

refer merely to those who are hired by the season, but to those who are hired and paid by the day for some continued time on public work of various kinds, and who are now to be paid at a very considerably less rate than others in the locality. Hitherto it has been the custom of the Government to pay the current rate of wages and the men in the public employ were perfectly satisfied. But that is not the practice now, and the men are very much dissatisfied; I do not know of anything in fact that is producing equal discontent.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): The minister gave the committee the impression before six o'clock that the Civil Service Commission were appointing ordinary labourers. Now I am not able to find any authority in the Civil Service Act for such appointments by the commission. Section 23 of the Civil Service Act, which refers to temporary employment, reads as follows:

When, from a temporary pressure of work, extra assistance is required in any branch of the Civil Service, the commission may, on the written report of the deputy head that such extra assistance is required, authorize the employment of such number of temporary employees as are required to carry on the work.

Then subsection 2 goes on to say that persons who have successfully passed the competitive examination will have an opportunity of being appointed to this temporary work, and such temporary employment in the Civil Service shall only be authorized for such time, not exceeding six months, as the commission deems necessary, and the authority by which the employment is authorized shall be mentioned in the certificate of qualification issued by the commission. That is all I can find in the Civil Service Act relating to the employment of temporary employees. I think the minister must have been mistaken when he told us that the hod carrier, the stone mason, and the ordinary labourer were appointed by the Civil Service Commission if their services were required for more than thirty days. If that is the practice of the commission, I would like the minister to tell us where they get the authority to make these appointments?

Mr. ROWELL: My hon. friend has not repeated quite accurately what I stated before adjournment in reference to the matter. What I said was that these men were taken on by the Government officers of the district, but that they could not be continued beyond thirty days without the approval of the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): There is nothing like that in this section.

Mr. ROWELL: The section to which my hon. friend refers provides:

When employees are required on short notice for emergency work outside the city of Ottawa, the responsible agent or officer of the department requiring such extra assistance may engage the necessary employees, and the said agent or officer in such case shall forthwith report to the commission through the deputy head of his department the names of the persons so employed. No such employment shall extend beyond thirty days unless approved by the commission.

I understand that under that section the deputy head of the department reports to the commission the temporary employees taken on in connection with public works, such as the Welland canal, and that unless their employment is approved the department is not authorized to continue them beyond the thirty days.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): I do not yet understand clearly what duties the commission perform. How would the commission be able to judge of the qualifications of, say, a hod carrier who was working at Victoria, B.C., or at Sydney, N.S., to warrant his being continued in the service? I cannot see any purpose to be served by the commission dealing with a question like that unless they submit the man to some kind of inquiry or examination. Does the minister mean to say that some person on behalf of the Civil Service Commission attends at such distant places to see whether the hod carrier does his work properly and is a suitable person to be continued in the employment of the department? If it is only a formal matter, and the commission deal with it without knowing anything about the person employed, what service can it be to the country? That is the point I would like the minister to make clear. I can understand the advisability of a man engaged in clerical work or in a position of responsibility being appointed by the Civil Service Commission, but for the life of me I cannot understand why a man who is going to do pick and shovel work requires any endorsement by the commission. The payroll for each month shows the number of days the men have been working, the paymaster checks that, and it seems to me that that should be sufficient. If my hon. friend is keeping the Civil Service Commission busy at such work, I think they would be much better employed in the duties they were intended to perform. I would like to suggest to the