

district? Lately, it seems, a great many of the men who have been described as permanent or yearly employees of the Government, have had their pay cut down from what it was last year, and the explanation given by the commission is that on account of reclassification their pay had to be cut down.

Progress reported.

At Six o'clock the House resumed and then took recess.

After Recess.

The House resumed at Eight o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

SECOND READINGS.

Bill No. 142 (from the Senate), for the relief of Jennie Wright.—Mr. Fripp.

Bill No. 143 (from the Senate), for the relief of Alfred Charles Edwin Westley.—Mr. Fripp.

Bill No. 144 (from the Senate), for the relief of George Orville Scott.—Mr. Fripp.

Bill No. 146 (from the Senate), for the relief of Harry Davis.—Mr. Wallace.

Bill No. 147 (from the Senate), for the relief of Elizabeth Conway Murray.—Mr. Fripp.

Bill No. 149 (from the Senate), for the relief of Frank Fulsom.—Mr. Fraser.

Bill No. 150 (from the Senate), for the relief of James Proudfoot.—Mr. Hocken.

CIVIL SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

House again in committee on Bill No. 53, to amend the Civil Service Act 1918, and the Civil Service Amendment Act 1919.—Hon. Mr. Rowell; Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

Mr. BURNHAM: Would the minister be kind enough to explain why it is that the employees on the Trent canal for example, who are hired by the year—and have been hired year by year for several years—and have been replaced by many returned soldiers, now receive less than they received a year ago? They were notified this year that the pay would go down considerably. They complained to me, and I brought the matter before the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. J. D. Reid). The minister said he thought it was a strange thing, he did not understand it; but on considering the matter he came to the conclusion that it was not his business but was the business of the Civil Service Commission. Accordingly I sent a written complaint, together with the letter

[Mr. Burnham.]

of the Minister of Railways and Canals, to the commission. The commission said that the reason of the decrease was that they were bound by the re-classification and the re-classification had nothing to do, so far as I can understand from their letter, with the current rate of pay in the district for similar work, but was altogether something settled by those who made that re-classification. That is to say that if a certain class of work in a locality, which the canal staff had hitherto been paid for at the rate of say \$60 a month and the bonus, under the classification order was considered worth only \$50 the latter amount was given, although the people employed on the general work in the locality were getting \$60 or perhaps \$80. The result of the reduction in pay is impairing the efficiency of the canal work and producing very great discontent, and I would therefore like to know what the minister, or the commission, propose to do about the matter.

Mr. ROWELL: I am not familiar with the point raised by the hon. member, and therefore cannot answer him specifically. I will, however, look into the matter and obtain the necessary information. My understanding of the law and the practice is that if the men are paid a stated salary—that is if they are not paid the prevailing rate of wages—while under the classification it may be that some are classified at lower salaries than they have hitherto been receiving, the Act provides that no man shall be reduced in his salary—that is that no existing employee shall have his salary reduced—by reason of the change in the classification. So that if any of these men have been in the employ of the Government and have been receiving a higher rate of pay than the new classification provides, the Act itself contains provision that they shall not be reduced in salary by reason of that fact. As to the particular case my hon. friend has in view, I shall be very glad to look into it and give the hon. member the desired information as soon as I obtain it.

Mr. BURNHAM: I may say for the further information of the minister that this is not an isolated case. There are a great many cases of the kind, and if I understand the minister to say that the pay of people who have been for several years in these positions cannot be reduced, nevertheless the effect is to reduce the pay of returned soldiers. When the returned soldier is appointed to fill a new job, or to replace a man who is not re-hired, he is taken on at reduced pay, and it results in great indignation and great hardship. This does not