

you do not propose to make any new offices. These men are occupying these positions today as inspectors and you are promoting them by calling them superintendents.

Mr. MILLS. With the same duties as they had before.

Mr. BEATTIE. The same duties.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. They are called superintendents in the United States. The system that I am suggesting here exists in the United States. There is one controller—I do not know his name or whether he is called a controller—and over the whole postal system of the United States there are these superintendents at railway centres where there are many trains. These superintendents must be always on the alert to see that the clerks engaged in the mail service are constantly at their duties.

Mr. SPROULE. The Minister gave us a statement in regard to what the routine would be, describing what would happen on a trip between Toronto and Owen Sound in the case of a letter being lost. Two railway mail clerks go out to Orangeville where they separate, one going to Teeswater and the other to Owen Sound. Owen Sound is in the Barrie division and Orangeville in the Stratford division. He gave us a statement of what would happen in a case of a letter going astray. Would he explain what would be the routine under the same circumstances of a letter going astray on that route as to where it would be reported and how it would be traced.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. We would send out what is called a tracer.

Mr. SPROULE. Would it first be reported to the Toronto office?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. We adopt a system of sending out a tracer. This is a sheet which is sent out, and when you get your clue you follow it up.

Mr. MILLS. That is done now.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. That is done in a roundabout way. This tracer is sent out and each person whose hands it passes through makes his note upon it, and at last it comes back to the place from which it started.

Mr. SPROULE. That would be Toronto, I presume?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It would come back again to the person who started the tracer.

Mr. SPROULE. How would you divide the country? There must be some divisions because I understand that no certain places where there are already superintendents which have been named by the Postmaster General. These are Halifax, St. John, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg and Vancouver. These are all important cities and they must be centres

of districts. Would a railway mail clerk report to the centre of the division or would he be obliged to report direct to the controller at Ottawa?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The matter would be worked out in the most expeditious way.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). It is with a great deal of diffidence that I make a suggestion in regard to this matter because the Postmaster General understands the practical working of the department and I do not know very much about it. Would it not be possible to provide that the inspector at Toronto, for example, might communicate directly with any mail clerk who might have had a letter in charge? Why could you not in that simple manner do away with a piece of red tape? It seems practicable, but there may be reasons why the suggestion should not be adopted.

Mr. CLANCY. The Postmaster General has informed the committee that there will be a very substantial reduction in the cost of this branch of the service, which, I understand, he now proposes to separate from the other service and make it a special branch. So far as that special branch is concerned, he states in general terms, that there will be a considerable reduction. But the hon. gentleman has not stated where this reduction will arise. There will be the same number of inspectors to do the work as before and their work will be confined to the branch from which this is separated or what is called, I believe, in the words of the Postmaster General himself, the railway mail service branch. There will be no reductions so far as that is concerned. Then I understand that there will be no reduction in the number of mail clerks. I do not understand that the hon. gentleman believes that there are too many clerks in the service or that it will be possible without destroying the efficiency of the service to reduce their number. There can therefore be no reduction in that quarter, nor do I understand that the Postmaster General proposes to reduce the number of transfer agents. The hon. gentleman indicated that there were nine post office inspectors throughout the Dominion, but he did not state that there would be any reduction in their number. Therefore it is not to be expected that there will be a reduction of the number of employees in the service, and still less is it to be expected that there will be a reduction in the salaries. The new controller will be something like a deputy Minister, having his office in Ottawa, and so far as he is concerned there will be an increase in the inside service. As to the question of letters going astray; at the present time persons having complaints to make are brought directly in contact with the local superintendent who sends out his tracers. There are obvious reasons why this can be much better done