

ment that no civil servant holding a status lower than that of first-class clerk should have a right to speak to him with regard to his affairs or the business of the department. The then Prime Minister replied, "I know that perfectly well, because they all come to speak to me about matters that should have been submitted to you." I can inform my hon. friend that the grievance which he is expressing on behalf of civil servants is entirely a fanciful one. I have had some experience, for nearly nine years, of this matter, and I can assure him that civil servants at Ottawa and throughout the country have not the slightest difficulty in making their grievances known to the Government. During the past nine years, on numerous occasions, I have received civil servants who desired to express to me their view that in some respect or another they were not receiving the consideration that was their due. As a matter of fact, at the present time, they have more facilities than they ever had before in that regard. During the past three years we have had a minister who, so far as the duties of his department would permit, has devoted special attention to the claims of civil servants. Some time ago we established a board to which the President of the Council (Mr. Rowell) alluded, and I really think there is no serious difficulty in the way of a civil servant who desires to make representations to the Government. Such representations eventually find their way, not only to the minister of the department, but to the Prime Minister, and finally they come before the Government as a whole.

Mr. GAUVREAU: I want to say just a few words as to the way in which men working for the Public Works Department are chosen. Take the case of a wharf to be repaired in my riding, as happened last year. If the men are chosen by the resident engineer and by the chief carpenter, those officers, of course, are responsible for their choice. These are the men who will work if they are required for a period of less than thirty days. Of course, they should not be chosen in the first place if they are not able to do the work required of them. If they are required for a longer period than thirty days the chief engineer forwards the names picked out by the chief carpenter and sends them to the Civil Service Commission at Ottawa, and those are the men chosen for the longer periods. This matter is so simple that I cannot see why there is any opposition.

[Sir Robert Borden.]

Section agreed to.

On section 5—classification deemed to have come into force on, and salaries payable from April 1, 1919.

Mr. ROWELL: I beg to move to insert as subsection 2 this clause, an amendment which I shall now read, and the present subsection 2 will then become subsection 3. The reading of the clause will explain the reason for its insertion:

Persons filling positions the compensation of which is or has been fixed at prevailing rates under the classification or any amendment thereof, and persons who have been retired from or have left the public service, shall not participate in any benefit resulting from the provisions of this section, making the classification retroactive to the 1st day of April, 1919.

Hon. members will see that if persons have left the public service since the first day of April, 1919, there is no reason why the country should pay additional compensation, and where persons are receiving the prevailing rates of pay there would seem to be no reason why any special benefit should accrue to them from making the classification retroactive.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Why has this change been made in the Act, making its provisions retroactive for one year?

Mr. ROWELL: We are making it retroactive because when this whole matter was under consideration in the early part of the year 1919 and various delegations of the Civil Service waited upon the Government, particularly representatives of the different branches of the postal service, the Government at that time believed that the classification would be sufficiently advanced to be brought into operation in the year 1919, and these representatives of the different postal organizations were assured that it would go into effect for the year 1919. It so happened that the classification was not sufficiently advanced to make it operative during the year 1919, and when the legislation was passed last autumn it was provided that it should come into force on the first day of April, 1920, because at that time it was believed that the classification would not be completed so that it could be applied before that date. The Act of last session was passed in that form. When the Act was before the House the question of making it retroactive was raised, and my hon. friend (Mr. A. K. Maclean), who was in charge of the Bill, said he would give the matter consideration and see whether in view of what had taken