

to be in much better positions. I do not regard the letter-carrier as being a skilled workman, for we find many men coming into the service who are not skilled workmen, and a good many coming in who have trades and crafts and who think that the condition of the letter-carriers is better than theirs. There is not the slightest desire in the department to have any one transferred from one class to the other, but there is a difference between \$600 and \$725 and any intelligent man can see the advantage.

Mr. HEYD. There is a misapprehension in the minds of the letter-carriers of the old school that, in the event of their being sick for an indefinite period, they have acquired the right to be paid. They have obtained the impression that they are legally entitled to be paid while laid up. It will clear the atmosphere a good deal to let them know that they have no such legal right, and that if any of them have occasionally enjoyed their pay while ill that was simply a matter of courtesy and not of law.

Mr. CLARKE. With regard to the matter of which the hon. gentleman speaks, a petition was sent to the Postmaster General on the 10th of March last by the letter-carriers of the Dominion who are under the provisions of Bill (No. 106) in which they refer to this very question of sick-pay. They say:

We, the undersigned letter-carriers of the Dominion of Canada, all of whom are under Bill (No. 106) beg to state that we appreciate your efforts to better the condition of the post office employees generally. Nevertheless, we think that the change has not benefited us to the extent to which your honour had intended that it should, and we would request that you give the following brief epitome of our claims your favourable consideration:

1st. We feel that loss of pay in sickness or accident is a condition not imposed on any other branch of the service, and that if you take into consideration the unfavourable conditions under which we have to perform our duties, these disabilities will be removed by you in our case.

2nd. That reduction in grade is a condition that we would ask to be eliminated from the Bill, and some fixed form of penalty inserted specifying the acts for which imposed and how the same may be regained by those unfortunate enough to fall from the path of duty.

These are the two paragraphs in this petition referring to the sick pay. The hon. Postmaster General says that these men receive \$2.25 a day. That is the maximum pay, I believe, of class 'E.'

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK. And they may receive a bonus of \$20 besides.

Mr. CLARKE. So they receive \$2.25 with a bonus of \$20 in addition—that is the maximum. But it is optional with the officers of the department to lower these men from grade 'E' to grade 'D' or 'C' or 'B,' and of course, the pay is reduced with the grade. Only those in the highest

class receive \$2.25 a day, and they are not paid during the period of sickness.

Mr. HEYD. Wherein do they differ in that respect from the old condition?

Mr. CLARKE. As I understand it, the difference is this—that if a man contracted sickness in the discharge of his duty and was able to send a medical certificate, his pay went on during the period of sickness. Of course, if the sickness were caused by misconduct on the part of the man himself he could not obtain the medical certificate and so was not entitled to sick-pay. But the hon. gentleman (Mr. Heyd) will see that in this memorial complaint is made of the withholding of sick-pay from men who are under the operation of the Bill (No. 106) which has been passed since 1896. Now, with regard to the position of the men who were in the service—

Mr. HEYD. Let us finish that other point first. As I understand it, although they occasionally got sick-pay they had no legal right to it—it was a matter of favour.

Mr. CLARKE. I do not know that.

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK. They had no legal right to it.

Mr. CLARKE. But they received sick-pay.

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK. Some did and some did not.

Mr. CLARKE. In the case of the men who were able to show by a medical certificate that the sickness was not caused by misconduct or indiscretion on their own part, they received sick-pay. But it makes no difference what may be the cause of sickness, they now receive no sick-pay; they receive \$2.25, if they are in the highest grade for each day on duty. Now, with regard to the men appointed prior to 1896, they do not think that it would be to their advantage to come under the provisions of the hon. minister's Bill—at least many of them do not. They memorialized the department in March last. Of course these men are officials who are under the provisions of the Act of 1882. Their petition says:

We, the letter carriers of Toronto post office working under the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1882-3, respectfully ask your consideration of our petition for an increase of salary for the reasons hereinafter set forth:

We do not question your desire to better the condition of the letter-carriers by the legislation enacted at the past two sessions of parliament, but regret to say that owing to our length of service in the department we are unable to take advantage of it, and think it would be unreasonable to expect us to accept its provisions, which detract materially from any financial benefits set forth therein.

We feel it incumbent upon us to urge upon your honour as a defence against the unfair, artificial and unstable arguments of outside