to point out to hon. gentlemen that these boys have an excellent opportunity to grow up in the public service, and, indeed, many of them have reached the highest positions in the service. One of the highest officials of this House, a gentleman very much respected by all the members as well as by his brother officers, started as a page boy; I refer to the Acting Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. Another gentleman although comparatively young is to-day in receipt of a salary of \$25,000 a year from a large industrial corporation, and he started as a page boy. The Minister of Justice informs me that another of our former page boys is now a bishop. It might perhaps be better to change the system and to engage men of mature years. I may say quite frankly that while the boys on the whole behave themselves remarkably well, still they are young and have the characteristics of youth, and it is not always easy for the officials of the House to get the very best service from them. But after all this is purely a question of policy for the House to determine, and so far as I am concerned I shall be only too happy to carry into effect any change which the House in its wisdom may deem to be desirable.

Mr. McMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to take the ground that we should not employ page boys; what I want is to give them a chance to go to bed earlier.

Mr. ROBB: What about the girls in the gallery?

Mr. McMASTER: They are there by choice, and they are rewarded by listening to the eloquence of the hon. member for Huntingdon and other hon. gentlemen. I would draw the Speaker's attention to the fact that the argument that this is a time-honoured institution is not a very strong one, because 50 or 60 years ago the public looked upon child labour with a far more indulgent eye than it is regarded to-day. I am very glad to learn that the Inspector of Schools is satisfied that the boys' education does not suffer through the service which they render to this House, and I can quite understand that for a bright lad

work in this House may have a very considerable educational value. But the point I was endeavouring to make is one which I think will recommend itself to every hon. member,—that these boys of 12, 13, 14 and 15 year of age should be in their beds by ten o'clock at night. It is true the younger boys get away at half-past nine, which is quite proper, but very often a boy of 15, large perhaps for his age, requires just as much sleep as a boy of 12 or 13. I know the sight of these boys here late at night struck me as improper when I first became a member of this House. But we get used to these things and after a time they cease to have any effect upon us—"we first condole, then pity, then embrace." But I think the ground I take is sound, and that most members of this House, if these little fellows were their own sons, would not wish to see them out of their beds after ten o'clock at night.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one way of finding out whether our system can be improved, and I intend to instruct the Serjeant-at-Arms to have all the page boys retire at ten o'clock each night until such time as the arrangement does not work satisfactorily to hon. members.

Resolution reported as amended, and read the first time.

On motion of Right Hon. Mr. Doherty for the second reading:

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Before the motion is put, Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that last night the right hon. the Prime Minister made no reference whatever to the subject under consideration in stating the order of business for to-day. I do not wish to in any way delay concurrence, but if there be some hon. member not now present who might wish to ask questions on the resolution I think he should not be denied that privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: He would be able to do so on the Estimates.

Motion agreed to and resolution read the second time.

CANADA SHIPPING ACT (Sick and Distressed Mariners) AMENDMENT.

On motion of Hon. N. W. Rowell that Bill No. 127 to amend the Canada Shipping Act (Sick and Distressed Mariners) be read a second time:

Mr. H. H. STEVENS (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I regret to again have to bring to the attention of the minister in