

vantage, but that is a point which can be better argued, perhaps in the second reading of the Bill—in the superintendent being actually connected with a post office, so that he may have a better opportunity of informing himself of the details, from time to time, in connection with the working of the office, rather than to have to gain information from hearsay, as is the case at the present time where the inspection may be done by inspectors who have, more or less—generally less rather than more—practical acquaintance with the technical working of a city post office.

Hon. JOHN HAGGART (South Lanark). Why does not the Postmaster General apply the principle to all the departments? It is an anomaly that a porter and a messenger in the post office department should be removed from the section of the Civil Service Act which at present applies to all the departments, and that they should come under a different rule. If this is an improvement, the hon. gentleman should offer an amendment to the Civil Service Act to make it applicable to all the departments.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. We will see after it has worked a while whether it is an improvement. I do not know that uniformity is absolutely essential. I do not know anything that does more to depress energy at times than an aim at uniformity. A dead level uniformity, I think, very often discourages the ambitious. However, there is much in what my hon. friend says, that if this measure is good for one department it may be good for another. Perhaps different views may obtain on that point. We will see after it has worked a while whether it is wise to extend it to all the departments.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

QUESTION.

CONTRACT TO A. I. AUGER.

Mr. MONK—by Mr. Taylor—asked:

1. Has the government given a contract to A. I. Auger, of Quebec, for spruce planks of 2 x 6 and 7 and 8 feet in length at a cost of \$11.50 per thousand feet?
2. Did the government call for public tenders before granting the said contract?
3. What quantity of such planks should the said A. I. Auger furnish according to his contract?

The PRIME MINISTER (Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I would ask the hon. gentleman to let that stand, in the absence of the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), because we cannot find any such contract.

Hon. Mr. MULOCK.

PENSIONS TO NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE.

Bill (No. 40) respecting pensions to officers of the North-west Mounted Police, read the second time; and the House went into committee thereon.

On section 3,

The PRIME MINISTER. I may inform the committee that this Act is founded upon a similar Act which was passed last year granting pensions to officers of the militia, and this section No. 3 is a reproduction of the provisions which have been applied to all the militia men, with the exception that in the Militia Act the term is 25 years to entitle an officer to superannuation, and here the term is 30 years, for the reason that at present officers of the mounted police force are subject to the disposition of the Act regarding superannuation.

Mr. SPROULE. Am I correct in understanding that under this Act a member of the force will be able to have the superannuation part of the Civil Service Act applied to him as well as the pension, and that he will have the superannuation allowance in the event of being retired after 30 years, as well as the pension?

The PRIME MINISTER. No. There is a disposition at the end of the Act which makes it incumbent upon him to elect whether he will remain under the Superannuation Act or come under this Act. He cannot have the two.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. I am sorry I was not in the House when the resolutions were adopted on which this Bill was founded. Would the right hon. gentleman state what difference this makes in the law at present in force?

The PRIME MINISTER. At present, officers of the force are subject to the provisions of the Superannuation Act. They can be superannuated in the same way as an officer of the civil service. They contribute a certain abatement, 3 per cent or 2 per cent, I forget which. Under this Act the abatement they will pay into the treasury, instead of being 2 or 3 per cent, is 5 per cent. The rate of pension is not very much different, but there is one great advantage, and it is this, that under this Act widows and children are entitled to pensions, whereas under the Act heretofore in force widows and children were not entitled to anything. That is the chief advantage we desired to give to the officers of the police force over the present Act.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. There is no objection to the extension of the Act, I think perhaps it is perfectly right. But here is