

the different officials in the postal service, railway mail superintendents, post office inspectors, and so on. It is not an easy matter to measure correctly the relative degree of responsibility of the different positions and the compensations that should be attached to each. However, the matter has not been fully determined, but will be before the Civil Service Commissioners during the next few months. I am sure that this and all other matters will have their careful attention and the very best possible consideration.

Mr. DEVLIN: I was glad to hear the minister say that the salaries of the post office inspectors had not yet been definitely settled, because it was not intended by section 9 of Bill 53, to which I had occasion to refer at another time, that the salaries of any officers should be reduced, but that they should continue to draw the salaries to which they are at present entitled. Speaking generally, I think we are somewhat blest in this country by having a good class of post office inspectors. I need not go as far as the province of Nova Scotia, although I have no doubt the post office inspectors there are of the same high class. Judging by the debate, both sides of the House seem to agree that any appointment in Nova Scotia is all right, and I have no doubt that no Scotchman could be appointed who would not fill the bill. Respecting other provinces, with which I am more familiar, it seems to me, and I commend this to the minister's attention and through him to the commission, that it would not be fair to interfere with the salary of the post office inspectors unless it be to give them the increase to which they are entitled in order that we may have the most effective service possible.

Mr. MOWAT: The condition mentioned by my hon. friends from Nova Scotia is one that obtains throughout the Dominion. There is a good deal of heartburning over the disparity between the remuneration of the different officers at the present time. However, I do not see how that can always be avoided. For instance, there is a case in the Civil Service where a deputy minister gets considerably more than the minister himself, and yet I think the minister would be the last person to make an objection.

As the minister in charge of the Bill has pointed out, while the postmaster at Halifax is now in receipt of \$4,000 a year, if he were to vacate his office his successor could not expect to get more than \$3,300, whereas

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

an inspector, if this classification is adopted and adhered to, would receive in four years \$4,020, so the disparity there would be done away with. But the whole question of classification and compensation has yet to be determined by the commission, and I imagine that the different classes of persons who think they are discriminated against either from lack of information by the experts and the commission, or by lack of appreciation of their real work, will be heard by the commission, and any seeming injustice that we may find in the classification before us be remedied.

With regard to post office inspectors, the compensation of assistant post office inspectors under the classification is not what I should like to see it, in view of what I know and what I think is common knowledge, that it is the assistant inspector with whom we come most in contact, and who has the really difficult and rough work of the office to do. Not only is he a sort of secret service man, but he must also be an auditor, because he has to audit the accounts of the postmasters. He has to be ready at all times to travel into remote corners of his district in the most rigorous weather to inspect post offices in respect of which complaints may have been made, while his senior, although quite as competent, no doubt remains comfortably in his office in the city. Under the classification the assistant post office inspector, who it seems to me should get at least \$4,000, is only down for \$2,700, but I have no doubt the assistant post inspectors will be able to force these views upon the commission between now and the 31st of March next, when the question of compensation will be determined. All these things have their remedy under section 42, under which the commission will have full powers to inquire into these matters.

There is another matter in connection with the Post Office Department, which seems to be the most interesting to hon. members, no doubt because they have most to do with it, and that is that the commission cannot well appoint rural or city postmasters without consultation and conference with the assistant post office inspectors and the post office inspector, and it seems to me that these officials could best work out the provisions of this Act, so far as that department is concerned, to make it acceptable to the people, and if not popular, at least to be received with some respect. They should, when a postmaster is to be appointed, consult with the prominent business men of the community, not with the men of one political side only, but with