

I believe all of us will find that the work done by the several committees has been useful, first because of the publicity the committee meetings have been given in the press and, second, because of the suggestions made in those several committees to improve the working and the administration of the Civil Service Act. The publicity given the committee meetings has had the effect of making the public better acquainted with the vast amount of work done by and the difficult problems confronting the civil service commission.

All hon. members hope, as they grow older, that other days will bring new and even better ways of understanding among all concerned. At this point may I commend the wonderful work accomplished by the civil service commission since its inception, in giving to the public that type of service expected by the vast body of taxpayers.

It is because these taxpayers are at times hard to please that I should like to bring two or three points to the attention of the house. A. What preference or what is the preference which should be given in the future to our men who were in the service of His Majesty either in world war I or world war II? To my mind their status could be made much clearer than it has been made.

Looking over the Civil Service Act one would readily find that, under the provisions of section 28, those who resigned their positions to join the service of His Majesty in either war must be taken back into the service in a position at least equivalent to the one they left upon resigning to join the military service. It will be found in another section that men who had served overseas are to receive preference in respect of positions given under the Civil Service Act.

Section 30 of the regulations in the act states:

30. The names of persons in the service of His Majesty placed upon eligible lists under the provisions of section 28 of the Civil Service Act, shall be placed in the order of merit above all successful candidates at the examinations—

That means above civilian candidates.

—and above persons whose names are placed upon the eligible lists under the provisions of section 54 of the Civil Service Act.

Section 54 refers to the abolition of positions in certain sections of the civil service. Consequently it means that men who have served in the services of His Majesty will have to be given preference over them. I really think this situation should be clarified in order that there may be a better understanding of the act on the part of hon. members of the House of Commons and the public generally.

[Mr. E. O. Bertrand.]

B. The amended sections 20 and 32 of the Civil Service Act provide that local positions shall be filled by those possessing a knowledge of the language of the majority. That provision is easy to understand and it has been put into practice with a great deal of satisfaction in the last few years. However, nothing is said about positions at headquarters or at important branch offices or in senior positions of the service.

C. Do we know that when a department makes a requisition for personnel to the civil service commission it stipulates that a knowledge of English or French or both is required? It would appear that the civil service commission has very little responsibility in connection with these cases.

For the reasons I have just given, and many others, and for the benefit of hon. members and of those who expect to obtain positions in the civil service, I would venture to suggest that at the earliest convenient time during this session, or during next session if this is to be a short one, a special committee should be appointed to study and review the Civil Service Act and its regulations. This is a time when many changes will have to occur in order to establish a new order in the world and there should be a clear exposition before this committee of all that is to be expected from the civil service commission under the operation of the Civil Service Act and its regulations. This would be conducive to a better understanding by all concerned.

The second question I wish to deal with is just as ticklish as the one upon which I have just touched. Probably it is more so because it affects a greater number of persons. I refer to taxation. Something of taxation was said this afternoon and I should like to deal with just one phase of this matter. As was mentioned this afternoon by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken), the speech from the throne contains a paragraph which reads as follows:

You will be asked to make financial provision for all essential services, also to meet expenditures arising out of the war, and for the purposes of reconstruction. My ministers' proposals with respect to taxation measures will be disclosed in the budget.

I am sure that all members of the house will be ready to approve the provision of all essential services, especially those having to do with the repatriation of men who are in the services. I know they will be ready to approve all measures necessary to help in establishing these men in civil life as well as for the purpose of reconstruction. I know they will be ready to approve any measures