

Revenue and Audit Act

Mr. MEIGHEN: What charges?

Mr. BELAND: The charges which have been published in the newspapers and to which reference was made in the House yesterday by the hon. member for Kootenay (Mr. Humphrey). My right hon. friend (Mr. Meighen) will remember that I made a statement in the House yesterday in the matter. I may apprise the House further that I received this morning a communication from the chairman of the Board referring to those charges in specific terms. I thought I had among my papers the charges in their exact wording, but I do not seem to have them now. At any rate, they have been published in the newspapers; the charge is, in a word, that the board conspired to deprive ex-service men of rights to which they were by statute entitled.

REVENUE AND AUDIT ACT

On motion of Hon. W. S. Fielding (Minister of Finance), Bill No. 57, to amend the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, was read the second time, and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Gordon in the Chair.

Mr. FIELDING: The object of this bill was explained at an earlier stage, but I may briefly repeat my statement. The purpose is to facilitate an earlier closing of the public accounts at the end of the fiscal year. Under our practice which has prevailed for a long time, while the fiscal year ends on the 31st of March, a month is allowed for the preparation of accounts, and then there is provision that a further allowance of time may be made which, I regret to say, is usually availed of. The consequence is that there is considerable delay in the preparation and ultimately in the publication of the accounts, and that acts upon the date upon which we are able to commence the business of Parliament. I think it would be very helpful if we could get the public accounts into better shape. We propose to adopt, therefore, the English system, which is that the accounts shall close on the 31st of March just as they are. Any balances of appropriations that have not been expended, or the paying out of which has not been authorized, will lapse; if there are any credits issued against which cheques have not been drawn, they, for the time, will lapse, but provision is made that such credits may be renewed and the expenditure charged against the expenditure of the following year. The great point is to give the officials authority to close the

[Mr. Beland.]

accounts on the 31st of March. Another clause which is introduced at the request of the Justice Department is technical in its character; it has reference to arrangements for the transfer of bonds in certain cases. It involves nothing of importance.

On section 1—transmission of bonds registered in the name of person dying domiciled abroad:

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Perhaps the Minister of Justice will explain this clause.

Sir LOMER GOUIN: I am not prepared to explain it; I did not know the matter was coming up this afternoon.

Mr. FIELDING: It is merely to facilitate the transfer of bonds in the cases of deceased persons.

Section agreed to.

On section 2—what periods accounts shall include:

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think the minister (Mr. Fielding) said that balances unused could subsequently be made available. How will that be done?

Mr. FIELDING: If moneys out of the appropriations have not been expended and no action has been taken on them, they will lapse. If a letter of credit has been issued which has not been fully used, the unused portion of it may be provided for by a new letter of credit chargeable to the coming year.

Section agreed to.

Bill reported, read the third time and passed.

CURRENCY ACT, 1910, AMENDMENT

On motion of Hon. W. S. Fielding (Minister of Finance) the House went into committee to consider the following proposed resolution, Mr. Gordon in the Chair:

Resolved, That it is expedient to amend the Schedule to The Currency Act, 1910, as amended by chapter nine of the statutes of 1920, by changing the millesimal fineness of silver coins from 4 to 6, and by providing that this enactment shall apply to silver coins heretofore struck since the first day of January, 1920, and also to amend the said Schedule, as amended by chapter six of the statutes of 1921, by striking out the millesimal fineness of nickel five cent coins.

Mr. FIELDING: This resolution has for its object the enactment of a bill which is desired by the authorities of the Mint. Under the act respecting the currency our silver coins are required to have a certain standard of fineness; out of every 1,000 parts 800 are required to be of pure silver.