

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The Government has not recommended to have this increase of \$30 apply generally beyond those enjoying salaries of \$450, but it does not say that this increase must stop at \$480, and it will be quite competent to go to higher salaries on a future occasion. I do not think that \$480 is adequate in some parts of the country, for example in British Columbia. It would not be fair to have an arbitrary standard throughout the Dominion as the cost of living varies.

Mr. FOSTER. The Government started out by boldly declaring that the statutory increases were to be a thing of the past. They were given by the late Government and would not be given by this Government. While during the first year the Estimates showed increases in departments presided over by particularly strong or persistent Ministers, these second year Estimates show in almost all the departments that the Minister picked out certain clerks and gave them statutory increases. Now comes the Postmaster General and by wholesale methods gives these statutory increases to 150 or 160 men in his department, while in other departments young men who are not receiving \$480 a year, but whose work is more beneficial than that of these men, do not receive any increase. It just illustrates what we declared would be the result, namely, that it would come to be a matter of favour on the part of different Ministers, and not a uniform practice, because it would vary with the temper, persistency or power of the individual Minister. I am afraid my hon. friend will find he is doing the very thing to disorganize the service, which is a very bad thing to do, and is entirely depriving it of anything like uniformity. I do not want it to be said in reply that I am opposed to the letter carriers receiving this money. My theory is that they should have received this amount in the course of their regular increase. I am pointing out what the effect will be ultimately in the service. We shall find young men just as worthy, and whose work is more onerous, refused this increase of \$30 or \$50, while in other departments it will be given, and this does not advance the morale of the service, but destroys it.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I appreciate the tenor of the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) but I would point out to him the difference between a liberal increase of salary to men who have very small salaries, and increases to men whose salaries are perhaps in excess of the value of the services rendered. When you come to the class of men who are paid \$450 or less, the value of the services must be very small if they are not worth \$480. But, if a man is doing the same work and is paid \$1,000 for it, some discretion ought to be exercised before you would allow an automatic increase to take effect, and the statutory increase practically was an automatic increase.

Mr. FOSTER

Mr. FOSTER. It always had to be voted, and so has this?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Yes, but it became a matter of form. It seems to me that if a letter carrier or messenger is worth keeping at all he is worth \$480 after a couple of years in the service. Speaking for myself, I would say that the great difficulty in the past has been in not having the salaries commensurate with the services. It would have been better if there had been appointments of men to do particular duty carrying with the office certain titles, such as if we had a class of men known as shorthand writers appointed as such. It does seem to me that the system is not good, of calling them all clerks, and of allowing a man by the automatic principle to rise to the position of first class clerk, when he is still doing the same work as he did when he entered the service at \$400 a year.

Mr. MONTAGUE. I want to call the attention of the Postmaster General to a matter which I am sure he will see to once his attention is called to it. The hours at which most post offices are compelled to be open varies at different places chiefly dependent on the time at which the mail arrives. I have a post office in my mind where a short time ago the mail in the morning was despatched for the cities at nine o'clock, and the office was opened at eight o'clock so that business men might register their letters and secure post office orders if they required to do so. The mail from the cities with which the town does business arrives, the night before at between seven and eight o'clock, and the post office closes at eight o'clock, so that business men cannot transact business in regard to registered letters or post office orders that night. Now the train service has been changed and the mail departs in the morning at half past eight. The postmaster instead of opening the office at an earlier hour has posted a notice requiring the people who require to register letters or secure post office orders to do it the night before. That is a very serious inconvenience and practically delays the transmission of registered letters for one day between that point and the city of Toronto, all for the convenience of the postmaster who receives a good deal larger salary than the postmasters at many points in the neighbourhood where the post offices are open at five and six in the morning. I refer to the village of Dunnville. I have had complaints with regard to this matter from business men, and all I ask is that the Postmaster General, as I am sure he will feel in duty bound to do, will require that so long as the present train arrangements exist, that the post office shall be open at the hour of, say seven o'clock in the morning, instead of at eight as at present.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I think that is a most reasonable request.