

proof of the remarkable alteration in the views of the hon. Minister of Railways since he entered office. There may be some reason for part of this increase, and there may be this reason also, that hon. Ministers are not careful in their expenditures and not anxious to check items like those.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. There is no service that Parliament is called upon to provide for, perhaps, which it provides for so cheerfully as this service, and there is none that it is so anxious to see increase. What I criticised with some sharpness, perhaps, when sitting on the opposite side of the House, was the great difference between the expenditure and the revenue. The more we expend on the Post Office the better, provided we get the money back; and, notwithstanding the great increase in the postal accommodation of the country, it is given at less cost than formerly. The deficit at present is less than that of the late Government, and the hon. gentleman will find that there was not that same reason for the close examination of the accounts that existed formerly.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. The deficit the last year was \$555,000. I do not think in our last year of office it was any greater—probably it was not quite so great, although that does not affect the explanations of the Postmaster General on the subject.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. The annual deficit was less from 1879 to 1881, than during the four years previous to 1878; and for the present year, judging from the receipts so far, I think there will be \$100,000 in excess of the estimates, showing that the deficit is likely to be much less than last year and the year before. The increased business will, of course, necessarily increase the expenditure, as most of the postmasters are paid a percentage on the revenue, as much as 40 per cent.

Mr. RINFRET. Before this item is passed, I would like to ask the Government whether it has decided upon giving the parish of St. Flavien a daily mail. Some time ago, I made this enquiry of the Government, and the hon. Minister of Public Works replied, that the matter was under consideration. Has the Government come to any decision?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The intention was to give the matter a favorable consideration, should it be found practicable. I do not yet know what additional amount will be required. If the thing is possible, and if it is within the limits of the attributes of the Department to alter the line ordinarily followed by the mails, I feel convinced that it will be granted. I cannot give the hon. member an answer to-day, but I will make a note of the matter, and will probably be able to do so Monday or Tuesday next.

Mr. RINFRET. The parish of St. Flavien is situated close to the Grand Trunk Railway, and the mails might easily be transported daily by that road. It is a very important parish, and I think that it is the only one in the county that receives mails twice a week only.

Mr. DAWSON. Before the item passes I would draw the attention of the Government to a part of the country where the mail service is not very efficient, not from any fault of the Post Office Department, but probably from circumstances over which it has no control, and that is in the carriage of the winter mails between Parry Sound and the Island of Manitoulin, and along the north shore of Lake Huron. The mails are often very much delayed, and petitions were sent to Parliament and to the Government this winter complaining that they had been over a month without mails. Of course, it arises from the circumstances of the case. There is no winter road along the Georgian Bay, and the mails have now to be carried, as they were half a century ago, on men's backs and with dog-sleds. I think this Government should

enter into communication with the Government of Ontario, to get a winter road along the Georgian Bay, from Parry Sound up to Killarney. It would not be a work of great expense, and it would greatly facilitate the carriage of the mails. We have now east of Sault Ste. Marie and in Algoma, a population of 12,000; and there is not another instance in the whole history of the colonies, of 12,000 people having their mails carried on dog sleds during winter. I hope that some better system will be devised for next winter. Of course, we know that when the railroads, including the Canadian Pacific, are completed up to Spanish River, all this difficulty will vanish; but something should be done in the meantime to remedy the evil.

Mr. ANGLIN. I have to notice and protest against the statement of the hon. Finance Minister, in comparing the expenditure previous to 1879 with the expenditures since that year. Under the late Administration a great many changes were made tending to reduce for a time the income even if the business had continued as large, if there had been no general business depression; but some of those changes were very important. There was the reduction in the charge on letters, and on the rate of postage between Canada and the United States, and other changes all calculated for the time to reduce the revenue, and all, after a time, to increase very much the business of the Post Office. These changes, including the reduction in postage, have led to an increase of the revenue. There was also, of course, an improvement in business generally, which led to a larger business being done through the Post Office. The position of the hon. Minister of Railways is untenable. He would have it that the accommodation given to the public must be limited, if the revenue from the Post Office itself is not nearly sufficient to cover expenditure. That is not the principle on which we proceeded, and it is not fair to say that at any particular period there was room for complaint, because the expenditure did bear the same proportion to income that it did at some other period. I presume there is nowhere too much accommodation given to any portion of the people. Once you create a post office it must necessarily be sustained, whether the times be good or bad, whether, owing to changes in business, there be an increase or decrease in the mail receipts. I think the late Government acted very properly on that principle, and very properly increased the accommodation to the public in various ways. To day, notwithstanding the increase in business, there has not been any increase in the post office accommodation in the North-West, yet the deficit last year was quite as large as the last year of the late Administration. The hon. Minister of Railways has no right to try and cover up the facts by a system of averages which does not apply in this particular case. The changes were made in the earlier years of the late Administration, and were only producing their beneficial effect in the latter year of that Administration and during the term of the present Administration.

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex). I quite agree with the hon. gentleman from Gloucester as to the benefit to be derived from increased accommodation. My attention was drawn to the large increase in the postal service; and in the Postmaster General's report for the past year, I found the following statement, which accounts for a large proportion of the increase referred to by the hon. member for Centre Huron. The country postmasters, who were left for quite a number of years during the late Administration without receiving any increase, have, during the present Administration, had their salaries readjusted in proportion to the work done. In 1877, the country postmasters of Ontario received \$180,493; in 1881 they received \$230,779. In 1877, the country postmasters of Quebec received \$59,201; in 1881 they received \$68,758. In 1877, the postmasters of Nova Scotia received \$41,329; in 1881 they received