

the Civil Service Commission itself submitted in the year 1930 makes pointed reference to this very matter. Under the subject "legislation", at page 14, the report says:

**Private Secretaries—**

It would seem that a retrograde step was taken, in so far as civil service legislation is concerned, when chapter 38, 19-20 George V, was placed on the statutes. Legislation of this character has a tendency to dishearten the conscientious, hardworking employee whose chances of advancement are blocked by the preferment of an ex-minister's private secretary, and the lowering of interest in the personnel is reflected inevitably in the character of the work performed.

It is also open to question whether, from the point of view of efficiency and economy, the departments are benefited by having their higher supervisory positions filled by persons who are unfamiliar with their work.

Secretaries of ministers are certainly not familiar with the routine work of civil service administration.

In many instances, no doubt, the private secretary is a capable official who may, if he has had years of experience as private secretary in a department, speedily become of value to the staff. On the other hand, the tendency is to create in some departments unnecessary higher-grade positions, or to fill those already vacant with a view rather to the interest of the private secretary than to that of the department. It may be pointed out, further, that the legislation in question is contrary to the whole spirit of the Civil Service Act, inasmuch as private secretaries are appointed without competition, and the section of the act requiring that vacancies be filled as far as possible by promotion is contravened.

There is the definite printed recommendation of the Civil Service Commission, made to this house in the form of its annual report. In the evidence given before the committee every single organization represented on behalf of the civil servants recommended this very piece of legislation and opposed the granting of positions to private secretaries, especially the few positions available to men of that type. I quote from page 261 of the evidence. In this case it is given by the president of the Civil Service Association of Ottawa:

The Witness: Now, I would like to break a little fresh ground. There is the piece of legislation known as the private secretaries' amendment to the Civil Service Act, properly known as chapter 38, 19-20 George V, an Act to amend the Civil Service Act, assented to June 14, 1929, which we believe to be decidedly contrary to the principle of the merit system. Perhaps I could put it this way: A new government comes into office following a general election. A minister brings to Ottawa a young man he has selected to be his private secretary—John Doe. Already in this department is one Richard Roe, who has been employed in the service for twenty years, having successively held a junior clerkship, a principal clerkship

and now is a head clerk—these various advances having been effected by promotion after the usual investigation by the Civil Service Commission. Richard Roe is now looking forward to a chief clerkship. There may be only one chief clerkship in that department; the present incumbent is some years older than Roe and is due for superannuation in a couple of years or so, but manages to hang on—human nature—most of us would do the same. In the meantime the ministry, with a small majority, is getting ready for the inevitable general election which in four years follows. The administration is changed. Under the legislation I have referred to, the minister, ceasing to be a minister or member of government, the said secretary (John Doe) "shall thereupon be appointed to a permanent position in the public service classified not lower than that of chief clerk, provided that the said secretary has been acting as such for a period of not less than one year."

The present proposal is to change that and make it three years. That is but a very slight improvement of an entirely incorrect principle. The evidence continues:

The department has no need, or no place, for an additional chief clerk. The elderly incumbent is now retired and John Doe fills the position. As a consequence Richard Roe's opportunity is postponed for years or it may be forever. Further, the principal clerk next in line to Richard Roe, the clerk grade 4, the clerk grade 3, grade 2, grade 1, all efficient public servants, all are in a like predicament. The line of promotion in that department is blocked indefinitely. Not only may this unfortunate circumstance occur after a general election, but it may occur in any department, at any time during any administration, when any member of the government ceases to be a member of that government.

Nothing that I could say would add to the very pointed and effective remarks of the president of the Civil Service Association given before that committee. Let us continue and endeavour to find out whether any damage has been done. The point has been raised by the hon. members for East Algoma (Mr. Nicholson) and Stanstead (Mr. Hackett) as to whether or not anyone has been injured by this provision. I quote from the evidence of the same witness as follows:

Q. How many positions are there in the civil service as chief clerk?

The position of chief clerk is the one to which these secretaries are supposed to go. Incidentally, it carries with it an emolument of \$3,100 per year. The question continues:

Can you tell me, Mr. Bland—approximately? —A. In the neighbourhood of 200 or 250, with that salary.

Those are all the positions there are of that particular type. The evidence continues:

Q. How many private secretaries were put into the civil service after the election of 1918?

Mr. Bland: There have been 54 all together.