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1901-11-08

Senate.

The President took the chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

DEATH OF PRESIDENT McKINLEY

The PRESIDENT

I have to announce to the Senate that I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor-General : -

Melbourne, 7th November, 1901.

Sir, -

With reference to your message expressing the sympathy of the Members of the Senate with the United States of America on the death of President McKinley, I have the honour to state that I have now received a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies intimating that the American Ambassador wishes to convey to yourself and to the Members of the Senate, on behalf of the people of the United States, his sincere thanks for your very earnest and heartfelt expressions of sympathy, which are most grateful to the American people.

I have the honour to be.

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

HOPETOUN, Governor-General.

DEATH OF THE EMPRESS FREDERICK

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The PRESIDENT

- I have to announce to the Senate that I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor-General : -

Melbourne, 7th November, 1901.

Sir, -

I have the honour to state that I have received a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies intimating that the Address to the King from the Senate, expressing sympathy with His Majesty on the death of his sister, the Empress Frederick, has been laid before the King, who commanded that his grateful thanks should be conveyed to

the Members of the Senate. for their kind and loyal sympathy.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

HOPETOUN, Governor-General.

QUESTION

PRESS AND TELEGRAPHIC RATES

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

asked the Postmaster-General, upon notice -

Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill providing for uniform press and general telegraphic rates ?

Is it the intention of the Government to continue to charge double telegraphic rates in Western Australia for messages lodged after 7 p.m. ?

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

- The answers to the honorable senator's questions are as follow -

It is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill providing for postal and telegraphic rates, but the rates have not yet been determined.

It is the intention of the Government, when dealing with the rates, to endeavour to secure uniformity between Western Australia and the other States of the Commonwealth, as to the additional charge to be made for telegrams handed in for transmission between certain hours.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

In Committee

- (Consideration resumed from 7th November, vide page 6988).

Clause 8 -

It shall be the duty of each of the inspectors from time to time as generally or particularly directed by the commissioner to personally -

inspect each or every department ;

examine so far as is practicable the officers thereof, and ascertain their duties and the value of their services ;

hear and inquire into all matters and things affecting or relating to the working of the departments ; and furnish in writing to the commissioner a full report as to every such inspection, examination, or inquiry, including therein recommendations for the consideration and determination of the commissioner.

After considering any such report, the commissioner may propose to the Governor-General any particular disposition of officers and offices, and the division of class, subdivision of class or grade of every officer, and re-arrangement or improved method of carrying out any work which appears to the commissioner necessary or expedient for the more economic, efficient, or convenient working of any department, and such proposal shall be considered and dealt with by the Governor-General.

Senator GLASSEY

- A great weakness in the operation of the provision in the Queensland Public Service Act has been that the commissioners, instead of making personal visits, merely issued a circular to the heads of departments, and to the officers in charge of various branches, requesting answers to be supplied to certain questions. I am glad to observe that this clause provides for personal inspection. I hope that there will be a vigorous inspection of the departments within a reasonable time by the inspectors.

Senator DOBSON

- Does the Postmaster-General think that the provision in sub-clauses (1) and (2) is full enough. I take it that the commissioner will not have sufficient evidence to do the important work of classification, unless the inspectors understand that they have to suggest 'the classification.

Senator Drake

- That is the recommendation.

Senator DOBSON

- Is each inspector simply to report, as I think paragraph (d) implies, as to what he has seen ? How can the inspector who inspects the departments in New South Wales report about the classification of civil servants in South Australia or Queensland? I wish the Minister to explain the working of this wonderful provision, which I foresee will end in a deadlock. How is the commissioner to do the work of classification, grading and fixing salaries, unless there is some provision for the inspectors to meet together to compare notes and then set to work to do what I want the chief officers in the States to do with their better knowledge. Once we understand how this most important work is to be done a most dreadful flaw is apparent on the face of the clause. The inspectors cannot all go and do the same work. If the officers are worthy men - as I believe they are - they would prefer to be classified by men who have grown up with them, and not by new men.

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - I fail to see anything wonderful or ambiguous in the clause. It is perfectly clear that each inspector is to inspect the departments and make all possible inquiries, and then furnish a full report in writing to the commissioner, including his recommendation.

Senator Dobson

- As to the particular State.

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Senator DRAKE

- Of course the inspector's recommendation is to be with regard to the men who have come under his notice during the inspection. He is not to make a recommendation concerning men he knows nothing about. The confusion in the clause has been created by Senator Dobson himself.

Senator Dobson

- How does the inspector help to classify the officers of one State with the officers of all the States ?

Senator DRAKE

- That is the business of the commissioner after he gets the reports and the recommendations from the inspectors. He can adopt any part of the recommendations he likes. He has then knowledge as to the conditions of the service in each State, and it is his business to take the necessary steps to bring about a harmonious system.

Senator Dobson

- The Minister does not see my point - that the inspectors cannot make any recommendations without classification.

Senator DRAKE

- Each inspector will make his recommendation with regard to the matters which he has been deputed to inquire into. When the commissioner gets this information from the inspectors he will be in a position to take the proper steps to harmonize the conditions of the civil service in the different States.

Senator GLASSEY

(Queensland).- The remarks of

Senator Dobson

imply that there will be an inspector for each State.

Senator Dobson

- I hope not.

Senator GLASSEY

- The honorable and learned senator said that an inspector would be employed to make an inspection in each State. I do not view the provision in that light. I think that the commissioner will send inspectors to those States to which, in his judgment, it is necessary to devote their attention, and to gather all the information to enable him to carry on his work. It may be necessary to send all the inspectors, or a portion of them, to one State. Senator Dobson expressed the opinion that the civil servants would prefer to be classified by the heads of their departments. I do not hold that opinion at all. My chief reason for supporting the appointment of the commissioner and inspectors is that justice may be done, more particularly to the officers in the lower grades, who, in my judgment, have not received that fair play to which they are entitled. I would strongly object to leave the classification and grading of civil servants in the lower grades in the hands of the heads of the departments. Unless we have an independent authority to do this work, the civil servants in the lower grades will not receive that treatment which in my judgment they are entitled to.

20 0 2

Senator DOBSON

(Tasmania).- The remarks of

Senator Glassey

seem to me to carry a kind of vote of censure against every chief officer in the States. We can find instances of failure of justice wherever we look - from the woolsack downwards. To make a charge of that sort against the chief officers in the States is, I think, a very great mistake.

Senator Glassey

has failed to grasp the facts as they exist. The facts are that all the civil servants have been graded, not by the chief officers, as I desire, but by the Public Service Boards in which he has such confidence. I ask, taking all the services of the States and having them properly graded, how are they to be classified into one service ? If there are six inspectors - one to each State - or, as I hope will be the case, three inspectors - one to every two States - how is the classification to be arrived at unless the inspectors personally examine the officers and then confer together, compare notes, make recommendations, and suggest a classification? I wonder that the Postmaster-General does not see the point. But if the Government are content to let the classification of the public service be done in this unpractical and impossible way, I must submit.

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I beg to move -

That after the word "report," in sub-clause (2), line 1, the following words be inserted - "and the report of

the permanent head of the department. "

The object of this amendment is to make the sentence read -

After considering any such report, and the report of the permanent head of the department, the commissioner may propose to the Governor-General.

I desire that the more or less fragmentary information, which is all that the inspectors will obtain, shall be supplemented by the detailed information that it is within the competency of the officers responsible for the administration of -the departments to furnish. I put it in this way : What kind of discipline would be secured on board a vessel, if every time the captain desired to give an order or allot duties to his men it was necessary for him to get authority from the agents or owners 1 The captain would be powerless. That is one of the objections I have to this Bill - that the heads of departments or the permanent heads practically have no authority whatever. They will be held responsible for the discharge of work by men over whom they can exercise no control whatever. I do not desire to minimize the authority of the inspectors, but I do wish that officers who are charged with the control of the different branches of the public service shall at least be required to furnish reports to the commissioner. Those reports, taken in conjunction with the inspectors' reports, will probably lead to a more satisfactory solution of difficulties than would be arrived at without them. If any honorable senator likes to change the permanent head for any other officer, so far as the furnishing of this information is concerned, I shall not object. But it seems to me that the permanent head is the proper person.

Senator DRAKE

- In order to carry out what Senator Neild has in view it would first be necessary to provide that the permanent head should make a report to the commissioner, and in the clause providing for that it would have to be stated what was to be the nature of the report, and what details were to be furnished to the commissioner for his guidance. Seeing that there is no provision in the Bill for the permanent head making any report of this kind, it seems to me that it will be entirely insufficient to insert the words proposed. If they were inserted it might seem that some provision had been made for the report of the permanent head.

Senator Dobson

- Under clause 12 he has to advise the Minister.

Senator DRAKE

- Under other clauses a report is required from the permanent head of the department, but there is this difference - that in the clause we are now dealing with, several departments are affected. Clause S provides that officers may be transferred from one department to another. Therefore it may be necessary for those who work with the commissioner to have a report not from one permanent head, but from the permanent heads of several departments. Those reports might be contradictory. If it is suggested that instead of a report from the permanent head, a report from the chief officer should be obtained, I think that is entirely out of the question, because it would put the permanent head into a most invidious position. It would be asking a subordinate officer to report to the commissioner over the head of the permanent head. The inspector himself would be reporting on the chief officer, and the chief officer also would be sending a report to the commissioner. That is the reason why, in this clause, no reference is made to the report of the permanent head.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- There was such a provision in the Bill originally, but it was struck out in another place.

Senator DRAKE

- Probably for the reason that this deals with the organization of the whole service, and not, with one department only, and also because it does not deal with the officers of any one State, but with the officers throughout the Commonwealth. Therefore, it seems neither necessary nor desirable that any provision should be made for the consideration of a report from the permanent head of one department.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- At first sight it would appear that the amendment of Senator Neild was an advisable one, seeing that the permanent head is the head of the whole of the branches of a department in each State. But looking at the matter further, I think that the amendment would complicate matters. We are appointing six inspectors, whose duty it will be to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the details of all

departments in each State. In order to carry out the instruction of this sub-clause, the inspector must bring himself into close contact not only with the officers in the departments, but also, and more particularly, with the chief officers. Having got all the information he requires, he will forward it to the chief commissioner. I do not see how the permanent heads can be called upon, or can be expected, to make reports on the whole of the departments in all their branches in the six States. They cannot visit the branches themselves, and, therefore, any reports they might make would be of little use. It must be borne in mind also that this process would take a good many months. Even in Victoria, before the Public Service Act was passed, it took twelve months before the various departments had been carefully looked into, and a report made. The commissioner having received the reports from the inspectors, and carefully considered them, will proceed to make a report to the Minister. The Minister will consider that report, and either accept it or not as he thinks fit. In arriving at a conclusion on the report, the Minister will necessarily consult the permanent head of the department concerned. That is provided for by sub-clause (2) of clause 12. That is where the permanent head will come in. I am dealing with the matter as an ordinary man of business, and I say that the arrangements made in the Bill are strictly practicable. To obtain reports from the permanent heads at this particular point will complicate and not simplify matters. But let the permanent heads be, as they are intended to be, the advisers of the Ministers, and then the report of the commissioner, based upon the reports of the inspectors, will be submitted to the permanent heads ; and no doubt the Minister will be to a considerable extent guided by the advice of the permanent heads, who necessarily must know a great deal more of the departments than any Minister, who may only be in office a few months.

Senator DOBSON

(Tasmania). - One of the objections I have to this Bill is that the permanent heads and chief officers are placed in a humiliating position under it. The heads of departments are charged with the control, discipline, and management of their departments, but almost the whole of the power is given into the hands of the commissioner. I hold in my hand four articles which appeared in a newspaper in Western Australia when the Public Service Bill was before Parliament in that State. I believe the effect of the publication of these articles was to change the control of the public service of that State from a board back to Ministerial responsibility. These articles were written by an old Victorian civil servant. One of them says -

The general tendency of the Act was to injure the monde of the service. By so much as the powers of the board are magnified in the eyes of the public servants, by so much will their relied for the authority of their immediate superiors be lessened. If the officers be encouraged to look to the board for promotion, the bonds of discipline will be weakened and the authority of heads of departments subverted.

No one can deny the truth of these words. I am in absolute sympathy with Senator Neild, when he desires to put before the commissioner the report or advice of the permanent head of each department. Does the Postmaster-General suppose that justice will be secured in the classification of the whole of these State services into one Commonwealth service, by leaving out the chief officers and the permanent heads'? Who r.ro going from knowledge to ignorance when we pass by the men who know everything, who have grown up with the officers, and every day estimate the use and value of their services - who know the efficient man on the one hand and the dunce on the other, the careless and the careful man, the punctual man and the man who is always late, and know also those who have their heart in their business, and those who simply consider what horse will win every race that takes place in Victoria. It may be said that the views of these men will be considered. But do honorable senators suppose that if we pass over and humiliate the heads of departments and chief officers, they are going to put down in black and white what they think about A and B in order that their recommendations may go before the inspectors and be perhaps entirely disregarded 1 Is it supposed that they are going to run the risk of making themselves unpopular by making recommendations to nien who will know nothing, and which perhaps only after six months will come before the Minister ? It is running in the face of human nature to suppose anything of the kind. Therefore I am with Senator Neild in saying that before the various officers are classified, the permanent heads should be consulted. But here they are being absolutely passed over. I suggested in my letter to the newspapers that there should be a temporary board, consisting of a chief officer and permanent head from each State - that would be twelve of them - with an outside man, say a stipendiary magistrate or a county court Judge accustomed to weigh evidence, as chairman. We ought to give him

both a deliberative and a casting vote. That board should be temporary, and the chairman should be paid for his services for three, six, or twelve months. When we get the services once classified as one service we shall have something to start upon, but to imagine that these inspectors or the permanent heads can make in a report a classification of the whole service is absurd. They must meet together and confer. If the Minister means it, he should provide that whoever is going to do the work shall have the duty not only of examining and reporting, but of conferring with the different inspectors and making a general report suggesting the classification to the commissioner. Then the commissioner could, and I suppose would, go behind the back of the inspectors, hear the opinion, of the permanent heads, and proceed to classify the Commonwealth service. I do not like the proposal at all.

Senator Lt.-Col.

NEILD (New South Wales). - If we are going to exclude the chief officers from all right of control and from the opportunity to give advice, we might very well characterize this measure as one for the propagation of "pimps." I say that deliberately, because I know what has happened in connexion with this method of sending round persons to make inquiries, and of classifying as the result of those inquiries. The man most likely to play informer is closeted with the inspecting officers, who pump from him all the tittle-tattle that can be obtained in connexion with the different officers employed in his division. As the result of this behind-the-back tittle-tattle, the classification takes place, and the permanent heads have no say in the settlement of these important questions. As I understand this Bill, the scheme of it is that the Governor-General shall be the apex of everything. To him on one side the commissioner reports, and on the other side the Minister reports. The heads of departments report to the Minister, and the inspectors report to the commissioner. Beginning at the base, we have on the one hand the inspectors reporting to the commissioner, and the commissioner to the Governor-General; and on the opposite side the chief officers reporting to the Minister, and the Minister to the Governor-General. If we want to increase expense to the Commonwealth, and have an inordinately large number of important officials, who shall by this very process be battering their heads one against the other, wasting their time and the public money, we shall succeed, most admirably under this system. What is the use of the Minister when he is superior to the commissioner in one respect, and inferior to him in another? Under this system, instead of having a proper administration beginning at the beginning, we shall have nothing but conflict till we get to the Governor-General.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Who is the Governor-General but the Minister in charge of a department?

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- That may be, but why not have matters of detail thrashed out before we reach the apex of the Constitution? Why should nothing be settled by the Minister until the two forces to which I have referred come to agreement or conflict? When a conflict has arisen, who is to settle it? Is the commissioner, who has authority over the inspectors, or the Minister, who has authority over the chief officers, to be paramount?

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- The Governor-General.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I am sure the honorable senator must see, if he will take the example of the business of a great firm such as that of which he is the head, that he would rather have details settled by the heads of departments under him than have them brought to him for settlement.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Distinctly no; we should never do such a thing - it would ruin the business.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- That is a new idea in dealing with details. I do not exactly see what is the use of having heads of departments if we can have nothing settled but by the primary authority.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- The honorable senator will bear in mind that we are dealing now with appointments.

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- If the honorable senator will look at paragraph (f), he will find that an inspector is required to furnish in

writing to the commissioner a full report as to every inspection, examination or inquiry, including therein recommendations for the consideration- and determination of the commissioner. That, no doubt, includes appointments, but it includes a great deal more. It includes every detail upon which it may be the duty of an inspector to report. I have had some experience in these matters, as I was, for some little time, a member of the old Civil Service Board of New South Wales. I never was an official, and never had a relative who was an official ; and what I know of these matters has been gained from positions occupied, so to speak, outside the service. I have no official prejudices, but I think that great care should be taken to preserve the authority of those who are responsible. Under this Bill the chief officers will be charged with the responsibility. If the inspectors make wrong reports, and the commissioner comes to wrong conclusions as the result of the hearsay evidence upon which he will act, the person held responsible, if anything goes wrong, will be the chief officer, who, under the Bill, can do nothing. It will be my duty to take a division upon the question, though I may be in a minority.

Question - That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted - put. The committee divided -

Ayes 9

Noes..... 14

Majority 5

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I have given notice of two amendments of the same character in other parts of the clause. They are not consequential, but in view of the decision which has just taken place, I do not think it is worth while to occupy time in fighting the matter further. In view of the absence of my own colleagues in New South Wales, I shall not move those amendments.

Senator DOBSON

- I desire to draw the particular attention of the Postmaster-General to what I regard as an obvious inconsistency between sub-clause(2) and clause 9, which provides that -

The commissioner shall determine the division, class, subdivision of class, or grade of every officer.

So that under the sub-clause we are now considering all that the commissioner can do is to propose a classification to the Governor-General. Under clause 12 the permanent head may advise the Governor-General - and, in all probability, submit a contrary report upon the classification suggested by the commissioner - and then under clause 9 the commissioner is himself to determine the classification, and so on. I think the Postmaster-General must see that we require either to alter clause 9 or this sub-clause, because the inconsistency is apparant.

Senator DRAKE

- Clause 9, I take it, provides that where the proposition of the commissioner" has been approved of by the Governor-General it then becomes the duty of the commissioner to carry it out.

Senator Dobson

- If it provided that he should make a record of it or register it I could understand it, but the clause says that "he shall determine."

Senator DRAKE

- He has to make a record of it, and register it, and it is published in the Gazette, but it seems to me perfectly clear that the action taken by the commissioner under clause 9 must be in accordance with recommendations which have been approved by the Governor-General.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- This applies to future appointments.

Senator DRAKE

- I thank the honorable member for the reminder. Clause 8 deals with existing civil servants, who may be required to be reclassified, and clause 9 deals more particularly with officers who may come into the service in the future.

Sub-clauses (1) and (2) agreed to.

Sub-clause (6) -

If the services of any officers in excess in any department are not likely to be required in any other department, the Governor-General may call upon such officers to retire from the public service ; and

every such officer so called upon to retire shall retire accordingly.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- We have so far provided for the arrangement of the whole of the service, and it is evidently anticipated that there may be cases in which there will be officers in excess of the demand in any department or in the service of the Commonwealth as a whole, and the question arises as to how the excess of officers is to be dealt with. That is provided for in this sub-clause. It is absolutely necessary to have such a power. We have to bear in mind that there are two classes of officers in the service, permanent officers, under a system of promotion, and also what are called officers under temporary appointment. In some States more than in others, and in some departments more than in others, there is a considerable number of officers temporarily employed. The retention for years of so-called temporarily appointed officers is a curse to the public service. I know of cases where men have been temporarily employed for six, seven, and eight years. I know of as many as eight or nine men being so employed in one department. It was this system which caused the break-down of the public service in 1884. I do not think any honorable senator will deny that where two officers are discharging similar work, and one of them has to go, it should be the temporary employee. I move -

That sub-clause (6) be amended by the addition of the following words - "Provided that no permanent officer shall be called upon to retire under this section so long as there are any persons temporarily employed by the Commonwealth discharging duties of a similar character to those of such officer.

Senator Drake

- How about the different departments ?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD. If it is necessary to dispense with an officer, surely it should be the officer who has been temporarily employed. Surely it is not fair to dismiss the man who, entering at the bottom of the service, has served for a number of years, and to retain the man who has not been in the service for more than six months.

Senator Playford

- In South Australia some of the temporary men have been in the service for twenty years.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I want the committee to be seized of the importance of dealing equitably with both the permanent and the temporary officers, and on the ground of fair play to give the preference to the permanent men.

Senator DRAKE

- I agree, with the principle underlying the amendment, but I fancy there would be a great deal of difficulty in carrying it out. We have departments in which the work is of a varying character, and we have sub-departments of those departments in each State. Supposing that a man has been temporarily employed for six or seven years in the Post-office in Victoria, and that one temporary man is not wanted, and that there is a permanent officer available in the Custom-house in New South Wales. Do I understand that when a position is to be filled somewhere, a man who has been temporarily employed for some years in the Post-office here is to be dispensed with in order that a permanent officer may be brought down from the Custom-house of New South Wales to take his place ?

Senator Sir FREDERICK

SARGOOD (Victoria). - The clause provides that if there be an excess officer in one department he may be removed to another department in any part of the Commonwealth. Therefore, no harm can be done in the case suggested by the Minister, seeing that the very principle to which he objects is embodied in the clause. Again, nine-tenths of the merely clerical work in all the departments is practically the same, and it matters very little whether the Government transfer an officer from the Custom-house to the Post-office, or vice versa.

versa.

Senator DRAKE

- Is it desirable to make this hard-and-fast rule so that we cannot keep a temporary man in a department so long as there is a surplus in a department in another State ? I think that very often the men who are temporarily employed have just as good merits as those who have procured permanent employment. In some States the opportunities for obtaining permanent positions have been greater than in other States. The amendment means, if in one State there was a surplus of men who had been permanently employed,

they would have to be brought down to another State and put in. the position of men who had been temporarily employed - perhaps for a greater number of years than themselves. If Senator Sargood were administering a department, he would not like to let men who had been serving for three, five, or six years go away in order to make room for men from other States, who, perhaps, had been doing work of a different character.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- There is really nothing in that.

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Senator DRAKE

- I submit that that is the whole point. I think that the merit of each case should be considered, and that if there is an excess officer the commissioner should consider whether it is desirable that the permanent man or the temporary man should go. It would be fair for the commissioner to take into consideration the length- of service of the men, and not keep a man who had secured permanent employment within the last year or two in preference to a man who had been temporarily employed for double the time. Another matter which should be taken into consideration is the convenience of the department to which the officer belongs. So long as employment can be found for him in a department, I do not think that any officer, temporary or permanent, should be put out to make way for officers from any other department, or from any other State.

Senator PLAYFORD

- It sounds very fair, and very reasonable, that a man who is said to be a permanent officer should not go if there is a temporary officer in the department ; but we have to look at the case of States, where a pro and tem. service has been adopted as a part of the civil service. In South Australia, we have a pro and tem. list and a fixed list. Many officers who have been on the pro and tem. list for ten or twenty years are quite as much civil servants, and as deserving of consideration, as those who happen to be on the fixed list. In our original Civil Service Act, we divided the civil service into classes, and we provided for a considerable difference between the classes. In

One class, a cadet who started at £25 went up to £80, and when he rose to £90 he passed into another class, in which he received an annual increase of £10 until he rose to £ 150. When he had got to the top of that class, he and his friends naturally fought very hard to get him into the lowest grade of the next class, so that he might rise by an annual increase of £10 from £150 to £210. A man might be worth £180 who would not be worth £210. We found that we were paying men on the fixed list, very frequently, considerably more than their services were worth. Their services might be worth more than the minimum of a class, but certainly not worth the maximum. Therefore we adopted the system of appointing a number of pro and tem. officers, so that we should pay civil servants only the value of their services. The Government did not think it worth while to trouble about altering the Act. In the Post-office and the Customs department the vast majority of the civil servants are on the pro and tem. list. Possibly in other States such a system has not been adopted. Through force of circumstances, we adopted the expedient of appointing officers right and left on the pro and tem. list - men who in many cases had passed the ordinary civil service examination and entered at the lower rung of the ladder, and whose salaries were gradually increased by Parliament when it was thought that an increase was deserved, without reference to the Civil Service Act. These pro and tem. men were protected under the Act. After they had served five years they were entitled to practically all the privileges of an ordinary civil servant - for instance, to a retiring allowance and to leave of absence. Under this amendment we should have men coming over from a neighbouring State to take the place of men in our Post-office or Customs department, who are called temporary, but who are really permanent employees. Where the circumstances have differed so much in the States, and various practices have been adopted, we must look at each case on its merits quite apart from the question of whether an officer is on the fixed list, or the pro and tem. list. I believe that the commissioner will take length of service into consideration and not trouble his head much as to whether a man is a permanent or temporary employee.

Senator Sir FREDERICK

SARGOOD (Victoria). - Senator Playford has presented a new phase of the question. The officers who have been called pro. and tem. appear to me to be permanent officers who have been appointed under the Act. They are not what we understand as temporary officers in Victoria - namely, men appointed for a

period of not more than six months. My amendment would certainly not act fairly toward such men, and under the circumstances I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Senator DOBSON

(Tasmania). - I

am

very sorry that

Senator Sargood

has withdrawn his amendment. I desire to see temporary officers done away with. I can quite understand that we ought to have temporary officers to a limited extent. But we have evidence from South Australia and New South Wales that men who have served twenty years are still called temporary officers. In my opinion temporary officers ought to retire before permanent officers. If, on the merits of each case, a pro and tem. officer is really a permanent officer he ought to be made permanent.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 9 -

The commissioner shall determine the division, class, subdivision of class, or grade of every officer, and shall keep a record of all officers, showing with regard to each officer his age and length of service, the office he holds, and his division, class, subdivision of class, or grade and Biliary under this Act.

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Senator DOBSON

- The word "determine" is inconsistent with the previous clause, which says that the Governor-General is to determine. In suggesting an amendment, I am placed at a very great disadvantage on account of the very loose language of the previous clause. It does not say plainly what we all mean - that the commissioner is to suggest the classification, and the Governor-General is to finally determine it. If the Chairman had not, with his desire to get the Bill put through quickly - which, I am sure, we all applaud - put the question so hurriedly; I should have proposed an amendment to the effect that the Governor-General should deal with and finally determine the classification. The amendment I wish now to propose is to the effect that the commissioner shall keep a record. The whole fight in the other House was in regard to giving over the management of the civil service to an outside commissioner, but at the same time maintaining the responsibility of the Governor-General. If we allow the Governor-General to finally determine the classification proposed by the commissioner it is all right, but if we say that the commissioner himself shall determine the classification we undo the work which has already been done in clause 8. Therefore we should say that the commissioner shall keep a record of the officers as classified by . the Governor-General, or whose classification has been' finally dealt with under the proposed clause. I move -

That all the words from "determine" line . 1, to "shall," line 2, be omitted.

The clause will then simply read, "The commissioner shall keep a record."

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I do not know that it necessarily follows that clause 9 is consequential upon clause 8. That clause deals with the transference of a number of officers from the States to the Commonwealth. The commissioner has to classify them and submit his classification to the Minister. But as I read clause 9, it refers to future appointments, not to matters dealt with by clause 8.

Senator Dobson

- Does Senator Sargood suggest that the Governor-General should classify all present officers and the commissioner all future ones?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

-Certainly. That is what is done in the State Services. The Public Service Board receives applications, makes the necessary examinations, and recommends who shall be appointed to a particular class. Of course, it is the ultimate signature of the Minister that completes the business. There can be no question of that. But this provision has nothing to do with clause 8. It refers to future appointments in the service. At the same time, however, I think the clause could be made clearer.

Senator GLASSEY

- I should be very slow indeed to support anything that would limit the power of the commissioner to regulate, control, supervise, grade, and classify any one in the service, subject to the control of the Governor-General. The commissioner must have a free hand, and anything that limits his power of dealing with the service in this particular, will be a mistake. I strongly object to any limitation of the power of the commissioner; but at the same time I recognise that throughout the Bill he merely has to recommend, and the final approval must rest with the Governor-General.

Senator FRASER

- I take the view, that it would be very dangerous indeed to give the commissioner supreme power in the determination of the division and class of each officer. It would create a panic in the civil service, unless the commissioner were recognised as a very high-minded and just man. I will support any amendment that will subject the determination of the commissioner to the final control of the Governor-General, which of course means the Executive Council. I do not object to the commissioner having a hand in it, but to give him the final determination would be very wrong indeed.

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Senator DRAKE

- I must admit that I do not like the word "determine" myself, because clause 9 clearly applies to every officer. I have not the slightest doubt that the commissioner will be the person who will fix and decide upon the class and grade of officers. Of course he must do so, always subject to a control of the Governor-General. The previous clause refers to officers who have been in the service previous to the passing of this measure, but this clause is clearly designed to correct anomalies and to put officers who are in the service in their proper places. If the service in any particular State has not been worked well, the inspector makes his report in regard to the particular department together with a recommendation. The commissioner may then propose certain changes or alterations under clause 8. It is perfectly clear that the commissioner is bound to respect the decision given by

Senator DOBSON

(Tasmania).- I shall be glad to withdraw my amendment on the understanding that the clause will be subsequently recommitted.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sub-clause agreed to.

Sub-clause (3) -

The commissioner shall in the month of February in each year publish in the Gazette a list of all officers on the first day of January in such year together with the particulars so recorded in respect to them. Such list shall be prima facie evidence of the information contained therein.

Amendments (by Senator Pearce) agreed to-

That before the word "publish," line 2, the words "forward to the Governor-General, and" be inserted; that after the word "them," line 5, the words "and showing the date of appointment of such officers," be inserted; and that after the word "therein," at the end of the sub-clause, the following words be inserted: "A copy of such list shall be laid before Parliament within fourteen days of publication, or if Parliament is not then sitting, within fourteen days after the commencement of the next sitting thereof."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10 (Power to summon witnesses and take evidence on oath) -

Senator Sir FREDERICK

SARGOOD (Victoria). - This clause says that the commissioner or any inspectors may summon any person to give evidence. Under the Customs Act a similar power is given, but it only relates to the State in which the inspector may be. This clause will give the inspector power to summon a man from Western Australia to Victoria. That cannot be intended, but, inasmuch as there is a restriction under the Customs Act, it seems to me that there should be a similar one here. I do not move an amendment but suggest the necessity for one.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 11. - (Commission to report on state of public service to Minister.)

Senator DOBSON

(Tasmania). - I desire to do what I can to place the permanent head in a position of some importance. In

Clause agreed to.

Clause 14 -

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act -

All appointments or promotions of officers of the Parliament Library and the Parliamentary Reporting Staff respectively, and all regulations affecting such officers after their appointment, shall be so made on the joint nomination or recommendation of the said President and the Speaker.

Amendment (by Senator Drake) agreed to-

That the word " the," line 2, be omitted, with a view to insert in lieu thereof the words " both Houses of."

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Senator Sir RICHARD BAKER

- I move -

That the words " Library and the Parliamentary Reporting Staff" be omitted.

With the amendment proposed by the Postmaster-General, the paragraph will provide for all appointments or promotions of officers of both Houses of Parliament. The amendment was necessary to cover not only officers of the Library and the Parliamentary Reporting Staff, but gardeners, engineers, and every other officer of Parliament who is not exclusively under the jurisdiction of either the President or Speaker. The amendment I propose will make the clause simpler and more comprehensive.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-clause (2) - (President or Speaker substituted for the commissioner.)

Senator Sir RICHARD

BAKER (South Australia). - I move -

That the words " and by the Clerk of the Joint House Committee) so far as relates to the officers under the control of that committee," be added to the sub-clause.

The reason for that amendment is that since this Bill passed the House of Representatives matters have been altered, and a new department has been created - the Joint House Committee. That committee has had placed under its control everything not under the control of the President or Speaker

or the Library Committee. Honorable members will recollect that the Joint House Committee is provided for specially on the Estimates, and, in addition, the Government have written an official letter stating that all the matters to which I have referred are placed under that committee. It is, therefore, necessary to recognise the Clerk of the Joint House Committee as well as the Parliamentary Librarian and the Clerks of the two Houses.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-clause (3) -

The officers of the Senate, the officers of the House of Representatives, the officers of the Parliament Library, and the officers of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff shall be deemed to constitute separate departments under this Act.

Amendments (by Sir Richard Baker) agreed to -

That the word "and," line 3, be omitted, and that the words "and the officers of the Joint House Committee " be inserted after the word "staff," line 4.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 20-

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Governor-General may, on the recommendation of the commissioner, fix the rate of salary to be paid to an officer occupying any particular office at any sum within the limits of his class or grade, and such sum shall be the salary attached to such officer while he holds such office.

No order shall be made so as to diminish the rate of salary received by the occupant of any office at the time of making such order.

Senator DOBSON

- During the debate on the second reading of the Bill, some honorable senators, with myself, had a little altercation with the Postmaster-General as to the powers given to the permanent heads. The Postmaster-General stated that there were many instances under the Bill in which the permanent heads had power and authority, but I could not find them. If there is any part in which the permanent heads should be introduced it is that dealing with the fixing of salaries. The chief officer should know a great deal

about the value of the services of the officers who have worked under him for many years, and I ask the Postmaster-General to consent to give the permanent heads some power in this matter. If honorable senators will look at clause 27 they will find that, if some person from without the service is proposed for appointment, the appointment is to be made by the Governor-General on recommendation by the commissioner and upon a report from the permanent head.

Senator Drake

- That is a special officer.

Senator DOBSON

- That is so, but if a report from the permanent head is required for a thing of that sort, why not have a report from the permanent head before the Governor-General takes upon himself the tremendous responsibility of fixing the salary of every officer? It is true that the permanent head has to make an annual report, but that will not deal with salaries. I move -

That the words "and upon a report from the permanent head" be inserted after the word " commissioner," line 3.

Senator PLAYFORD

- It would be a mistake to make the amendment, and I am sure the permanent heads would very much rather be relieved of the responsibility of fixing salaries. If there is one disagreeable part of the work of permanent heads it is the fixing of salaries, and they will not thank members of the committee if they put these words in. We might very well put this disagreeable duty upon the exalted individual who is to be placed so high above every one else, and let him take the blame.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Senator Glassey) agreed to-

That the words "by order" be inserted after the word "fix," line 3.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21 -

) All new appointments to the clerical division shall be made to the first subdivision of the fifth class ; and the rate of the salary at which a person is first appointed to such subdivision shall be £40 per annum.

Senator GLASSEY

- I move -

That the words, "such new appointments shall, as nearly as may be, consist of equal numbers of males and females," be inserted after the word " class," line 3.

Senator O'Connor

- Make a sort of Noah's Ark of each department.

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Senator GLASSEY

- This is a matter of some importance. If there is any work for which, by nature, women and girls are fitted it is clerical work, and, considering the comparatively few avenues of employment open to females, I think that when, under this Bill, we are opening the door for employment, we should open it a little wider than is here proposed, and permit females to be employed in this division in equal proportion to men. It is not a novel proceeding. It is neither unjust nor unfair. Considering the large number of avenues of employment which are closed to women, an opportunity should be given for the employment of women in our public service, provided that they pass the same examinations as the men. I do not ask that when once women are employed, they should receive any favour which is not bestowed on men ; but I lay down the principle that wherever it is possible, the opportunity should be given for the employment of women. In this enlightened age, it is only reasonable and fair that women should receive more consideration than they have had. It may be contended by some honorable senators that my amendment, if adopted, is likely to throw men out of employment. I do not think it would, because many avenues of employment are open to men which are closed to women. Take the railway service of Victoria, in which some thousands of men are employed. With the exception of a few ticket collectors and others, very few women are employed. Again in our saw-mills, chemical works, and the bulk of our manufactories, very few women are employed, except at clerical work. In the public service of the Commonwealth, the sexes should be employed in as nearly equal proportions as possible. I shall be amazed if sound reasons can be given why my amendment should not be accepted.

Senator DRAKE

- Like Senator Glassey I have always taken great interest in this subject. It is very desirable that as far as possible every opportunity should be given to women to obtain employment in the civil service, but it should necessarily be limited to the work for which they are suited. There is no reason why we should lay down a hard-and-fast rule that the number of appointments as between the sexes shall be in all cases equal. To give effect to such a rule would cause a great deal of inconvenience. For certain kinds of clerical work women are much better suited than are men. In each case it should be considered whether the position could be best filled by a man or by a woman. Of course the women would have to comply with the regulations in regard to examinations and so forth. Surely if a number of persons are competing for employment in the civil service, young men who have shown themselves specially brilliant and fit for positions are not to be kept out ' simply on account of a hard-and-fast rule, which says that women are to be employed in a fixed proportion to men. The only way in which the matter can be dealt with is by leaving the question entirely open". There is a growing feeling in the civil service that every opportunity should be given for the appointment of women where they can be suitably employed. The proportion of appointments of women has increased, and is increasing. I am afraid that it would work injuriously to the interests of women if we laid down any hard-and-fast rule. For that reason I cannot consent to the amendment.

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Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- I hope that Senator Glassey will not press his amendment. I do not think that honorable senators desire to put any disability on the employment of women. Some reasonable precaution must be taken as to the employment of the sexes. A woman is not in her proper position as the head of a department. She is better employed in looking after her domestic affairs, or the interests of her husband and family. There are reasons, which cannot be explained, why women should not be put in some positions. If Senator Glassey will look over the Post and Telegraph department here, he will find that the interests of women have not been neglected. In the telephone exchange nearly every officer employed during the day is a woman. That does not show any desire to hamper women. It is a common cause of complaint in Melbourne that domestic servants cannot be obtained on any terms. They will go to the factories for 10s. a week, when they might get a far larger wage in good employment, with the advantages of food and lodging.

Senator GLASSEY

(Queensland). - The Postmaster-General has urged that it would be a great hardship to a number of young ! deserving men if women were employed at clerical work in equal proportion to men. Is there no hardship to young deserving women in the present condition of things

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Except in Victoria, Western Australia, and Queensland, the sexes are, I think, in equal proportions in the Commonwealth. Where would the hardship come in under my amendment? Women are not supposed by some honorable senators to eat and drink and lodge in comfortable places, and wear decent clothes, but it is the young men who are supposed to deserve these conditions. My daughters have to live, just as well as my sons, and if there is a section of the community which deserves special consideration it is the young women, who are not able to protect themselves in the same way as young men can do. It is a poor argument to advance that if women were employed it would be a great hardship to a number of young men. Young men can find employment in various avenues which are closed to women. In the railway service of Victoria, employing 10,000 men, how many women are employed ? Very few in comparison with the vast number of men. In Queensland, how many women are employed in the railway service? A couple of hundred.

Senator Fraser

- They could not be employed on the railways.

Senator GLASSEY

- That is one reason why they should be employed in the public service.

Senator Drake

- There is nothing in the clause to prevent a woman from being employed.

Senator GLASSEY

- The prejudices which have existed will continue to operate unless Parliament sees that a fair opportunity

of employment is given to women. I do not lay down a hard and fast rule. I simply use the expression, "as nearly as may be," which means that if it is impracticable to employ women the Government may appoint men. When an examination is fixed to take place in a country town, an invitation should be given to the girls to compete with the boys. Whenever a question relating to women is submitted to a House of Parliament, it provokes a certain amount of laughter and hilarity. It is suggested that women have not been created by Providence to perform the same duties as men, but merely to do domestic work, to be the hirelings or servants of men. It is a poor argument against my amendment to say that we cannot get domestic servants. I ask Senator Zeal why domestic servants cannot be procured in Melbourne. If domestic servants were provided with better homes, granted a little more liberty, and treated more humanely, they could be more easily procured. I do not wonder sometimes that domestic servants are not very easily procured. When I was a postmaster in Queensland some years ago, I had an opportunity of seeing the homes of many girls-, and they were not at all too comfortable. My experience in the old country, and in Australia, has been that wherever comfortable homes are provided, and fair consideration is extended not only by the head of the house, but by the women, domestic servants can be secured. I have no sympathy with this everlasting cry that domestic servants are not procurable, and that we must keep a number of girls in reserve in order that persons in high places may procure domestic servants. ' Some honorable senators say that the telegraph department is filled with women. In the postal department in Queensland, only sixteen or twenty girls are employed.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Six times that number in Victoria.

Senator GLASSEY

- Out of 11,178 persons employed in the public service of the Commonwealth, 1,000 odd are women. Is that a fair proportion 1

Senator Clemons

- Yes.

Senator GLASSEY

- It is not. I do not contend that in all the departments women would be capable of filling the various positions, but I do hold that if there is work for which women are eminently fitted, physically and mentally, it is clerical work. I have some notes with regard to the number- of persons employed in different branches of industry. If the committee will not agree with my amendment I hope they will consider it, and not treat it with levity and laughter. It should be discussed in a rational way.

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Senator FRASER

- I regret that Senator Glassey has apparently adopted the view that honorable senators are prejudiced upon this subject. I can assure him that I for one am not. We have to remember that woman is so constituted by nature that it is not possible for her in the majority of cases to occupy permanent positions in the civil service. Naturally, and properly, young women look forward to getting married. Nature has implanted a strong instinct in them which leads them in that direction. Is it not better that our civil servants in the majority of cases should be males with wives and families to- support? If women are engaged in the civil service of course they must be unmarried. It would be impossible for a woman to attend to her domestic duties and at the same time occupy a position in the service. It is much better for young women to be employed in domestic service than in factories or workshops. As a rule, I deny that domestic servants are treated badly. Of course there are all sorts of persons employing servants. Some may be very cruel, but some are kind, and, as a rule, domestic servants are well treated. In my own home, some of my servants have been in my employ for twenty years. I have never found any difficulty in getting good servants. But I do know that it is difficult to get servants to go into the country even for tip-top wages . The result is that we have to employ male cooks at wages as high as £1 a week, with good house accommodation. I am aware that considerable difficulty is experienced in getting good domestic servants, even at good wages. Do we want to see our women treated as women are in Germany and other continental countries ? I have travelled a good deal, and should not like to see Australian women working as I have seen women working in Germany and Austria. I saw a woman in the streets of Dresden dragging a little cart of coal.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- I have seen a woman drawing a plough in South Australia.

Senator FRASER

- I have travelled through South Australia many times, but I never saw anything of that kind. In English speaking countries the status of women has been raised greatly during the last 50 years, and is still being raised. I admit that there is plenty of room for improvement, but there is no necessity for inserting this provision in the Bill, and I shall oppose it.

Senator DE LARGIE

- I rise to support Senator Glassey's amendment, the object of which is to secure a fair share of employment in the Government departments for our women folk. As Senator Glassey has complained, the proposal has been received with altogether too much levity. It is a more serious matter than the committee appear to think, because the amount and the kinds of employment open to women are very restricted. I hold that most of the work done in connexion with the Postal department can be done infinitely better by women than by men. There are so many avenues of employment which are unfitted for women that every facility should be given to them to get justice in this respect. We have heard a good deal about woman's proper place being in the household, but I do not know that it is more fitting for a woman to be employed in domestic service than in the State service. There is much work of a domestic nature which can be more fittingly done by men than by women. The argument that men should be employed so that they may make homes for women is good enough so far as concerns married men, but we know that most of the applications for positions in the service are made by single men. Therefore that argument does not hold good. Moreover, women have to live until they get married, if they intend to marry, and many of them have the responsibility of keeping homes, having no male relatives to support them. Therefore, I contend that the proposal is a very reasonable one, which should receive the support of every honorable senator who wishes the women of the country to be able to secure an honest living.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- I am going to oppose the amendment for the very reason Senator Glassey has given for moving it. I agree that everything possible should be done to enable women to earn an honest livelihood, and I shall do everything I possibly can, so that when women are doing work for the Government or for any one else, where the influence of Parliament can extend, they shall get remuneration on a similar scale to that given to men for the same class of work. But the argument of Senator Glassey cuts both ways. He contends that in regard to work for which women are adapted - that is in the clerical branches of the departments - there should be as nearly as possible an equal number of men and women employed. Does not the honorable senator see what that would lead to? We do not want to restrict to one-half of each sex an employment that is entirely adapted for women. I hold that, as far as possible, a majority of women ought to be employed at work for which women are admirably adapted. Consequently, the object Senator Glassey has in view would be defeated by the employment of an equal number of men and women in occupations for which women alone are peculiarly suited. He imagines that because in the past women have not had a fair show - simply because they have not had the same opportunities for education as they have now - they will not be employed in the future. But I hope that suitable positions will be made available for them. I say not merely that one-half of those engaged, but that in some branches the large majority of those employed should be women. Without going into all the sympathetic expressions that have been used with respect to domestic servants - with which we have nothing to do in connexion with this Bill - I declare myself against the amendment. We could all talk that sort of clap-trap if we had any desire to do so, but I hope that we shall pass this measure some day or other, and, therefore, I do not intend to discuss questions that have nothing to do with it.

Senator GLASSEY

(Queensland). - I am sure that my honorable friend

Senator McGregor

is perfectly sincere in the view of this matter which he has expressed, but, at the same time, I think he is mistaken. I know of no better guide for the future than what has occurred in the past; and if we judge as to how the sexes are to be employed in the future by what has happened in the past, there will not be much show for the females. Let me direct attention to a few figures. In New South Wales the Commonwealth

Government employs nearly 4,000 persons in connexion with branches of the service taken over from the State. The number of females employed is only 219. Is that a fair proportion? In Victoria, the Commonwealth Government employs 2,764 civil servants, of whom only 390 are females. In Queensland there are 1,288 persons employed, of whom only 45 are females. In the model State of South Australia, I find that of a total of 1,232 persons employed in the Commonwealth service there are only 127 females.

Senator McGregor

will admit that the officials who have the employment of women will continue to be of the same class, and there is not much chance that they will, in the future, make a larger selection of females. In Tasmania, of 559 persons employed in the Commonwealth service, there are 101 women, the largest percentage in any of the States. In Western Australia there are 1,422 persons employed in the Commonwealth service, and 217 of them are females. If

Senator McGregor

anticipates that a larger proportion of females will be employed in the departments in the future he is likely to be woefully disappointed, and it would be much better if the honorable senator would assist me in taking this step, which would, at any rate, guarantee the employment of a greater number of women in the future. Now, let us take a few of the industries which are entirely closed to women. Take mining, for instance. I should be sorry to see women employed in mines, though in my young days, in Scotland, I saw women working at the pit banks. In the Commonwealth there are 83,000 miners, and 20,000 men employed in occupations connected with mining, or over 100,000 men; and that avenue of employment is entirely and properly closed to women. Then the foundries, chemical works, tanneries, and iron works are all closed to women. Surely it is not too much to ask that this clerical division of the service shall be open to women.

Senator Playford

- So it is.

Senator GLASSEY

- It is open only to a limited degree.

Senator Playford

- But the employment of women has been increasing. I can remember the time when there was not a woman employed in the Government service in South Australia.

Senator GLASSEY

- There are only 127 employed now in the Commonwealth service in that State, and there are very few employed in the State service. It is often said that if women are employed they will throw men out of work; but the fact that if men are employed exclusively women must be thrown out of work is never taken into account. Viewing it from every possible stand-point, I think that this is a fair proposal. It is sometimes contended that if we offer increased facilities for employment to women they will be prevented from marrying. In a very great many instances it would be a good thing if they were. Tens of thousands of women marry merely for a home, and as a consequence tens of thousands of marriages are mistakes.

Senator Playford

- The more women there are employed in factories the more bad housewives there will be.

Senator GLASSEY

- I do not agree with that remark.

Senator Playford

- A good servant girl trained in a good family will make a far better wife for a working man than a factory girl.

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Senator GLASSEY

- No doubt a girl brought up in a good domestic home with some degree of refinement will make an excellent wife for a working man but I entirely dissent from the view that factory girls make bad wives. I worked myself in a factory and amongst factory girls. I married a factory girl, and no better woman or better mother ever breathed. There are tens of thousands of factory girls who would make splendid wives and heads of households. It does not follow that because a girl works in a factory she is necessarily unadapted to preside over a home. It may be done unconsciously, as it is likely to be on this occasion, but by curtailing the opportunities for the employment of women they are driven in thousands of instances to

forced marriages which lead to infinite mischief and to no end of strife, difficulty, hardship, and privation through life. If we endeavour to find openings for the employment of women, and to place them in such a position that they will be able to earn their own livelihood, they will be independent, and they will be less likely to make an unfortunate choice than they are under existing circumstances. I say that in the performance of clerical duties women are equal, and in many instances superior, to men. I do not wish to put them on a superior pedestal, but I know that in the United States of America women are employed in every possible direction. I have seen them in printing offices there standing at the same frames with men, doing the same work, and receiving the same pay for it. I have seen them employed in hundreds of instances in the departments at Washington, and I know that in one of the departments a lady was the chief officer, and was receiving £700 a year. I deny that, so far as clerical work is concerned, women are unable to perform the duty as well as men.

Senator PULSFORD

- I have listened to the remarks made by Senator Glassey, without getting very much enlightenment from them. One point which appears to me to call for some explanation is as to whether it would be practicable, even if it were desirable, to draw a hard and fast line, and say that 50 per cent, of the employes should be of one sex and 50 per cent. of the other. It appears to me that to pass any such amendment as this would be to tie the hands of the Postmaster-General in an extraordinary manner. It must be remembered that the employment of females is already allowed. I do not know whether the honorable senator wishes the 50 per cent. to apply in the aggregate, whether he would allow 100 of one sex to be employed in one State and 100 of the other sex in another, or whether, in the case of three or four employes being required in an office, the number of either sex selected for appointment should be decided by the proportion of either sex engaged in the office at the time. Any such proposal as that seems to me to be incapable of being carried out. I do not think it desirable that the hands of the Postmaster-General should be tied in this way. I am entirely friendly to the employment of female labour to the fullest degree to which it is reasonably available, but I object to any hard and fast line being drawn such as Senator Glassey proposes.

Senator PEARCE

(Western Australia). This is one of those questions upon which I think it is not wise to give a silent vote, lest it might be misinterpreted. I claim to have as much sympathy with women workers as

Senator Glassey,

but I recognise the impracticability of this proposal. I wish to see women treated in the same way as men in the public service, and I certainly wish to see them paid equally well for similar services.

Senator Glassey

- We all agree with that. I do, at any rate.

Senator PEARCE

- I do not know that all agree with it. I can see that in some instances applications might be invited to fill certain appointments, and there might not be an equal number of either sex amongst the applicants. Yet, if this amendment were made, we should have to employ an equal number of women and men, whether the women would be more suitable for the employment or not. I think that if men are more suitable for certain positions they should be appointed to them. While I have every sympathy with women workers, I do not propose to let my sympathy run riot by supporting such an amendment as Senator Glassey proposes.

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I do not care to give a silent vote upon this subject. The Bill is permissive as to the employment of females, and it is undesirable to provide by a hard-and-fast rule for the employment of an equal number of both sexes. I have never given a vote that has had the effect of limiting the reasonable chances in life of persons of either persuasion, but it does appear to be possible that we may be making a scientific effort to alter by regulation that which Providence has decreed. I recollect reading not so long ago of a French gentleman who expressed his poignant . regret that he was not alive on the day of creation, because it would then have been in his power to give the Almighty several useful hints. It appears to me that some of the would-be scientists of to-day desire to give the Almighty several useful hints as to the proper sphere of duty of the members of the two sexes. We may reasonably differ from one another. I feel

convinced that Senator Glassey has made this proposal with the most absolute conscientiousness. But while we are continually seeking new occupations for women, we cannot close our eyes to the very serious problem which lies before Australia, in the very remarkable and undesirable diminution of the birth rate. I do not say that the two things are necessarily connected, but we might reasonably take them into consideration, and see whether we are not interfering to some extent - of course unintentionally - with the design of nature. If this were a proposal to exclude women from the public service, I should vote against it. Let there be every reasonable chance, and every possible fair play, but do not compel the employment of equal numbers. There are thousands of positions in the public service which it would be degrading to women to fill.

Senator Glassey

- - My amendment deals simply with the clerical division.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I do not know that a young or middle-aged woman is happier or better placed in the close atmosphere of a telephone exchange or an office, even if it be in the clerical division, than she would be, or is, in the management of her own home. I offer Senator Glassey the expression of my respect for his excellent intention and his bona fides, and if I vote against him it is not because I desire to put a limit on the avenues of employment for women, or to interfere with the achievement of his object, but because I think it undesirable to create a kind of obligation to make appointments which might not be in the interest of the public service, or in the interest of those to whom they might be given.

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- There are one or two points which have been somewhat overlooked. The amendment is restricted to the clerical division, and it refers only to new appointments. We have a fully-manned civil service, and therefore the number of women who might be appointed under this amendment would be very few. It is only proposed that women shall be appointed when the positions to be filled are suitable to their employment. If such an amendment is not made, although we have undoubted testimony that women are equally as good as men for certain offices in the public service, still they may be debarred from employment by prejudice. For this reason I support the amendment.

Senator O'KEEFE

- I offer Senator Glassey not merely my sympathy, but my support. We have heard a great deal about the inadvisability of restricting the number of domestic servants. Perhaps it would not be a bad thing for humanity if domestic servants were fewer, and more women were employed in avenues, similar to that which is advocated by Senator Glassey. Senator Pearce is afraid that the suggestion is impracticable, but I do not see where the impracticability comes in. Senator Stanforth Smith hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that the amendment dealt with only the clerical division. No honorable senator will deny that women are equally as competent as men to take any place in the clerical division. We should not be forcing on his department anything which the Postmaster-General would find impracticable if we assented to the amendment. Perhaps some honorable senators think that we should limit the field of domestic service if we threw open to the women of Australia other channels of employment. But if the field of domestic service were limited, it would make householders treat their servants better, and give them fairer conditions. There is a difficulty in obtaining domestic servants, but how many householders does it touch ?

Senator Stewart

- A very small proportion.

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Senator O'KEEFE

- The wives and daughters of the larger proportion of our householders have to do their own domestic work. I am not afraid of restricting the area from which the ranks of domestic servants can be recruited. The conditions of life for domestic servants have been much improved ; but until very recently in many households they were looked upon as very inferior beings. They were very little more to be considered than the watch-dogs of the household. I am glad to say that our experience is showing us that that condition of things is improving, and I think it will go on improving if we throw open to the young women of Australia as many avenues of employment as we can. The amendment does not tie the hands of the Postmaster-General greatly it simply gives to him and the head of the department a mandate from

Parliament, that as nearly as may be and wherever practicable, there shall be in the clerical division an equal number of women employed as of men. I hope the amendment will be carried, because, while it cannot do harm, it may do good.

Senator HARNEY

- The last speaker has told Senator Glassey that he has not only his sympathy but his support. Though usually I am entertained by listening to Senator Glassey, whose sentiments are generally broad and generous, I must say that, on this occasion, he has not my support. He has not even my sympathy, because what he proposes to do is to establish it as an inflexible rule that half the number of persons employed in the Government departments shall be women. Now, I think that women are very well able to look after themselves. My little experience and observation of women, and my general experience of mankind, have convinced me that where a woman is willing to work, and is competent to discharge the duties of the position for which she applies, there is a tendency in our minds, apart from any law, to give her a slight preference over a man. But nothing can be more injurious to the interests that are sought to be advanced - those of women - than this everlasting advancing and alleging of supposed grievances from which women are said to suffer. It has the effect of making the lowest class of that sex fancy that they are very hardly dealt with by domineering man, and it therefore brings to the surface in that class sentiments and conduct that reflect in a manner that is unjust upon the better members of the sex. We have been told that it would be a splendid thing if domestic servants were better treated. In my opinion, it would be a splendid thing for them if they were very much worse treated. It is the good treatment they get in the Australian States that has turned their heads, so that they have come to think that that is a right which they should regard as a privilege and a favour.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- I am afraid the honorable and learned senator's knowledge is not great upon this subject.

Senator HARNEY

- It may not be, but I have no hesitation in frankly expressing views which I hold very strongly. I am one of those who would like to see the lot of women shaped by the sentiments and thoughts of the better thinking among women themselves ; and I am quite sure that that section of females which makes the most noise and which is getting the most sympathy from those who do not look broadly at the question, do not voice the sentiment which really exists in the minds of the better "members of their own sex. That is the reason why Senator Glassey does not possess my sympathy. Now, I shall show in a few sentences why I cannot give him my support ; because it sometimes happens that we are forced to vote contrary to our sympathies. On this occasion I am not. Senator Glassey himself has quoted certain figures which show that, in most of the States, the proportion of employment of women as compared with men is from 10 to 15 per cent. That is to say, ten men are employed for every one woman. That I contend is the proportion in which the applicants existed, and in which competency was found. I do not know whether the proportion in the clerical division would show such variance in the number of females and males employed, but I am sure it would not show that women were applicants in equal numbers. Instead of taking those figures as a ground for denouncing as unjust and harsh the way in which women have been treated, as Senator Glassey has done, I take them as indicating the true proportion in which the sexes ought to be employed. Because, does any one think that the Government or any employer is going to debar women from employment in those occupations for which they are fitted, simply because they are women ? Is it not the other way? Has it not been always permissive to employ women in the clerical division 1 If we find that they have not been employed to any greater extent than in the proportion of 10 women to 90 men, are we not forced to come to the conclusion that the greater number of men employed is due to the fact that the men were more capable of doing the work?

Senator O'Keefe

- Certainly not.

Senator HARNEY

- Perhaps the honorable senator who interjects will do me the favour of showing why ?

Senator O'Keefe

- Simply because there is a prejudice against the sex.

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Senator HARNEY

- A prejudice against the sex ! There certainly is a prejudice against certain females making themselves male-females, to put it paradoxically ; but there is no prejudice against the employment of a woman in an occupation for which she is fitted. Take typewriting. Women are able to do typewriting, or ought to be, nearly as well as men. I never knew of an employer, and do not think there are any in Australia, who would refuse a position to a typist simply because the applicant was a woman. I am quite sure that the reason for the proportion referred to by Senator Glassey is that that proportion is a true representation of the natural position, having regard to the capacities of women, their energies, their physical strength, their endurance, and their disposition to work. There are a thousand qualities of mind and body and character that go to fit a person for any work, and it is absurd for us to say that women can do this particular work as well as men, as it simply requires the working up and down of the fingers. A woman may not have the energy, or she may not have the desire for continuous occupation. She may feel that there are other occupations which are more in consonance with her thoughts and disposition, and, therefore, she will not be an applicant. It is quite absurd for us to narrow down by some artificial law the occupations in which women ought to work, and therefore would work. We must allow nature to regulate these matters. Men and women apply for employment under the stimulus of a hundred motives which are not bred by Acts of Parliament, but by thousands of generations ; which arise from hereditary impulse and from environment; and which have developed from father to children through many and many centuries. It is utter nonsense for us to try by a flimsy Act of Parliament --to upset these lasting laws of nature which have been moulding for many hundreds of years. If the figures given by Senator Glassey prove anything at all, it is that the proportion of men and women in the past in these employments has been as 10 to 90. We should not, therefore, arbitrarily make the proportion as 50 to 50 - as is desired to be done here. Where persons had a free hand as in Western Australia, where applicants were influenced by the motives which operated on their own judgments, we find that there were 10 women to 90 men engaged in these occupations. We are now told that we must pass an Act of Parliament to compel the proportions to be as 50 to 50. There is no warranty for anything of the kind.

Senator Glassey

- That is only in the clerical division.

Senator HARNEY

- I care not what division it is in. Let us suppose a domestic division. I take it that there are 90 women for every 10 men engaged in domestic services.

Senator Glassey

- No.

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Senator HARNEY

-Very nearly. My point is this - Ought we to say that there must be an equal number of men and women employed as domestic servants 1 No. Why ? Because the experience of life shows that woman's adaptability has brought about the result that there are 90 of them employed for every 10 men in domestic service. Similarly, in these occupations where it is equally permissible for men and women to apply, if we find the proportion reversed, we must abide by that reversal. All my remarks come down to this, that the amendment is one of those attempts which are every day being made by Australian Legislatures to force the hand of nature by passing thoughtless and trumpery laws which recoil on own heads. For these reasons I will oppose this amendment, and every other proposal that has a like tendency. One of the previous speakers said that he would support a proposal that women should be paid an equal amount with men. That is another example of how certain sections would injure the very persons whom they intend to serve. By requiring that an equal amount should be paid to men and women, we should force the employer to take on the persons who could best do the work, and thus women would be thrown out of employment.

Question - That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted - put. The committee divided.

8

AYES

14

NOES

Majority..... 6

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Progress reported.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL

Bill received from the House of Representatives, and, on motion by Senator O'Connor, read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

Customs Regulations - Public Service Bill

Motion (by Senator O'Connor) proposed -

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Senator CLEMONS

- The regulations under the Customs Act have not yet been distributed, and, as I understand, fifteen sitting days are the total time we shall have in which to consider them, I urge that they should be distributed as early as possible.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I understand that the papers are ready, and I shall see that they are distributed at the earliest possible moment.

Senator PULSFORD

- I should like to ask whether the Vice President of the Executive Council will specifically set apart next Friday for the consideration of any objections there may be to the customs regulations. I had a question on the notice paper on the subject. If it be left to honorable members to find an opportunity to discuss this matter they may find that difficult.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I am sorry to say I cannot accede to the request of the honorable senator. We have the Pacific Island Labourers Bill, the position of New Guinea, and other matters to consider, and I cannot promise to set apart any time for the purpose suggested.

Senator DOBSON

- On the 2nd August last a return was ordered, on my motion, showing the maximum and minimum salaries paid to the female employees of the Commonwealth in each State.

The PRESIDENT

- Strictly speaking, all these questions are out of order. I have allowed two questions to be asked, because

I thought that they were necessary, but there ought to be no debate on the motion for the adjournment of the Senate.

Senator DOBSON

- I may be permitted to mention that a mistake has been made as to the return asked for. It was asked for by me, and ordered by the Senate, in order that we might be able to do justice to the very clause of the Public Service Bill which is now before the Senate.

The PRESIDENT

- Honorable members ought to bring forward matters of this sort on a specific motion, or take some opportunity other than that of the motion for the adjournment of the House. According to the standing orders, the question has to be put without debate.

Senator DOBSON

- I am not debating any question, but simply asking the Postmaster-General if he will wire to the other States for the information to which I have referred.

Senator Drake

- That has already been done so far as the Postal department is concerned.

Senator DOBSON

- The return has not been tabled according to the order of the Senate, and I am simply calling attention to the fact.

The PRESIDENT

- It is my duty to administer the standing orders which provide that the motion for the adjournment of the Senate shall be put without debate. Although I have allowed a certain amount of latitude, the rules must

be observed ; and I call the attention of honorable senators to the fact that if they wish to bring forward grievances they ought to take some other opportunity.

Senator Playford

- Let it be done when the Senate meets.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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15:55:00

Senate adjourned at 3.9 p.m.