

civil government salaries was whether or not that vote should be discussed before the general question of a salary reduction was discussed in the house, and I said that so far as I was concerned I was quite prepared to let that vote stand until the question had been discussed, and the vote did stand.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Do I understand then that there is no hope that the parties primarily concerned may themselves, not through any other medium, but by themselves, in any way appeal to the government in an endeavour to obtain some redress? Am I to understand that the door is closed in their face, that they are without the right of appeal?

Mr. STEVENS: No. The hon. gentleman is not stating the case fairly at all. As far as I am concerned I shall never refuse to receive any representatives of the civil service—never; and my hon. friend has no right or foundation for insinuating that any such refusal was made.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I made no such insinuation. The minister has no right to make the statement that I have insinuated anything. I did not. I want to ask the question now, whether on the behalf of the government the minister will say that those primarily concerned will be heard. If the minister will say that those primarily concerned will be heard before the final step is taken, I am quite prepared to take my seat now and leave the whole matter in the hands of the civil servants themselves. Will the minister give me the assurance that they will be heard?

Mr. STEVENS: I am not speaking for the whole government in regard to this vote. I am speaking for myself. The hon. gentleman should direct his question to the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Then I direct my question to the hon. gentleman who is now leading the house. So that there may be no misunderstanding I ask the Minister of Justice, who I presume is now leading the house, whether he will say that an opportunity will be given to those primarily concerned to place their representations before the government in an endeavour to obtain some measure of what they think they ought to get in the way of redress.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I personally think that the request is a very reasonable one, and I know of no refusal. Certainly it has not been made by any civil servant in my department. If a request is made I shall be very glad to consider it.

[Mr. Stevens.]

Mr. CHEVRIER: I am not going to be satisfied with promises of the kind made before August, 1930. This is no time for election promises. I want a straight answer to my question whether the government will receive and hear a delegation from the people primarily concerned. It is not satisfactory to say that they probably will be heard. I ask the leader of the house now if he is prepared to say that the government will receive a delegation from the people primarily concerned and give them an opportunity to present their case. I have asked a straight question; I expect an answer, and I think under the rules of the house I am entitled to it.

Mr. GUTHRIE: My answer to the hon. member would be that the government is at all times prepared to hear any representations made to it by any responsible body of people.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Will the government, if a demand is made upon them by the civil servants themselves, if plans are made tomorrow or the day after to present their case to the government, receive a delegation from the civil servants with respect to this matter?

Mr. GUTHRIE: I would not as a member of the government be prepared to listen to demands. I said requests, and if a request is made by any responsible body of people to be heard in regard to any public matter, the government will hear them. If the civil servants of Canada want to be heard the government will hear them.

Mr. YOUNG: We are being asked to vote money to pay 90 per cent of the salaries of the civil servants. When at the end of the month they receive cheques for only 90 per cent of their salaries they will be able to argue that they are getting the reduced amount, not because their salaries have been decreased by 10 per cent, but because parliament has not voted any more money, and that the other 10 per cent will still be due to them until such time as a statute passes this parliament reducing their salaries. The government say they intend to introduce such a bill, and all we are asking is that we be given an opportunity to see the bill and discuss it before we pass these estimates. Surely that is not an unreasonable request.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I can tell my hon. friend what will be in the bill. It will merely legalize whatever we do in the estimates. It will authorize the reduction of 10 per cent.

Mr. YOUNG: Perhaps it will. From what the minister has said we do not know exactly what the bill will contain. It might be that when the bill comes down we could agree

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939 (M.G. 26, J 4, volume 150, pages C108741-C109340)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA