

Mr. CARLING. The Chief Inspector of the Department has been at Montreal for some time examining into the working of the post office system there, and I expect that shortly some of the improvements which the hon. gentleman has mentioned will be carried out.

Mr. WATSON. I would ask the hon. gentleman if it is his intention to put on a daily mail between Portage la Prairie and Minnedosa, on the North Western Railway, as the people of Minnedosa only get a mail twice a week, although the trains are running daily. At Brandon, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, which is about the same distance, they have a regular mail, while in the case of Minnedosa, they have only two mails a week, and these mails are taken by stage a distance of 32 miles across the country.

Mr. CARLING. I understood that up to this time trains have not been running daily.

Mr. WATSON. Yes; they have.

Mr. CARLING. I believe a report has been sent in from the inspector, in regard to this matter, and if the railway company are running trains regularly, no doubt the arrangement will be made.

Mr. WATSON. Trains have been running daily for about six months.

Mr. GAULT. I am glad to see the great improvement in the postal facilities of Montreal, and I believe, before long, Montreal post office will be the model post office of the Dominion. I am glad the Postmaster-General is determined to make it so.

Mr. BAKER (Victoria, B. C.) I may state, that before leaving the capital last year, matters were arranged for the appointment of a city postmaster at Victoria, British Columbia. The salary of a second-class clerk was provided, \$900 and, an addition of \$600 to the inspector, making \$1,500. My colleague and myself left here with the distinct understanding that that amount would be appropriated for the payment of the salary of city postmaster, separate and distinct from the Post Office Inspector. At that time the Post Office Inspector was also the city postmaster, receiving \$2,400. The gentleman who holds the joint position is 63 years of age, and certainly has not the activity necessary for the position of city postmaster, so as to look after the young clerks in a proper way, and see that they perform their duties efficiently and persistently, as they should in so large and thriving a city as Victoria. I have no doubt that what has been done has been done unwittingly by the Postmaster-General, a gentleman for whom I entertain the highest respect, and I wish him to understand that when I protest against the change which has taken place, I do so in the interests of the public service of the constituency which we have the honour to represent. My colleague and I have advocated that the two positions should be kept separate and distinct. We were perfectly willing that the original Post Office Inspector should continue to hold that office and receive the salary which he then received; but what we really wanted was, a live man who would look after young fellows in the office, and see that they did their duty and would give satisfaction to the public. This can hardly be expected of a man who is sixty-three years of age. I think it would have been wiser to have left that gentleman in his position as Post Office Inspector, and to have appointed a gentleman whom we could recommend, under forty years of age. To my surprise and great chagrin, before reaching Ottawa this Session, the first notice I had of any change there was in an American paper, where I saw that the Post Office Inspector had been disrated, so to speak, and his subordinate, the assistant inspector placed over his head. I have every desire that Mr. Wallace should be retained in the position of inspector until he reaches the age of sixty-five, when I believe he should be compulsorily retired under the Civil Service Act, and the assistant inspector promoted in his place. Now, I notice that provision is made in the Estimates that that unfortunate individual who has been disrated to the city postmastership shall receive a salary of \$2,400. I think the House will agree with me that under the Civil Service Act a city postmaster of the fifth class cannot receive more than \$1,800. I am just as much one of the custodians of the public money as the members of the Cabinet, with all respect to them, and I would be failing in my duty if I did not point out this discrepancy. I move that \$2,400 be struck out, and that \$1,800 be substituted therefor. I appeal to the hon. Minister of Public Works if I am not correct in the statement I make.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. As the appeal is made to me, I will answer the hon. gentleman is perfectly right, that if the present officer should die, and another man were appointed in his place, we should have to act according to the Civil Service Act. But as this officer occupied the double position, and received this salary, he must be left with the salary he had before.

Mr. BAKER. I would like to have an explanation from the Postmaster-General.

Mr. CARLING. I would say to the hon. member for Victoria that if a new postmaster had been appointed, certainly his recommendation and that of his colleague would have been taken; but in the interest of the public service, and of the Post Office service in British Columbia, it was thought well that the gentleman who was acting as postmaster and inspector should cease to hold the two offices, and should be appointed to the office of Postmaster in the city of Victoria, and that his assistant, Mr. Fletcher, who has had considerable experience in the Department at Ottawa, and been a considerable time in British Columbia, and who was a younger man than the gentleman who was acting as inspector and postmaster should be appointed inspector. I believe that Mr. Wallace, who was the inspector and postmaster, is a very efficient man, and fills the office very satisfactorily to the Department, and that Mr. Fletcher also gives great satisfaction. As my hon. friend, the Minister of Public Works, has stated, if Mr. Wallace should cease to hold that office, then the person appointed in his place would come under the Civil Service Act, and would receive a salary of something like \$1,800; but so long as Mr. Wallace lives, we give the salary that he had when he held the two positions.

Mr. BAKER. If the Postmaster-General is perfectly satisfied with the incumbents of these offices, I have no complaint to make against them, or that they should receive these salaries. At the same time, I say it was very unfair to promote the junior over the head of the senior, and I know, of my own personal knowledge, that a gentleman who was at one time inspector and city postmaster went to his bed and was sick for a week on the subject. So he evidently was not satisfied. As a matter of justice to him, I would say it was unfair to promote his junior over his head, and I desire that this error should be rectified.

Resolutions to be reported; Committee to sit again.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills (from the Senate) were severally read the first time:—

Bill (No. 132) to extend to British Columbia certain criminal laws in force in other Provinces of the Dominion.—(Sir Hector Langevin.)