

Civil Service Act

—Canada was not ready in 1957, and is still not ready in 1961, to take Britain's offer of a free trade area as a basis for negotiation.

An hon. Member: Order.

The Chairman: Order. I should like to indicate to the hon. member that we are discussing Bill No. C-71 which is an act respecting the civil service of Canada. The problems which the hon. gentleman has been discussing are not affected by the bill as it is drafted and as it is before this committee.

Mr. Matheson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In referring to the interesting and scholarly address to which the Prime Minister devoted his attention when he enunciated his own thesis, that civil servants, like children, should be seen and not heard, I think we should remember the important part of that address—indeed, the real germ of the message which somehow or other escaped the Prime Minister as he considered the role of civil servants in government, namely, "We want all the man's brains". I think that is very important particularly in these areas of finance, trade and commerce, etc., upon which the well being of all Canadians so largely depends.

I should like to ask the parliamentary secretary if he could tell us how many economists of the Ph.D. level have been taken into the public service in the year 1960.

Turning to the chairman's report, there is another sentence on page 13 under the heading "Staff Turnover", which is worthy of note. There is some satisfaction taken there in the fact that the separation rate in the civil service is only 10.5 per cent. However, sir, there is the disturbing sentence further on which reads as follows:

—turnover is not a problem in the civil service, except in a few highly specialized classes—

I would ask in the light of—

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Would the hon. gentleman read on?

Mr. Matheson: Yes, I will read the rest, which is as follows:

—and is only a fraction of that for business and industry in general.

Is that as far as the parliamentary secretary would like me to go?

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Yes. The hon. gentleman was leaving out the last part.

Mr. Matheson: Yes, I was referring to what appeared to me to be the whole reason for the paragraph; that is, that there appears to be some concern on the part of the chairman that in certain specialized classes there is a higher separation rate than 10.5 per cent.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Yes, and the next sentence says that it is only one quarter of the

rate for Canadian finance, insurance and real estate companies generally in Canada.

Mr. Matheson: Yes, that is so, but I do not think we are particularly concerned about the problems of industry. Addressing myself to the comment of the parliamentary assistant I would say that there was a time when Ottawa was a great magnet for people highly qualified in the field of finance and economic theory as well as public administration. I think of great teams that were developed under Skelton and Clark and others. We still have our Department of Finance but somehow or another it seems to have lost its force.

Mr. Brunnsden: They are still coming.

Mr. Matheson: That is the question. Are they still coming? How many Ph.D.'s have come to Ottawa in the years 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961? Are these people being brought here now? If they are being brought here are they simply silenced and put into departments or are they actually being heard—heard not on the public platform but heard by the ministers? Are they being heard by the parliamentary assistant? Does this administration really want "all the brains" of these highly qualified people? Do we have enough of these trained and specialized people? Some of them like Dr. Galbraith are slipping off to be of great service to the United States and to work in industry. Does the chairman of the civil service commission find it possible in any way to take advantage of the excellent academic material that we have in some of our faculties? Is advantage being taken of the splendid school of economics we have here in Ottawa and that other one, perhaps more distinguished if I may say so, which is only a hundred miles away, Queen's University? Is advantage being taken of these great schools? At a moment of critical change in the world we appear to be without any over-all economic policy or purpose.

Mr. Brunnsden: Mr. Chairman, one could wish that a debate of this kind respecting so many people could transcend politics. The last speaker has made it very definite that he is speaking from a political angle. I refuse to believe that the civil service is bereft of new recruits from the colleges of Canada. I believe that the young men coming into the civil service today are as capable, as intelligent, as ambitious and as worthy as those of yesteryear. I resent very much the last speaker's suggestion that by virtue of this government being in office we have had an outflow of that type of civil service personnel which we need.