

Mr. G. H. ROSS (Calgary East): I have no desire to delay the passing of this bill. So far as I have had a chance to peruse it I am entirely in sympathy with it. The only question in my mind is whether it goes far enough. There are many persons employed by the board of grain commissioners, a number of them in the city of Calgary, in positions known as seasonal temporaries, also labourers who are continuously employed by the board. One of these employees, whom I shall call Mr. A, started work with the board in 1918 and has been steadily employed with the board since 1928. Another, whom I shall call Mr. B, entered the service of the board in 1922 and has been steadily employed since 1924. I could give many other examples. These men receive none of the benefits of a civil servant—no sick leave, no superannuation, and only this year was provision made to grant them vacations. For some unknown reason their vacation leave was limited to one week, whereas civil servants as a general rule receive three weeks vacation leave. I wonder if this amendment provides for these men. From a hurried perusal that I have made of the bill I think it does provide for them to some extent, but I doubt very much if it goes far enough. I wonder if Mr. A, who entered the service in 1918, has been steadily employed since 1928 and is still in the employ of the board of grain commissioners, will benefit under this bill, and the same with Mr. B. If not, I hope that the government will give consideration to cases such as this and make it possible for these men to be confirmed in their positions in a permanent capacity so that they can obtain the benefits to which civil servants are entitled. I submit that after twenty years continuous service they are entitled to some consideration.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Bradette in the chair.

On section 1—"Civil servant."

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Before hon. members commence a detailed consideration of this bill I should like to state that I intend to ask one of my colleagues to move that, instead of being operative from 1st October, 1944, only, it become operative on the 15th August, 1944. On looking over the bill I noticed that there were provisions which were extending additional privileges to members of the civil service, and it seemed to me that it would be unfortunate if any member of the civil service retired or died before the 1st October, 1944, and did not get the benefit of provisions which parliament had recognized to be proper provisions. I suggest that

wherever it is necessary in the bill as we consider the clauses, amendments be made to render it operative from the 15th August, 1944, instead of the 1st October, because I hope that by mid-August it will have received the royal assent and become the law.

Mr. BOUCHER: I am not sure of the actual meaning of section 1. It seems that, as worded, it limits those who can take advantage of the amendments to those who are on a yearly or annual salary. I am not sure if I read the section right, but it seems to me that a person who is not permanent may be granted by the treasury board the privilege of going under the superannuation act, but that it may be possible that even these persons cannot get under the act unless their salary is on a yearly basis. If such is the case I can see no reason why treasury board is authorized to grant special privileges to temporary officials and yet not to permanent officials who are not paid on a yearly basis. I should like the minister to consider that quite carefully and say whether my interpretation is the right one.

The other point which I should like to draw to the attention of the Minister of Justice is, why either temporary employees or those paid on an annual salary must go to the treasury board. We are here setting up a body which really, in law, has no official status, whose personnel at least is but little known to anybody, and giving them authority to exercise their discretion untrammelled and unhindered, with arbitrary power to say, "you shall get certain benefits" and "you shall not". I do not think it inures to the benefit of the government or the people of Canada to endow a board of that kind with such arbitrary power and open up a possibility of so many injustices.

A short time ago an amendment was made that certain civil servants should come under the superannuation act, certain others should get holidays, et cetera, subject only to the approval of the treasury board. I do not wish to give illustrations, although some are in my mind, but one can see where three men working for the same length of time on the same job in the same place could have varying judgments and differing privileges handed out to them by virtue of someone taking their case to the treasury board and getting its approval, where the others could not. If it were a matter wherein the interests of a class, and only a class, could be determined by the treasury board, the decision to give one in a class or to a number would apply to everybody in that class; but to be able to pick John and leave Tom out is not