

Mr. CARTER: I do not think Mr. Montgomery understood my point. My quarrel was that in determining these prevailing rates the Department of Labour took too small a unit, and I suggested that we should have one unit for the maritimes and not three or four separate ones.

Mr. LALONDE: I am not qualified to answer that point. The only thing I could say on it is this: as I have said at the beginning, fifty per cent of the work done by the corps of commissionaires is done for outside employers. The rate is set by the treasury board on the recommendation of the Department of Labour and it applies only to government contracts.

I have not heard of any great discrepancy in any city between the rate paid the commissionaire working for the government and that paid the commissionaire working for a private employer.

I think that the Department of Labour—if they have not hit it on the nose—have come pretty close, because employers are willing to pay the same rate.

As Mr. Montgomery said, if the rate we pay is too high, then civilian firms would not employ commissionaires; they would go out and hire their own people.

Mr. CARTER: I do not think that is entirely true, because the commissionaires are performing certain duties which ordinary people do not want to perform.

The CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Macdonald has a comment to make, and then Mr. Speakman, and then Mr. Pugh. Now, Mr. Macdonald.

Mr. MACDONALD (*Kings*): Mr. Chairman, on that point I would like to make this comment: I think Mr. Carter is a little bit in error in that view, that the labour unions have objected to the fact that the corps of commissionaires are being paid an almost comparable rate, whereas they are in almost a preferred class. I know that is the objection on the part of labour in my area; and the corps of commissionaires—most of the personnel—some of them do not realize it, but they are getting a real break. They may be getting a little less than the ordinary wage rate, but this should not be given too much emphasis, otherwise they may lose their preferred position.

On this point, Mr. Chairman, I think it is generally understood that all this money under 488 in regard to the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires services is for the employ of corps of commissionaires personnel at government offices here. I wonder if Mr. Lalonde would explain to us briefly the set-up of the corps of commissionaires in relation to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Among some veterans there is a feeling they are employees, which, of course, is entirely wrong. In our area the district administrator also administers the corps of commissionaires. Would you please clarify this matter for us.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed to that point I think there are general comments on the subject raised by Mr. Carter.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: May I say this: I had occasion to study the charter of the corps of commissionaires and they work under contract and charge on a contract basis to their employer. My recollection—and I believe it is correct—is that their scale of salaries is based on provincial minimum wage laws, and the corps themselves set their contracts on that basis.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pugh?

Mr. PUGH: That has pretty well answered my question. However, there is one further matter: do the commissionaires who are employed give full value for the money paid out?

Mr. LALONDE: I can speak only from our own experience. Most of the commissionaires whom we employ work either in our head office here or