

When my hon. friend interrupted me I was about to speak of the provisions as to compulsory retirement. At present, there is no provision in the Civil Service legislation for compulsory retirement of officials. It has been thought desirable that an age limit should be fixed. There is much precedent for a provision of this kind, and I believe it is generally the view of those competent to express an opinion on the matter that it is not possible to have an efficient Civil Service unless there is provision for compulsory retirement at a certain age and provision for a retiring allowance. When we have disposed of this resolution, I will refer to that matter at greater length on the next resolution, and also deal with the question of superannuation. The new legislation fixes the age limit at 65, but persons now in the Service of 55 years or upwards will be permitted to remain until 70, and those now 70 may be given two years' additional service. We desire to interfere as little as possible with the status of those now in the Service, but to enact legislation which will be for the benefit of the Service in regard to new entrants.

It is proposed to extend the competitive examination system to the Outside Service at Ottawa and to such branches of the several departments as may be practicable. The Government will give consideration to that question during recess and in the future.

Mr. MCKENZIE: Why Ottawa more than any other city?

Mr. WHITE: One reason is that the commission has its seat at Ottawa. To extend the system to all the cities of the Dominion would not be practicable at the present time, although it might be possible to extend it further than to the city of Ottawa. I hope to see the system extended to the Outside Service in respect of certain branches, with a view to gradually enlarging the scope of the commission with respect to the Outside Service.

Mr. MCKENZIE: Why not extend the system to Toronto and Montreal as well as Ottawa?

Mr. WHITE: We do not regard it as practicable at the present time. I had not intended to go so much into detail with respect to the Bill, but upon the request of my hon. friend from Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) I have done so, and perhaps it is just as well, for it will not be possible for the Government to proceed with the

Bill this session. That is quite apparent from the amount of legislation which stands on the order paper for consideration. This, to me, is a matter of very sincere regret. During the past two years—in fact, ever since I came here—I have been interested in the Civil Service. I have not approached this matter from any political standpoint. I shall hope that this Bill will be regarded entirely on its merits, and I believe that will be the case. It appears to me that it is of supreme public interest that the Civil Service should be made as efficient as possible. Governments may come and governments may go, ministers may appear upon the scene and disappear, but the Civil Service, changing only in individuals, remains from week to week, from month to month, and from year to year, carrying on the business of the Dominion.

Mr. CARVELL: And their salaries are increased proportionately.

Mr. WHITE: There may be some members of the Civil Service whose salaries are too high.

Mr. CARVELL: It is a question of geometrical progression.

Mr. WHITE: In a service of this kind that is inevitable. My own view of the Civil Service is that it is on the whole a body of which the Dominion might feel proud. I have been very much impressed, speaking of my own department—and I have had some experience in a business way—with the spirit with which the work is carried on. I have never had an officer fail to respond with alacrity at any hour, day or night, that I might requisition his services. I am very glad indeed to pay that tribute to the officers of my department. Personally I have a high opinion of the public service of the Dominion as a whole. In any service there will be defects; there will be elements of injustice; some will be overpaid and some underpaid; but, speaking on the whole, I do not believe that the service is overpaid, and I believe that it is an efficient service. That is my individual view.

As I said, I have been greatly interested, not from any political standpoint, in the Civil Service, and it has been my desire, in so far as I could accomplish it, to render it more efficient by taking such steps as might be suitable to put it upon a proper basis. There cannot be a proper basis unless that basis is founded on justice and equity. On account of my illness during the month of February, I have been unable to proceed as I had hoped with this legislation and