

pened to see a collector of customs who did not appear to be attending to his duty at the time, and the inspector reported unfavourably, and the man was consequently dismissed. This dismissed official has since reformed and is now as steady and temperate a man as there is in the Dominion, which is saying a good deal. I have been trying to have justice done to this man by having the money returned to him which he paid into the superannuation fund but have not succeeded. I think that something should be added to this Bill which would enable the government to deal justly with a case of this kind.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Of course it sometimes happens that a man is dismissed for what is alleged to be cause but really is not cause. Take a case in my own city, that of Capt. Stewart, who was dismissed ostensibly for cause but really for something else. No investigation was ever granted although Capt. Stewart was anxious to have one. In a case of that kind, an officer who has been long in the service receives back no portion of the money which he has paid to the superannuation fund. I am not so familiar perhaps with the practice of commercial institutions in this regard as some of the other hon. members, but I know that some institutions of this country which have created pension funds, repay to their employees, even when dismissed for cause, the amount contributed by them to the fund, and they do this because they think it is only fair and equitable. They do not think it fair to keep the money of these men even if they are dismissed for cause. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister of Finance has considered the question in this aspect?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The Superannuation Act as respects these matters is precisely in the same condition as it has been for many years. There is no provision which would enable repayment to be made in a case such as my hon. friend has mentioned. The difficulty is if we once open the door, it will be impossible to draw any line. I have had cases brought to my attention, in which the wives represented that their husbands had been dismissed because of intemperance and other offences, and the dismissal of whom brought great hardship on their families. Such cases appeal forcibly to our sympathy, but once you begin to entertain claims of that kind it will be impossible to draw any line. We have been simply following the practice continued ever since the Act was passed some thirty years ago.

Mr. OSLER. As regards banks, no clerk is dismissed, no matter from what cause, without having the money returned to him which he paid into the pension fund, and I think that is only fair.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Under what is called the Civil Service Retirement

Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.).

Act, which has been passed in recent years, we return the money paid in. Under that Act the money contributed constituted a savings fund, and when an officer retires from the service he gets back his money with interest. This Act now takes the place of the old Superannuation Act as respects new officials.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Why should there be any difficulty in dealing with cases such as those brought to the attention of the hon. minister. Of course there may be cases of malfeasance in which it would not be desirable to return the money, but I think that the practice followed in commercial institutions should be followed by the government. I think that the practice should be followed even in cases of malfeasance, but where there is no actual taking of money. It seems to me that there would be no difficulty in making a general rule.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. There is a broad distinction between the Superannuation Act and the Civil Service Retirement Act. In the latter there is no charge on the public treasury at all. We simply return the money paid in with interest. But in the case of the Superannuation Act, there is a large drain on the public treasury. For every dollar paid into the superannuation fund, we pay out three or four dollars. If we were to accede to my hon. friend's request, we would have to pay out considerably more. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister reminds me that under the Superannuation Act, no matter how long and meritorious a man's services may have been, if his death occurs before superannuation, his family receive nothing. In the case of life insurance, a man must die to benefit by it, but in the case of the Superannuation Act, a man must live to get any benefit from it. I may say that while the contributions to the superannuation fund under the Superannuation Act amount to \$60,000 a year, we pay out annually \$330,000, and if we were to take the course suggested by my hon. friend, we would add considerably to the burden.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). The same argument would apply in the case of corporations because the pension fund of a private corporation is not only built up by the contributions of the employees but is also supplemented to a large extent by the institution itself. Then so far as the cases of death are concerned, I think there is always a gratuity—

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Only two months salary.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). That might not be very much. But the fact that that seems, perhaps, a not altogether desirable state of affairs is no particular reason why the government should depart from what is the ordinary usage among commercial institutions