

Mr. OLIVER: When a vacancy occurs at some other place on the bench it might be useful to remove the present incumbent in the Yukon. It is not necessary that the change should occur immediately in the Yukon.

Penitentiaries—To provide for a bonus of \$100 to each penitentiary officer who was in receipt of a salary of \$1,000 or less on April 1, 1917, \$26,500.

British Columbia—To pay a compassionate allowance to Mrs. Mary Jane Mackenzie, widow of the late George Mackenzie, industrial guard, \$1,200.—\$27,700.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: What is the explanation of this bonus?

Mr. DOHERTY: In view of the high cost of living, it has been decided to grant to those employees of penitentiaries who draw salaries of \$1,000 and under a bonus to tide them over this year. It is not an increase in salary, but a temporary payment for this year. It is in line with what has been done in several other departments and what was done by the amendment to the Civil Service Act in the case of some of the inside civil servants.

Mr. OLIVER: On what basis is the compassionate allowance to this widow fixed?

Mr. DOHERTY: This is not under any fixed arrangement; otherwise we would not need to ask the vote. The circumstances make this case very exceptional. Under the penitentiary law, a man who is retired for illness is entitled to a gratuity which represents a proportion of his salary for the number of years he has served. That proportion is arrived at by taking the salary of the last three years. The husband of this widow served for over thirty-two years in the British Columbia penitentiary. He died from a sudden attack of heart disease, leaving his widow, with a large family of little children, in abject poverty. Had he been retired through illness, he would have been entitled to a gratuity of, I think, \$1,700 or \$1,800; but as he died suddenly his case does not come under the Act. On inquiry I find that it is most unlikely that other cases of a similar kind will occur, so that this will not be establishing a precedent. It is a compassionate allowance pure and simple.

Mr. OLIVER: I hope I shall not be accused of suggesting extravagant expenditures to the Government when I say that, while I feel we should be careful as to the amount of money we expend, I also feel that in the cases of many classes of officials of the Government we should have some system

[Mr. Doherty.]

by which consideration will be given to them if they retire because of physical unfitness, or to their dependent families in case of death. Many of the great institutions of the country have adopted that principle. In the case of penitentiary officials and others where special trustworthiness is required and where the remuneration is by no means large, I believe the public interest would be served by carrying out the principle now invoked in the case of men retiring owing to physical unfitness. Where a faithful man has left a dependent family it would not be going too far to give to that dependent family the full amount of the so-called gratuity to which, under the system adopted in the penitentiaries, the man himself would have been entitled had he been retired because of physical unfitness.

Post Office Department—civil government—To provide for an increase in salary of the superintendent of Mail Contracts Branch to \$4,500, \$750.

Mr. MACDONALD: There is a matter, not relating to this item, which I should like to bring to the minister's attention. The town of New Glasgow is desirous of having a letter carrier system adopted in the town. I do not know whether it comes within the limits of population and revenue prescribed by the department but the town has increased in population and importance very considerably of late years, and I think it should be granted a letter carrier service. Has the minister received any reports from his officials on the subject?

Mr. DOHERTY: We require a population of 12,000 and a revenue of \$20,000.

Mr. MACDONALD: Perhaps the minister would inquire whether he has received any application from the town itself, and let me know on Monday.

Mr. DOHERTY: I shall be glad to make inquiry.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I cordially support this increase in salary. I have known this officer for many years, and have always found him painstaking and most obliging and satisfactory in every way. I do not think this is at all too much for a man of his ability. I should like to say a word on a matter which I brought up in the House last year when the Post Office estimates were up. I do not know whether any attention has been paid to the matter by the department or not, but I think that some consideration should be given to those places that are distant for a considerable number of miles from railway stations, by