

*Supply—Post Office*

work for it any longer because in the meantime he has obtained something else to do that is paying better wages.

I believe that on the whole, when we compare their pay to that received by other people in the post office as well as in other departments, the rural couriers are doing their job too cheaply. These men who go out in all kinds of weather, both winter and summer, are deserving of much better pay and better consideration than they are now receiving. The prices of the cars they have to buy to give the service have increased, as have also all other expenses. This should be taken into consideration when contracts are being let.

I hope the Postmaster General will give the people in the area to which I have referred the service to which they are entitled, because they are still Canadians, even though they are away out in Alberta.

**Mr. McCubbin:** Mr. Chairman, I wish at the outset to congratulate the Prime Minister upon the very fine choice he made as Postmaster General. I know that once the minister becomes familiar with his department—and he will soon do that—he will do credit to that portfolio.

I do not wish to be critical at this late stage in the session, but I wish to say a word on behalf of the rural mail couriers. They are a group of men and women—because they are not all men; many of them in my own constituency are ladies—who go out in all kinds of weather to carry the queen's mail up and down the concessions and side roads, carrying letters and papers to the farmers living there. They give this service every day, winter and summer, good weather and bad, hot or cold. I do not know of any finer group of men and women anywhere giving service to the people of Canada. But I do not think the government is fair in the wages or salaries it pays these people. This is one group of government servants not being paid what they deserve. Someone may say, "Well, what about the tender system? It may have its imperfections, but these persons have taken the jobs on a tender basis. The only way they could receive more money would be to throw up their contracts, and re-tender".

I do not think this is good enough. When a man is giving good service in other branches of government employment, I know an effort is made to raise his pay. This is done, too, in private business. We try to give them what they deserve. The same does not hold true in connection with rural mail couriers. They are allowed to continue

year after year, four-year term after four-year term, without any change. I know some in my own riding who have been giving service for more than thirty years, and in all that time have received only one increase in pay.

I know it has been said that a committee will be set up at the next session to reconsider the whole system, but that is not good enough. We want these people to get a salary increase and we would like to see them get it now. There are certain ways of doing it. One would be to provide a supplementary payment as was done in 1948. I think the government and the Postmaster General should take this matter under consideration to see if something cannot be done to assist these noble government employees.

**Mrs. Fairclough:** Mr. Chairman, I am sure that in these last few hours of the session the Postmaster General will realize that some of the usual amenities fall by the wayside, but on behalf of the official opposition I have pleasure in congratulating him upon his appointment to the office he now holds and wishing him every success. There are a few things I should like to bring up this evening on these estimates, some of which have been mentioned already by my colleagues.

In particular I should like to refer to a matter which was mentioned briefly this afternoon by the hon. member for Peterborough West; that is, the reversion to two deliveries of mail a day in urban centres. This is a matter which claimed our attention last year and on which many of us spoke. The claim was made by the Post Office Department that economy was made possible by reducing this service, but I find on looking at the estimates that whereas the department budgeted last year for \$97 million its actual expenditure was in excess of that figure. I hope the minister will have figures at hand to show the real results of this move.

I realize full well that the matter of one a day, two a day, three a day or four a day delivery is of concern only to urban municipalities and consequently has little relation to the over-all picture. I do know that in adopting this new delivery plan a great deal of overtime was necessary, as well as the employment of additional inside staff to do the extra sorting required. When the minister comes to answer questions I should like him to indicate what was paid out last year for overtime and for the employment of additional inside staff.

The hon. member for Peterborough West asked a question which was answered, but as I did not hear the answer I shall have to read it in *Hansard* tomorrow. I do hope that con-