

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

than heretofore. Many difficult problems arise in administering this provision of the act, conditions varying so greatly from place to place all across Canada. However, I can assure hon. members that the war veterans allowance board is keeping in close touch with all aspects of the matter to ensure that latitude is given to war veterans allowance recipients to earn by casual employment.

I can assure the hon. member that there has been no regulation, as he thought there might have been, to restrict casual earnings. If my hon. friend is aware of any individual cases, I should appreciate his bringing them to my attention.

**Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Esquimalt-Saanich):** In order to clear up the matter, in view of the fact that there is an ambiguous directive, could the minister tell the house the present definition of "casual earnings"?

**Mr. Lapointe:** I shall be glad to give it to the hon. member at another time but, as he well knows, it is somewhat complicated. The act does not define "casual earnings", so the board has to interpret it and make up the definition.

As my hon. friend is aware, the situation used to be much simpler. Until 1948 a ceiling was set in respect of casual earnings, and any income derived from employment amounting to a sum below that ceiling was considered as casual earnings. This, however, was changed, and in fact I believe the hon. member was one of those who asked that this provision be taken out of the act. Since that time the situation has been made more difficult for the board, so that now they have to look into each individual case as it arises. However, I would be glad to let the hon. member have the definition as it exists today.

**POST OFFICE****REGINA—FORTY-HOUR WEEK AND SALARY INCREASES**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. A. M. Kirk (Parliamentary Assistant to the Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday last the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. Ellis) asked the following question:

Has the Postmaster General received protests from certain postal workers in the city of Regina respecting the delay in introducing the five-day forty-hour week for all such employees and also the delay in granting salary increases? Will the government rectify this situation in the near future?

Representations have been received on these subjects at various times from employees' organizations.

There has been no delay in introducing the five-day week. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) announced on September 9 that the government had decided upon further extension of the five-day week for its employees in those areas and types of work where it is now the established pattern in private employment. One of the places mentioned was Regina.

With respect to postal employees, the statement reads as follows:

The extension of the five-day week being put into effect forthwith applies to office workers only, and not to what are frequently termed "operating staffs", who usually work a 44-hour week. The government has now decided in principle, however, that it will proceed within the next few months to apply the five-day week to a large part of these operating staffs in areas and types of work where it is now the established pattern in business employment, even though such action will require a reduction in working hours and an increase in the number of employees. Time will be required to make the necessary arrangements, particularly in the large post office operating units and in various continuing operations requiring shift work.

With respect to salaries, the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) indicated in a letter to the president of the civil service federation, which has been published, that the government would be giving consideration in the next few weeks to a general review of civil service salaries. Until that review is completed, there can be no question of a delay in implementing any salary increases.

**Mr. Ellis:** May I ask a supplementary question? Is the Postmaster General aware of the differential between the wages paid post office workers in the city of Regina and those paid by the provincial government to their civil servants?

**Mr. McIlraith:** They are organized.

**Mr. Knowles:** That is the point.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****PROCEDURE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart):** May I suggest that we might do as we have done in former years during this debate, namely, ask the Prime Minister or the government to arrange for the answering of questions already on the order paper at some convenient time next week?

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** If it appears that this debate is going to continue for any substantial length of time, and if that would be the desire of the house, probably a day might be fixed to