

Further cables have been received stating that owing to continued strikes the ships will not leave in accordance with our programme and many ship sailings are quite uncertain.

The situation is very trying to soldiers waiting their return to Canada and has created a most difficult situation for those charged with demobilization; both in England and Canada, and it will create a further difficulty with sudden congestion at ports of disembarkation for the railway companies to carry out their programme. It may create congestion at both Halifax and Quebec, and there may be some annoyance caused to both the troops and the relatives and friends of the troops on account of the present condition and unavoidable delay but I can assure the House that every possible effort has been made and is being made to meet the situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is only in very rare cases that any document can go in Hansard that has not been read in the House, but as this is an important communication I take it that the consent of the House will be given that it appear in Hansard.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Certainly.

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL SERVICE.

On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. Mr. ROWELL (for the Postmaster General): On Friday the hon. member for Maisonneuve raised a question in regard to the delivery of Canadian mails at New York by ships carrying Canadian troops, and in connection with the matter he read an extract from the Halifax Chronicle. I have made inquiries of the Post Office Department and find the position to be briefly this: At the present time, owing to the interruption of regular ocean traffic, due to the transport of troops and supplies, the greater part of the mails have for some time been coming to New York. The particular steamers in question were not steamers that travelled regularly from Liverpool to Halifax, nor were they subsidized to carry Canadian mails; their regular route was from Liverpool to New York. Arrangements were made with the shipping authorities by the Overseas Ministry of Militia or the Admiralty for these ships to carry Canadian troops to Halifax on their way to New York. The Post Office Department here was not advised that they were carrying Canadian troops to Halifax or that they were carrying Canadian mails, and did not know of it until the mails were landed in New York. They were sent on these ships by the British authorities, and as the ordinary route was from Liverpool to New York the British post office authorities evidently addressed the mail to New York. The matter has already been taken up with the British post office

[Major-General Mewburn.]

authorities to see if this cannot be changed, and to ensure that on all steamers which bring troops to Halifax the mails will be landed there. I hope such an arrangement can be made with the British post office authorities.

POSTAL EMPLOYEES' SALARIES.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. SANFORD JOHNSTON CROWE (Burrard): Before the Orders of the Day are called I would ask the President of the Council (Mr. Rowell) if he is prepared to make a statement regarding the outcome of the conference held with the Western postal employees.

Hon. Mr. ROWELL (for the Postmaster General): Some days ago, before the Easter recess, I made a statement as to the result of the conference with the Eastern postal employees, and I said at the time that negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily with the representatives of the Western employees. I think that on the whole reasonably satisfactory conclusions were reached. I cannot take up the time of the House now to go into all the matters that came up for discussion, as the Western employees presented some forty-eight distinct requests to the Post Office Department which they desired to have considered. The great majority of those matters were of a purely routine departmental nature and were dealt with by the Postmaster General and his administrative staff, on the whole, I believe, in a way satisfactory to the representatives of the employees. There were, however, certain important questions of policy raised by the Western postal employees some similar in character to those raised by the Eastern employees, and others that differed from those in the East. I shall refer briefly to the most important of these questions.

The first demand was for the equalization of payments as between East and West. Hon. members will recall that for many years the Post Office employees from Sault Ste. Marie West received an additional allowance of \$180 to meet what was assumed to be the higher cost of living in Western Canada. When the Post Office employees waited on the Government in July last, the Eastern employees pointed out that in their view the basis on which the additional allowance had been made in the past no longer existed, as the cost of living was approximately the same in the East as the West, and they asked that this discrimination should be removed. The Government