

Mr. SALES: I suppose Mr. McLean got a holiday?

Mr. ELLIOTT (Waterloo): Yes, he looks out for that part of it. The department could give these men the holiday without adding a single cent to the cost of the mail service.

Mr. LAPIERRE: Do the trains stop on holidays?

Mr. ELLIOTT (Waterloo): We are not dealing with trains; we are dealing with the rural mail service at the moment. I think this is one improvement that the department might very well make. It will go a long way towards satisfying these men if they are given some consideration in this matter.

Mr. LAPIERRE: Are these mail contracts not based on a daily service?

Mr. ELLIOTT (Waterloo): The contracts are made for a year. Personally I think the tender system is wrong. The man who is willing to work for the lowest sum gets the job whether he is qualified or not. These contracts should be let on the same basis as in the case of the letter carriers in the towns and cities. Instead of calling for tenders in the first place, make certain salaries applicable to certain routes, then call for tenders and give the best man the contract. That would improve the service and bring into it a better quality of men. This matter has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the government and I would strongly urge that it be considered.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The United States government have put this plan into effect and the advice of every United States officer is that we stick to our tender system, because in the other case the costs are too great. If we are to have the service we must keep down the cost. A man's qualifications are taken into consideration as well as the amount of his tender.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Waterloo): I am aware of that. I know of instances where the man who made the lowest tender was approached by the official in charge and told that his tender was still too high and that if he would decrease it further he would get the contract. The system does not make for the most efficient service. Undoubtedly this service costs a lot of money but when you consider that these men get an average of only \$45 per mile, or something in the neighbourhood of \$600 or \$700 each, out of which they have to maintain themselves and keep a horse and buggy, I think it

will be admitted that they are getting entirely too little money, even if the service does cost a lot. I think this matter is worthy of attention and should be gone into very carefully.

Mr. MALCOLM: I want to bear out the remarks of the hon. member for South Waterloo on the question of holidays, but before supporting that contention, I want to say that I do not think there has been that reasonableness on the part of the farmers of this country who are being served by rural mail routes that there should be. I have heard complaints of couriers because they missed one service on account of a snow storm or on account of a holiday. As a matter of fact, the rural communities would be very well served if they got no mail on holidays in any part of Canada. What business house gets its mail on a holiday? Then in the winter time we have climatic conditions in Canada which make it practically impossible for a courier to maintain his six or seven hour service in deep snow. What community suffers if it gets its mail in the winter only every other day? There are times in the cities when our mail is delayed for a day on account of bad weather conditions, and it causes no suffering to anybody. I think a service of three times a week on these rural mail routes during the winter would be sufficient. While I support the tender system I think there is a hardship on these couriers on account of the daily service in winter time, and the regular service on holidays. I have always maintained this to Mr. Anderson, who is a very efficient public servant, and I would point out to the acting minister that if he wants to do something for the couriers he can easily take the stand that holidays should be granted to them, and in the stormy winter months the service should be every other day instead of daily.

Mr. CAMPBELL: With regard to discrimination against the Canadian National in the carrying of the mails the minister's remarks imply that the removal of that discrimination would perhaps mean an added cost. I am not entirely clear on that, and I would ask the minister to explain a little further. Suppose I post a letter here in Ottawa for Cochrane, and that letter goes over the Canadian Pacific to Winnipeg. It must come back from Winnipeg to Cochrane, and that means not only a considerable delay but unnecessary handling on the Canadian Pacific. I am not sure that that is true in that particular case, but it is true in many other cases.