

Mr. FOSTER. It goes out side of the railway mail service ?

Mr. MILLS. The interpretation is given in chapter 35 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, "An Act respecting the Postal Service." It reads : "The expression employed in the Canada post office applies to any person employed in any business of the post office of Canada."

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. It is unfortunate that this Bill should take up so much of the time of the House, but the Opposition are not responsible for the delay. I understood that the Postmaster General had withdrawn this measure, but at all events it is quite certain that he brought it before the House on three occasions when there were very few members present. This is a very important measure, and I regret extremely that the Chairman declared clause 119 carried, while the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont) had risen to speak, but as I am always prepared to abide by the ruling of the Chair, I shall do so on this occasion. It is not in the public interest that a Bill of this importance should be rushed through the House in the dying hours of the session. This clause says :

No person shall be eligible to be appointed Controller of the Railway Mail Service unless he has been for fifteen years employed in the Canada Post Office.

I wish to ask the Postmaster General, does that mean that he must be fifteen years employed in the railway mail service ?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It means any man holding an appointment in the post office service.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I understand that, but does the Postmaster General intend to confer these omnipotent powers on a controller who has not been in the mail service branch. If the hon. gentleman selects an officer outside of the mail service, he will be making a great mistake, because that is a special branch, and if it is to be improved at all, a specialist in the knowledge that appertains to that branch must preside over it. Does the Postmaster General think that he can improve the mail service by taking a man who does not belong to that branch ? I believe that he cannot. The hon. gentleman was good enough to go into details, and he told us that the controller would have the duty of sending tracers to hunt up lost letters. Well, that is not necessary at all, because the duty is to-day performed as perfectly as it can be under the supervision of the present inspector. The intention is apparently to centralize this work at the headquarters in Ottawa. Now, if any trouble occurs in the province of British Columbia, a person there cannot apply directly to the resident inspector, but he will have to write to the controller at Ottawa and get the controller to send a tracer from Ottawa

to British Columbia, with all the delay and expense that involves. The system provided by this Bill is unworkable and cannot last, even if the Bill passes. It will create extra expense, and it will not give to the public as efficient a service as prevails at the present time. Take, for instance, a man who has been employed for fifteen years in the Money Order Branch of the department; would he be a proper man to place in charge of that branch of the service ? I say he would not, and that is why I am anxious to get information upon that point. I want to know whether the fifteen years of service would be limited to the railway mail clerk service, or whether the Postmaster General could select from any officers in the department outside of that branch the man who would be entrusted with the controllership of the department.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I will answer the hon. gentleman if he will allow me. The present controller was not in the mail service. He had been in the Toronto post office. He was selected and recommended to me by chief inspector Sweatnam as having the best experience and being the fittest man in the service; because more than a mere knowledge of the mail service is required for the charge of a large organization. He is not a mail clerk, and never was a mail clerk. So that I do not contemplate limiting the choice to mail clerks, although I am free to admit that a railway mail clerk ought to have special qualifications for the office, and one would naturally look to the mail clerks for a controller.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Then, how does the hon. gentleman explain what he told us a few moments ago, that his main object in proposing this measure was to create a healthy emulation among the railway mail clerks. How does he create the emulation by taking a man outside of that branch, and putting him over the heads of all the railway mail clerks ? That is one of the reasons why I was so anxious to get the information from the hon. gentleman. He stated that he wished to give promotion to the deserving members of the railway mail service, and to create this emulation among them, which he believed would largely promote the efficiency of the service; and he starts to create that emulation by taking an officer outside of that branch, a man from the Toronto Post Office, and placing him over the heads of men who have been ten or fifteen years in that service. Another thing strikes me as very peculiar in this most peculiar of all Bills that I have ever seen introduced into this Parliament. The hon. gentleman has been insisting upon our passing this measure; but what does he say ? He speaks of the controller whom he has appointed from the Toronto Post Office. How could he appoint him until the Bill was passed ? What