

these matters, and I am sure he will be guided by the best interests of the country, and I hope that that will not conflict with the interests of the people of Inverness.

Mr. McGOWAN. Some months ago, on the Wellington, Grey and Bruce branch of the Grand Trunk Railway, a fast train was put on connecting with Guelph and trains for the east, west and south, but there is no mail on that train which comes down in the evening. It would be a great convenience if it were given the mails, as it is one of the fastest trains on the road, and connects at Guelph with all the trains going east, west and south.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER. The discussion of the mail service is not in order on the item before the committee. We had better pass the first item.

Mr. BLAIN. I understood the hon. minister to say that the same allowances are given the country postmasters as were given by the previous government.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I said that we were dealing with them in the same scale. Whatever the scale was when I took office is in force to-day.

Mr. BLAIN. That would leave rather a false impression on the committee. You would naturally suppose that the country postmasters were receiving the same salaries to-day as under the former administration. But the hon. gentleman has told us that the revenue, in a large number of the smaller post offices, is less than it was before, because more post offices have been established, which necessitates a greater division of the revenue among them. That being the case, I suppose it is fair to assume that the average country postmaster is receiving less now than he did under the former administration.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. My officers inform me that that is not correct. There are fluctuations in salaries as there are in revenues, but some salaries are fixed. Where the salary is in proportion to the revenue, that is where it is paid by a commission, there is fluctuation, but there has been no reduction of revenue because of any reduction in the rate of postage.

Mr. McLENNAN. I see that the comptroller of the railway mail service is here, and I wish to call his attention to the fact that the hon. the Postmaster General has reduced the cost of the mail service in the county of Inverness by over \$5,000 a year for the last seven years. That would amount to something like \$35,000. When the comptroller is called upon to make a report with regard to putting a mail clerk on board that train I hope he will take into consideration the fact that \$35,000 has been sweated out of that service in the past seven years.

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Mr. BLAIN. I confess that I do not follow the statement made by the hon. Postmaster General with respect to the salaries of country postmasters. I am anxious to get the information and have no other object. Am I to understand that the salaries of postmasters do not increase with the revenue of their post offices? Or, if that is not a correct statement, will the hon. gentleman give us an illustration of how the sliding scale he speaks of applies to a country district like his own county?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The scale of payment to the postmasters paid by way of commissions is as follows: 40 per cent upon the gross revenue up to \$800, 25 per cent on the excess between \$800 and \$10,000; 15 per cent on the excess over \$10,000.

Mr. BLAIN. If the revenue is \$150, do I understand the Postmaster General to say the postmasters receives 40 per cent on that amount?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Yes.

Mr. BLAIN. The hon. gentleman's (Hon. Sir William Mulock) report does not appear to bear that out, as he will see by referring to the case of almost any country post office.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The accountant of the department tells me that that is lived up to.

Mr. BLAIN. Would the hon. minister turn to the case referred to by the hon. member for Cardwell, that of Sleswick.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I except from that, offices where there is a fixed salary. In the case of Sleswick, the postmaster is paid a fixed salary of \$20. The gross revenue there is \$18. In these small, minor offices, the rule does not apply. Forty per cent on \$1 would be only \$7.20. Therefore the rule does not apply.

Mr. BLAIN. The hon. minister's statement was misleading, therefore I did not understand him. He makes the statement that up to \$800 the postmasters are paid by commission.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I qualified that.

Mr. BLAIN. Then, the fact is that the Postmaster General was not discussing the underpaid postmasters whose cases the committee are trying to understand. Will he tell us what is the policy of the government with regard to the payment of postmasters where the revenue runs from \$18 up to \$50?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The accountant informs me that where the revenue is \$30 or under, the 40 per cent does not apply, because it would give the postmaster less than is desirable; but, above \$30 the scale is applied.