

Mr. SALES: If there was any chance of getting them, we would have two hundred applications.

Mr. STANSELL: With the amount of money that is paid for rural mail contracts, the granting of these 125 applications would not cost over \$75,000. We have passed in just a few minutes items ranging from \$20,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 up to \$500,000 for various other things, and many of those

4 a.m. large items would not be as good an investment as one in rural mail delivery. We are spending large amounts for immigration although the money might be better spent at home in this and in many other ways than in bringing foreigners in to take the place of those who are living here. We were told, in answer to a question, that as a result of \$100,000 spent in an immigration scheme, to which was added another \$100,000 by the railways, we got in about 35 settlers. If that had been spent in bettering conditions for farmers in outlying districts, and if in nothing else than in giving them mail deliveries, we would have done more to advance the national interests than by spending the money on immigration.

Something should be done to see that rural mail carriers have a uniform outfit that is not a disgrace to our country. Many of them, owing to the extremely low price they get for their services, have to go with a disreputable outfit, and they are working under such conditions as it would be difficult to find other men in other places willing to accept. When we remember that on from \$500 to \$700 the average mail carrier has to keep one or two horses and endeavour to support an average family, we can see the injustice under which he labours. He should have a living wage and he should also receive a few days holidays in the year.

There should be some examination as to fitness in connection with applicants for rural mail carriers. If this service is to be profitable, only such men should be accepted as are qualified to give satisfactory service in connection with the delivery of mail and the handling of money orders. Unless the latter is taken care of, the service cannot be profitable to the government. Where a man is not qualified for doing that work satisfactorily, he will not be entrusted with money order work which is a service that brings in money to the department. This very important work, instead of being held up, should be extended in the national interest.

The contract system is probably a good one, but the way in which it is handled by some

officials of the department is not to the greatest credit of the department. There should be some provision also in the case of the man who renders satisfactory service that his contract should be extended at a reasonable rate and that he should not have to compete with others under the tender system. He is better qualified to serve the people and to extend the advantage of the service than a new man would be and, therefore, he should be given the encouragement of a renewal of his contract. Comparing the conditions in the country with those in the town and in view of the difference in the remuneration that is paid, I think our sympathies should go to the rural letter carrier as well as the letter carrier in the towns.

Mr. DOUCET: Has an appointment been made to fill the vacancy at La Tuque, Quebec?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No.

Mr. DOUCET: The minister has no doubt received complaints, as I and others have done, with regard to the dismissal of Mr. Willie Juneau from the position of postmaster at the town of La Tuque, as a result of a charge brought against him on October 10, 1922 of having been guilty of active political partisanship. The charge was laid on that date and it was not until the fall of 1923 that the government decided to ask Mr. Oscar Drouin, of Quebec to make an investigation. As a result of that investigation Mr. Drouin decided that there was not sufficient evidence to warrant a decision in the case and he asked the department to make inquiries to find out whether Mr. Juneau had signed the nomination papers of a Mr. Ducharme who ran as a candidate in the election of 1921. That information could not be secured, and four or five weeks after the inquiry had concluded Mr. Drouin came to the conclusion that there was sufficient evidence on which to render a decision, which held Mr. Juneau guilty of active partisanship. Some few days later a petition signed by over 1,300 residents of the town declaring that Mr. Juneau had always performed his duties as postmaster quite satisfactorily to everyone in the locality and that he had not been guilty of any partisanship, was forwarded to the department. Unfortunately, however, by order in council this gentleman had already been dismissed. It must be apparent to the Acting Postmaster General and to everyone in the department who has followed the evidence which was adduced before the commission appointed to investigate the charge, that this man had not been guilty of any active partisanship at all, but he was dismissed nevertheless. Now, there is a pro-