

to be followed in connection with the appointments of postmasters to positions in offices that have a revenue of less than \$3,000. I am not opposing the bill but what I wanted to be sure of at that time was that the preference for returned soldiers would be continued as it was prior to this enactment, and the reason I rise at this time is because the returned soldier preference in the constituency that I have the honour to represent is being entirely overlooked.

In 1920, a resolution passed the Ontario legislature unanimously, in effect, that in all cases returned soldiers were to get the preference in appointments to permanent positions within the jurisdiction of the government of Ontario. Only recently a sheriff has been appointed in Kenora by the Ontario government, and the occupant, while a very good citizen in every way, is not a returned soldier. I have received many letters from returned men in my district telling me that they had no knowledge whatever that that position was about to be filled, and further that it was filled on the recommendation of the executive of the Conservative association for the district. There were two other appointments. The office of registrar for the district was vacated twice, and while the position was filled in both cases by very good citizens the returned soldiers in the district did not get an opportunity of appointment to those two vacancies. Again only recently, about a month ago, the mayor of Kenora was appointed to a provincial government position, and he is not a returned soldier. Those positions were filled upon the recommendation of the executive of the Conservative association for that district. What I wanted to say to the minister was this: If federal government positions are going to be filled in the same way, I think the minister will agree that I have reason to look askance at the protection that is afforded to the returned soldier in the matter of preference in appointments. How are the returned soldiers in that large district going to know where to apply? Are they to apply to the Postmaster General, to the member for the district or to the Conservative executive, and even if they know where to apply, what guarantee is there that the returned soldier preference will be maintained in appointments to these positions?

That is the only observation that I have to make, Mr. Speaker, and I am sorry that the bill was reported out of committee before I was given an opportunity of ascertaining beyond the shadow of a doubt that the returned soldiers in that district, and it is the only district that I have the right to speak for,

[Mr. Heenan.]

would get a square deal in federal government appointments.

Mr. E. J. GARLAND (Bow River): I am opposed to the third reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker, because of two clauses that it contains. One of them I referred to when the discussion on the resolution was before the house, and at that time Your Honour will recollect that I moved to delete the clause referring to the exemption of revenue post offices up to \$3,000. When the bill was before the house yesterday I disagreed with the administration in the amendment which was proposed by the Minister of Finance to modify section 11. It is not my intention at this time to prolong the debate unnecessarily. I simply wish to move, therefore:

That Bill No. 99, an Act to amend the Civil Service Act be not now read a third time but that it be referred back to the committee of the whole for the purpose of amending it by striking out section 10—and by striking out section 11, substituting for section 11 the wording of the section as contained in the first reading of the bill.

May I explain that section 10 is the one referring to the exemption of post offices with revenues up to \$3,000. Under the first reading of the bill hon. members will recall that section 11 carried out the unanimous desire of the committee, the unanimous desire of every civil service organization which appeared before that committee, and the desire of many other people. As it stood at the first reading of the bill section 11 took away from private secretaries to ministers the special privilege which had been accorded to them under the amendment to the act moved some years previously. My motion is therefore to restore section 11 as originally drafted in the amendment this year, and I sincerely trust that the house will see that the merit system, to the extent at least of the improper changes being made to this bill—and I use the word “improper” advisedly—be not interfered with.

Mr. E. R. E. CHEVRIER (Ottawa): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to vote for the motion now before the house so that the bill may be referred back to the committee. I will so vote in the hope that before the committee the section dealing with private secretaries may be brought back to its previous form, and at the same time in the hope that the committee will not alter the section with reference to postmasters as recommended by the special committee.

Mr. J. L. BROWN (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in somewhat the same position in regard to my vote as the hon. member for