

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: I want to compliment the honourable gentleman in whose hands the government's case has been placed on his defence of this bill. The administration could not have chosen a more capable counsel to represent them; and I presume that under those circumstances everything which could be said has been said in favour of the measure as it stands and in opposition to the amendments which I have suggested. I do not believe any argument has been omitted. I wish also to compliment the honourable senator from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin) on placing in our hands a most valuable document, namely the reasons which have actuated the Civil Service Association in making their recommendations. I hold in my hand that document: it supports completely the arguments which I have advanced. It is signed by Mr. T. R. Montgomery, Acting President, Civil Service Federation of Canada. That gentleman is elected to his office by the votes of civil servants, most of them young people, because as time goes on the numbers of those of advanced years are gradually thinned, and those eligible for superannuation are but a small percentage of the total number. So; I repeat, this gentleman represents electors largely drawn from the younger element.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Why does the honourable senator say that?

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: Because the younger class is so much more numerous than the older ones.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: All of them get old, though.

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: All of them get old in time, but at the present time the great majority are the younger civil servants, not older ones who are at the point of retirement; these latter are comparatively few. I will read from the letter which has been put in our hands by the gentleman who is in effect, if not in fact his counsel.

Hon. Mr. GOUIN: I would not call myself his counsel.

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: Well, the honourable gentleman is a counsel, and a very good one, and surely he is making Mr. Montgomery's case. This is what he says:

The increased efficiency brought about by a betterment of morale.

That is to say, the people who are left in their jobs are going to be much better satisfied.—a betterment of morale consequent upon the increased promotional opportunities opened up to members of the service due to the lowering of the retirement age will be quickly apparent and most beneficial.

See the significance of that statement. The morale of the younger men who stay in their jobs, after the older men are pushed out, is going to be increased because they will be promoted a little quicker. I read further:

The fact that promotion in the public service is relatively slow and promotional opportunities for the many thousands in the lower grades comparatively few in comparison with their numbers tends to make the Public Service less attractive than it should be to many highly efficient well-trained Canadians.

Certainly the promotion for these civil servants is too slow to satisfy them, and I appreciate their desire for advancement. We have all been eager for promotion and have struggled for better work. For these reasons many of us left jobs that we held and struck out in some other direction. The old fellows were ahead of us, but we did not propose that they be thrown out of their jobs so that we would be promoted more rapidly.

I read further:

It should also be recalled that recruitment to the public service now involves many thousands of young veterans who have a right to expect along with others the opportunity for quicker advancement in the future than has been possible in the past.

I ask you to observe the concluding sentence:

The above are a few of the main reasons why the Federation has approved of the Bill and is most anxious that it be adopted at the current session of parliament.

The reasons are not "a few" in number; there is only one reason—the younger men want to push the older ones out. No other reason is shown in this letter.

My honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Gouin) has said that each man may stay in his office if an order in council is passed on the recommendation of the head of his department. I have just as much confidence in the heads of departments of the civil service as has anyone else; I feel that we have a fine civil service in Canada and I am proud of it. I get along well with various departmental officials, and have met with nothing but courtesy from them. My argument at the present moment is entirely in their interest. I may not be right, but I feel that I am struggling for their interests, because I would not like to see anybody hurt.

As I have said, my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Gouin) has stated that the older men, if efficient, may remain in their jobs provided that the heads of their departments so recommend. That is all right for the "teacher's pet." He or she will stay on the job. I am very glad though that I am not a civil servant approaching the retirement age and that my right to continue in my occupation depends upon the smile of the man just ahead of me.