

spoken with various couriers, and I see the system in operation in our country. If this resolution is the best we can get, I think we must accept it in principle, with the expectation that, when the year is up, the department will have had time to study this whole matter, so that some system may be worked out under which these people will receive proper pay. The hon. member for Vancouver North mentioned the difficulty of getting routes established. I have had difficulty in getting routes extended. Part of that opposition arises from the fact that the carrier does not want his route extended because it is costing him too much as it is.

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): Whenever a route is extended payment to the contractor is increased in proportion to the extension.

Mr. WHITE (Middlesex East): The other day I had occasion to go to the Post Office Department to inquire as to the possibility of extending a route. The gentleman in charge said, "I am not in very good humour today", and he refused the extension. All I can say to the department in respect of that type of reception is that it is only another nail in the coffin of this administration.

Mr. HERRIDGE: I rise to support the principle of the measure, not because I am entirely in agreement with it, but because in the meantime it does something for people who need help. I think however that we will have to go further than that in this respect. The hon. member for Cariboo expressed in clear language my thoughts on the measure, and the necessity for further action.

I must say I am happy to support the criticism of free enterprise by the hon. member for Peel, so far as rural mail deliveries are concerned. I believe I can say that I agreed with nearly all he said, and particularly with his suggestion that a committee of the house should be set up to deal with this matter. It was the hon. member for New Westminster who said that this question is larger than simply one of rural mail delivery, and suggested that it involves the whole rural mail system, including post offices.

I heartily agree with that, and believe a committee should be set up to study not only rural mail delivery, but also the administration of rural post offices. I believe that in many respects the present administration of rural post offices is inefficient, and there is evidence of many inequalities and injustices. I know there are some who are not receiving the remuneration they should receive, while others are holding positions they should not hold, and receiving remuneration they should not receive.

I know of one instance where a veteran's application for a rural post office was refused. The position was given to another person, with the result that the veteran is now operating the post office upon the condition of his paying the postmaster a percentage of the total income. The postmaster does not go to the post office at all. That is the sort of thing which should not happen in connection with rural post offices.

I know of other instances where postmasters are receiving \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year, and not going near the post offices at all. They are paying some girls petty, pettifogging salaries to do their work. Those positions should be opened to veterans who need jobs. I could go on, at length, giving similar examples. I do think, however, that the suggestion by the hon. member for Peel in respect of the setting up of a committee is a sound one. We should have such a special committee to deal with the problem of rural mail delivery and the administration of rural post offices.

Mr. FRASER: Did all those who applied for bonuses get them?

Mr. BERTRAND (Laurier): I would not be able to answer that without discussing the matter with my officials. I am sure if the couriers asked for bonuses which were not deserved, they would not receive them. I should be glad, however, to give the hon. member the actual number and the total amount.

Mr. FRASER: In my own riding I find there are thirty eight carriers, of whom only sixteen received bonuses. I do not know how the minister or his department can ascertain why one would deserve a bonus and another would not. Someone near me suggests that it depends upon how they vote; I hope that is not so.

In my list before me I find that one man makes a trip of 47.8 miles six times a week, for which he receives \$923.41, plus bonus. The next man travels only 24.7 miles, and he receives \$940. Travelling only about half the distance, he receives about the same payment. That condition is shown all the way through this list, and I know it obtains right across Canada. In the routes set out here the roads are good all the year round, with the exception of times of heavy storms, such as those we have witnessed only recently. One gentleman points out that horses had to be used in the winter time, and I know they have been used on these routes within the last few days. However, those horses are rented, or taken off their own farms. I believe that there should be a set figure per mile for all these routes.