

to set up a pilot plant and do the necessary work in order to prove the value of a promising idea that might otherwise never be utilized.

Section 15 is a new section, giving the council power to establish and support a pension scheme, if the governor in council so approves. At the present time very few members of the regular research council staff are under any pension scheme. After a great deal of study of the matter, and after consultation and examination of pension schemes in connection with similar scientific organizations in other countries, the national research council has recommended that a special pension scheme be set up for the national research council scientific staff which will permit the desirable transfer of scientific personnel as between government services, industry and universities, without undue loss to the individual. Such a system has been in satisfactory operation for some years in scientific branches of the British civil service, and there can be little doubt that such a system is desirable in the case of the national research scientific staff.

It should be noted that it is the intention of the council to bring clerical administrative and non-scientific staff under the Civil Service Superannuation Act, and that this amendment is needed for the purpose of enabling a special pension scheme to be set up for the scientific staff if the government so approves.

This is an important bill, Mr. Speaker, but fairly simple in its terms, and I do not think that any further remarks of mine are needed at this time.

Mr. IRVINE: Does the council have in view any investigation or research into social science as well as physical science?

Mr. HOWE: No. That is not within the scope of the Research Council Act.

Mr. H. C. GREEN (Vancouver South): This bill, which is numbered 154, amends the Research Council Act. That act was first passed in 1924, and there have been no amendments since it was originally adopted, which is something very unusual in the history of legislation in recent years, either in this house or in any of the provincial legislatures.

The duties of the research council are set out in section 6 of the act as originally passed, which reads:

The council shall have charge of all matters affecting scientific and industrial research in Canada which may be assigned to it by the committee and shall also have the duty of advising the committee on questions of scientific and technological methods affecting the expansion of Canadian industries or the utilization of the natural resources of Canada.

[Mr. Howe.]

The committee referred to in that section is the committee of the privy council on scientific and industrial research. I think the minister will agree with me that that committee of the cabinet has in effect not been functioning in recent years. The other day he was asked to name the members of the cabinet on that committee and he could not do so, at least he named some but could not name them all. He said also that they met only once a year and that to consider the annual report of the research council. I am afraid therefore that the committee of the cabinet has had very little to do with the operation of the research council in recent years.

The bill before the house to-day does not propose any changes in the duties of the research council but it does aim to give the council the power to carry on the expanded work which it undertook during the war. Naturally the demands of war time meant a great increase in the work being done by the research council and also a great increase in staff. The council and its employees are to be congratulated on the work done for Canada and for the other allied nations during the war.

The official opposition take it that the main purpose of this amending bill is to provide for the continuation of this expanded work during peace time, and deeming this to be the main purpose of the bill we are glad to support it, although at the same time we disapprove of some of the provisions of the bill.

The Minister of Reconstruction and Supply has given us this afternoon a brief summary of the provisions of the bill. He has pointed out that whereas formerly there was just a president, there are now to be a president and two vice-presidents. I believe the intention is that one of the vice-presidents shall be in charge of the scientific work of the council while the other will be in charge of administrative work. The minister pointed out also that further provision is now being made with regard to the committee of the privy council on scientific and industrial research, and we hope that committee will take this new work very seriously. If a cabinet committee is vitally interested in research, that in itself should mean a great deal in the development of research activities in Canada.

The minister mentioned the fact that there is to be an executive committee of the research council. Under the original act there were only fifteen members of the council. That number is now raised to twenty and provision is made for a small executive committee, to consist of the president, two vice-presidents,