

Is the Rural Mail Delivery Run by the Politicians?

(Continued from page 5.)

A LARGE PERCENTAGE

Although the foregoing regulations have been in force for only four years, over 50 per cent. of the 38,000 carriers now engaged in the service have been appointed in the manner described. At Caledon Springs, New York, our representative saw a notice hanging in the post office inviting any who desired to be appointed as rural carriers to apply for application forms. The notice gave particulars in regard to the examinations that would be held.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

General Black, who, as already stated, is a Democrat and the president of the Civil Service Commission, when asked by our representative if political influences have anything to do with the appointment of the rural carriers or the selection of the rural routes, replied:

"There is no service in the United States that is absolutely free from improper political influence than is the rural free mail delivery service. There is absolutely nothing of politics in the location of the routes or in connection with the general administration of the service."

VIEWS OF OFFICIALS

Mr. P. V. De Graw, Fourth Assistant Postmaster General, who has charge of the rural delivery service, asked if political considerations had anything to do with the rural delivery service, replied:

"None whatever. In the early days of the service it did to some extent, but not now. The evidence I can give you of this is contained in a letter I have just received from Mr. D. E. Finley, of Yorkville, South Carolina, a Democratic member of the Post Roads Committee, in which he says:

I regard the rural delivery service as being in a highly satisfactory condition. The service has been extended throughout the country and the pay of carriers increased and I am bound to say that to my casual eye it has been impartially extended.

"If you desire further evidence," continued Mr. De Graw, "you will find it in the report of the Civil Service Commission for the year ending June 30, 1905, which contains the following statement:

There is no service in the government to-day more popular than the rural delivery service, and it is believed that it is largely due to the fact that the people feel that under the present system of making appointments, the Government is co-operating with them, irrespective of politics or religion, to make it successful and popular, and as far as possible, to furnish good, honest, intelligent and reliable carriers."

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEWS

The same question that was put to Mr. De Graw was asked Mr. W. R. Spilman, Washington, the superintendent of free rural delivery. Mr. Spilman denied emphatically that politics have anything to do with the service. He said:

"The appointment of the carriers 'has been out of the hands of the members of Congress since 1902, when President Roosevelt had the service placed under the control of the Civil Service Commission. Applications for the establishment of routes are dealt with in the order in which they are received and are never approved of until they have been favorably reported upon by an inspector sent by the Post Office Department."

"As far as possible, we try to secure country boys as rural carriers, although we have a good many school teachers. The applicants for position as carriers have to pass a simple examination, including the addition of a column of figures and the filling out of a receipt form for a letter. Their examination papers are numbered, and mailed to Washington where they are inspected by clerks in the employ of the Civil Service Commission. These clerks examine thousands of these papers and do not know the name of a single competitor. After they have awarded the marks, the papers are mailed back to the local board of examiners 'who announce the results.'"

ALL SAY THE SAME

Not being entirely satisfied that politics might not have something to do with the services in some way our representative made still further enquiries. At Norfolk, Virginia, in the county near Washington, in the state of Pennsylvania, and in the state of New York, he interviewed postmasters, rural mail carriers, farmers and farmers' wives. Many of them were Democrats. Not one was found who knew of politics being connected with the rural delivery service in any way. They all united in saying that neither politics nor party politics had anything to do with free rural mail delivery in the United States.—H. B. C.

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(See front page)

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