

a better class of men will be secured and that when there is a change of government or a change of the board, the staff will not change. There may be a change of the board, even under the present government; is the new board to get rid of the old employees and take on new ones? I say to the minister: Surely he can find some way to give to the greater part of the staff of these harbours a sense of permanency which will make for the selection of better men and improve the administration of these harbours.

Mr. HOWE: I agree with the principle of building up a permanent staff. Perhaps my right hon. friend is not aware that there is considerable permanency on our harbour staffs. I suppose the number of new men employed on the harbours since this government came into power is not ten per cent of the strength of the harbour staffs.

Mr. CAHAN: But you have not been in power ten months yet.

Mr. HOWE: But it did not take you three months—

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: The minister should not say it did not take the other government three months. I would like to know what he means by that. He is not suggesting that we dismissed all the men in the harbours administration, is he?

Mr. HOWE: A question has been asked about the numbers; I have the numbers here, if wanted.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: I think both sides have done a good deal of that sort of thing. I do not think we can get on with this discussion on that basis.

Mr. HOWE: I think there has been improvement from year to year, and considerable improvement is taking place in the present year. The practice is growing up of binding these people into permanent organizations in quite a satisfactory way. For instance, in the port of Montreal, this group insurance which has been in effect some time, binds the people into a more or less permanent organization.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: Would that bind the board?

Mr. HOWE: It would not bind the board, no. But at the same time it builds up a permanent service, gives the men a status in the books of the commission, which I may say has been respected to a high degree over the years. I believe some method like that, rather than giving the appointment of the entire staff *holus-bolus* to the civil service commis-

sion, is the wise way to work it out. I believe it will work out that way under a permanent board. Remember that this board is being appointed for ten years, and I think the permanency of the heads will build up the permanency of the staffs as far as a business that is seasonal in character, as this business is, will permit. I do not know that I can think of any step at the moment that I can take which will hasten that situation.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: Does the minister not draw a distinction between the higher class of the staff and the lower? I cannot remember the name of the bill, but I do recall that a bill was passed some years ago in which it was indicated that certain of the staff would be appointed by the civil service commission and the remainder by order in council. I remember the matter was discussed in this chamber for some time. I am not suggesting that the minister should arrange the section so that all appointments should be made by the civil service commission, but I do submit to him that he should make a beginning. Could he not draw some distinction—he is better able to do it than I am—between the different classes of employees? He could make a beginning towards developing a permanent service for the harbours.

Mr. HOWE: It must be obvious to the hon. member, as it is to me, that it cannot be done this afternoon.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: No.

Mr. HOWE: The matter would require careful study. It seems to me that if we decided to do it to-day it would take a year to put it into effect.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: No.

Mr. HOWE: We would have to declare all positions vacant and ask for new appointments.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: No. I cannot remember the name of the bill, but one was passed in which—

Mr. POWER: I think it was the bill setting up the radio commission. But may I point out that on that occasion the employees in the lower brackets were placed under the civil service commission, and those in the upper were exempt. If I may judge from what I read in the public press and elsewhere, the people most criticized are those who are exempt.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: That may be, but the bill setting up the radio commission is not the one I had in mind.