

that class there can be no question at all. Others have been designated in practice by those words which are contradictory in terms, "permanent temporaries." That is an absolute contradiction in terms; nevertheless, because of arbitrary usage, those words do designate a certain class. It would hardly be proper to provide in the statute that "permanent temporaries" were to be included under the superannuation act. The regulations will prescribe classifications which will bring them in; they will use language that will be appropriate to include those who are to receive such benefits. Then it may be that there are certain individual cases for which it would be difficult to prescribe by regulation and classification, but which, because of the special circumstances, it would be proper to describe the employees as persons who had been or are to be for a continuing indeterminate duration in the service of the crown. They can be dealt with by a minute of the treasury board.

For a good many months now I have been a member of the treasury board. In my experience it has not been the one-man institution some hon. members seem to believe. My experience has been that decisions are arrived at by the members of the treasury board, which, after all, is nothing other than a committee of the cabinet. Someone has said that the treasury board has no legal existence. It is the only committee of the cabinet that is provided for by statute and is given by statute some special functions. There are officers who attend the meetings of the treasury board, but in my experience the information they supply to the members of treasury board is not as to the merits or demerits of the question that has to be decided, but as to the effect such a decision may have upon other matters that are not immediately involved. That is something for which it is necessary that we have expert advice and recommendations. I would not venture to express an opinion as to whether such a case which is submitted should be dealt with in a certain way, without having information about the class from which that case comes, how large a class will be affected, and in what way it will be affected. From my experience that is the information which is supplied to members of the treasury board by the officials thereof for the purpose of assisting them in coming to their conclusions.

Here, of course, I would not attempt to deal with some of the cases to which hon. members have referred. I have not come prepared to do that. I came prepared to discuss matters which are directly pertinent to the amending legislation. But as to the merits or demerits of the special cases concerning which there has been long correspon-

dence with the Department of Finance, I am sorry I am not in a position to give any opinion. I have not one. I do not know the facts.

The hon. member for Cape Breton South will notice that, while I did not feel at the resolution stage it would have been proper to read the bill, the matter he wished to have included is in this section now under consideration. He will find it at line 5 of page 2.

Mr. GILLIS: Yes, I have noticed that, and I am quite satisfied. Will that be retroactive? Will that cover the cases which have been outstanding?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I am not sure that I can answer in general terms. This will operate from the date which will be set. I shall ask someone to move that it be August 15, 1944. It will not in its present form operate from confederation. It will take care of all cases which have to be decided after it becomes law, but I do not think it would apply to persons who have severed their connections with the civil service in years gone by.

Mr. GILLIS: I do not mean that. I have in mind a case which dates back to 1941. A contributor had a stepmother who inherited his estate. His superannuation should have come to her. Under the old section in the act it could not be paid, because the stepmother was not included. I am wondering if this amendment will enable those administering the act to clean up this case?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: No; this will not apply to a case of that kind. That type of case would have to be dealt with on compassionate grounds by estimate or by special order in council. This will apply only to situations which arise after it comes into force. But the hon. member need not be told by me that when it is recognized for the future, it makes it easier to argue that it should have been the same in the past, and that there should possibly be some compassionate view taken of a situation which occurred before and which, if it occurred now, would be dealt with in the manner provided by the statute.

Mr. BLACK (Yukon): As I understand it, we are now considering paragraph (1) of section 1 which deals with salaries. This paragraph is worded in very clear language:

"Salary" of a contributor means the regular salary or compensation paid in respect of his service—

And I would ask the committee to note these words:

—together with the value of living and residential allowances—