

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: I spoke of that before. The Civil Service Commissioners do not profess to be fully informed in every branch of human knowledge, but they bring in technical men. They would call upon a first-class lawyer if they were going to set an examination for the appointment of a legal man. If they wanted an engineer they would consult a first-class engineer, the very best. But the amendment of my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Bradbury) would restrict the conference to a man who was in the department and who might or might not be first-class; for there are engineers of several classes in the Government service.

Hon. Mr. BRADBURY: The head of the department ought surely to know what kind of man he wants to work under him.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: The same is true of the lawyers also. If in the past the selection has been made by the deputy ministers, I do not know that they have always exercised such judgment in selecting their subordinates as would indicate to us that they were perfect choosers of men. I do not know that even in the legal department the men who have been selected by the deputy minister are men of such outstanding ability as to justify us in infringing the principle that we have adopted, in order to meet the views of that deputy minister. I say we had better leave the clause as it is.

Hon. Mr. MURPHY: Let well enough alone.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: Give the Commission full power, and then if the system does not work they cannot say it failed because of the obstacles we threw in the way.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Better withdraw the amendment.

Hon. Mr. BRADBURY: I introduced this amendment for what I believed to be the betterment of the service. Having a little practical knowledge of technical matters, I realize that the man who is in charge of a technical branch ought to know what should be the qualifications of an applicant for a position in that branch. If he does not know he ought not to be in charge. I do know this, that there have been cases in which the departmental chief was supposed to be consulted, but was not consulted, and the consequence was that the examination was such that, as I said a moment ago, a young college graduate would have no difficulty in passing it, whereas the practical man, who is well qualified and has perhaps been performing for months

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the duties of the position, may be easily tripped up on some of the questions in the examination paper. I do not think that this House should want to have it made impossible for a first-class man who is properly discharging his duties to secure the position. I have in mind now a man who had been for months fulfilling the duties of a certain position and who was giving splendid service to his chief, but who, when the examination took place, failed to secure the appointment, which was given to a young man without any experience at all.

I do not wish to press this amendment, although I would have liked to see it pass. I do not desire to do anything that would in any way hinder the Civil Service Commission. I realize how difficult is the task which the Commission has had to perform, and, like my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Fowler), I believe that we have been fortunate in securing a very competent Commission, who have rendered valuable service to the country, and we ought to support them as much as we can. At the same time I believe that if any of us can offer amendments that would improve the conditions, it is our duty to do so. However, in view of the fact that the amendment does not seem to be acceptable to the House, I withdraw it.

The amendment was withdrawn.

The Bill as amended was reported.

THIRD READING.

On motion of Hon. Sir James Lougheed, the Bill, as amended, was read the third time and passed.

FRENCH CONVENTION BILL.

FIRST READING.

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 43, an Act respecting a certain convention between His Majesty and the President of the French Republic dated the nineteenth day of September, 1907, and a convention supplementary thereto and the French Convention Act, 1908.

The Bill was read the first time.

SECOND READING.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED moved the second reading of the Bill.

He said: This Bill makes provision for the continuance of the commercial relations between Canada and France and the conventions that have been entered into by reason thereof. Hereafter these conventions may be terminated upon three months' notice being given.