

Supply—Post Office

postmaster in that same class in Toronto is a grade 3. There is one situation of that kind.

In another case in Montreal there are nine post offices with a revenue of from \$200,000 to \$300,000 and each one has a grade 2 postmaster. In the same monetary revenue class in Toronto three of the four post offices have grade 3 postmasters. In other words there is a great discrepancy, which I would assume exists right across the country. It does seem to me that the department, which claims to be taking steps to correct that situation, is at fault in not having corrected the situation long before now.

It may be that the Postmaster General will say that the grade of the postmaster has a relationship to the number of employees, but I would point out to the house that in those post offices in Montreal with over 30 employees 75 per cent have grade 2 postmasters, and 92 per cent of similar post offices in Toronto have grade 3 postmasters. The net result leads one to the assumption that the grading of post office employees at the present time is not in line with their responsibilities, and is not on a similar basis from one city to another. I certainly feel very strongly that this is unfair and demonstrates a lack of proper organization in the department.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. Hamilton (Noire Dame de Grace): Mr. Chairman, when the committee rose at six o'clock I had selected one example—among quite a few which might have been brought forward—of differences in remuneration for what is substantially the same job in so far as the Post Office Department is concerned. Having given the details, I would merely say again that it is that type of situation which makes people unhappy and which causes distress within an organization.

No company organization and no government organization can operate successfully for very long if their employees do not have a high level of morale. When one reads the publication of the post office employees themselves and when one hears from time to time through the press of certain happenings across the country, one is led to wonder whether actually the morale among the staff of the post office in its entirety is as high as it should be. I rather doubt that it is. For that condition I lay the responsibility

[Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace).]

at the door of the government because of situations such as the one I outlined to you a few moments ago.

I turn now for a few moments to the question of robberies from the post office and security within the post office generally. We have a situation which has worsened steadily over the last three years. I am prepared to say that the department had made its attempts—and I think they were attempts that were quite sincere and at times quite extensive—to deal with this situation, but to date the results that we expected have certainly not been forthcoming.

I am inclined to think—and I mentioned this before the committee—that the efforts which have been made have stemmed directly from the study made in this house a couple of years ago of the security or lack of security within the post office and of the facts which were then produced. Certainly the department since then has greatly improved its record-keeping system in respect of thefts and burglaries, and it seems to have taken some steps in other directions.

Despite that fact, we find that the incidence of break-ins with respect to the post office has increased steadily year by year. In the calendar year 1953 they were 101; in 1954 they were 171, and in 1955 they were 235. The losses—and these are for the fiscal year—in the post office in the year ended in 1954 were approximately \$32,000; in the year ended in 1955 approximately \$58,000, and in the year ended in 1956 they were approximately \$99,000. That is a substantial increase.

Earlier I had made reference to a comparison between our experience and that in the United States. We find that in the United States post office break-ins increased from 1953 to 1954—these are my latest figures—from 1,087 to 1,280 or by 21 per cent, while in Canada they increased from 101 to 171 or by some 70 per cent.

When we were discussing this matter in committee the minister did not like the comparison between Canada and the United States. As reported at page 682 of the proceedings of the committee on estimates he said:

What you should compare is the incidence of postal burglaries as compared to the incidence of crime and other burglaries and so on throughout this country.

And later:

If the incidence of other crime throughout the country is going down, then you would certainly be right in saying that we are the victim of more crimes than the other operations in the country. That is not the case as I understand it.

Subsequently his advisers indicated that they had no satisfactory figures by means of