

House of Commons Debates

SECOND SESSION—NINTH PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, April 10, 1902.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

BANKING AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE.

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) moved :

That the names of Messrs. Kaulbach and Loy be added to the Select Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

Motion agreed to.

POST OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Hon. Wm. Mulock) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 106) to amend the Post Office Act.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). What is the object of this Bill ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The Bill mainly refers to certain classes of appointees in the service of the Post Office Department, known as messengers, packers, sorters, letter carriers and porters. It deals with the mode of their appointment and proposes to dispense with civil service examinations for this class of officers, substituting departmental examinations, such as the department may from time to time establish. It also changes the mode of payment, and in lieu of the present system, adopts a per diem allowance. It also shortens the time necessary for this class of officials to attain the maximum. For example, letter carriers attain the maximum in a period of the ninth year. Under this Bill, if it becomes law, they will be able to attain the maximum in about half that time.

Mr. SPROULE. How would it affect their status under the Civil Service Act as regards superannuation ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Any person now appointed to the service does not come under the Superannuation Act.

That is it does not apply to any persons hereafter appointed. It was repealed as to future appointments by the Civil Service Retirement Act of 1898. The measure also contains a provision entitling those at present in the service, at their option, to come in under the provision of this measure, instead of the Civil Service Act which applies to these appointees, but it does not exempt any from the Civil Service Retirement Act of 1898; that is, under the present amendment, those who elect to come under the provisions of this Act will carry the right and obligation of remaining under the Civil Service Retirement Act of 1898. The measure also provides for the creation of a new office called the superintendent of city post offices. That officer will have the duty of visiting the various city post offices and such other post offices as he may be required to visit from time to time, and to assist the postmasters and their staffs to keep the post offices abreast of the times, and in every way to aid in promoting the efficiency of the various post offices. There is also provision in the measure altering the condition of the indemnity clauses contained in a former amendment of the Act, simply making them more comprehensive and overcoming a defect which has been discovered.

Mr. CLARKE. Who performs the duty of inspecting city post offices now ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It can hardly be said that the duty is performed. I believe that the inspectors have the right of performing that duty, but they are not experts in city post office work. Under this measure it is proposed to appoint as superintendent a person who has had many years practical experience, and who may retain the office that he is now filling. I may tell the House that, if the measure goes through and my present intentions are carried out by Council, the person who will be first appointed will be the present assistant postmaster of Toronto, Mr. George Ross. Every one acquainted with that gentleman's merits will admit that he has not his superior in the post office service. Of course, he will not carry two salaries. While he draws the salary of superintendent, he cannot draw the salary of assistant postmaster. There is, it appears, much ad-