

Mr. KENNEDY (Winnipeg): I should like to refer to the enforcement of fair wage laws about which the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) has spoken. I agree that while it is essential to have laws on the statute books it is equally if not more essential that they be adequately enforced. In connection with tendering upon government contracts the custom has been to ask for public tenders, and all who will may tender. I suggest that the government, with a view to enforcing the payment of fair wages by those who fulfil government contracts, take into consideration the establishment of what might be called a "white" list. I am not suggesting a "blue" list or a "red" list, but a "white" list. By that I mean that before a contractor or supplier be permitted to tender upon a federal contract he be required to first establish, not what he will promise to do in the future, but that he has been paying a fair wage in the past. It is easy enough to promise what will be done in the future, but unless the contractor has established a name for paying fair wages he should be refused the right to tender. If such a method were followed we could establish a white list or fair list of those who wish to contract with or supply materials to the government or otherwise enter into government contracts.

Mr. VENIOT: Mr. Chairman, perhaps it might not be out of place for me to have a word to say on this question of rural mail contracts. I will remember how bitterly I was assailed as Postmaster General in 1929 because the government was not paying adequate wages or salaries to those delivering the mail in the rural districts. I remember at that time the motion moved by the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Guthrie), laying down the principle, and I remember also that the then leader of the opposition, now the Prime Minister of Canada, laid it down as a part of the policy of the Conservative party that if that party came into power—this was along the line of the discussion—they would see to it that proper remuneration would be paid to the rural mail carriers. It was advocated at that time that they be placed on the same basis as the mail delivery men in the United States. It was my privilege then to point out that it was impossible owing to the sparsely settled territory in Canada for us to adopt a system similar to that in the United States. I also pointed out that I had been reviewing the whole situation with the object of endeavouring to find some better system of remuneration for the mail carriers in our rural districts. While I felt the system of the United States could

not be adopted in Canada, paying on a mileage basis at a figure which the present Minister of Justice suggested be fixed at \$60 or \$70 a mile, I stated that with the officials of the department of which I was then head I was reviewing the situation with the object of attempting to inaugurate in this country a minimum tender system. That is, an estimate would be made of what a twenty-mile route or a thirty-mile route or a forty-mile route might cost, and then the department would fix a minimum below which no tenders would be received. But that suggestion which I made was met with derision by members of the then opposition, who claimed that it was a system which I desired to put into practice in order to give the Postmaster General of that day absolute control of the tender system.

Be that as it may, the matter was still under consideration when our friends opposite came into power in 1930, and although they had made promises, although they had circularized from the headquarters of their organization in Ottawa every mail contractor in the Dominion of Canada, once they got into power they never attempted to put into practice the system embodied in the resolution moved by the present Minister of Justice.

It has been said that the present government has permitted tenders to come in, and has accepted those tenders, at figures a great deal lower for the same mileage than the contracts existing prior to 1930 and contracts continued after 1930 up to their termination. In 1933, I think it was, I asked for a return of the mail contracts awarded since the present government came into power, and I found that in New Brunswick alone the contracts renewed under the tender system under this government were \$30,000 less than what the former contracts had been. I found that in Prince Edward Island the figure was some \$11,000 less on these renewed contracts. I found by the return brought down by the Postmaster General that the ordinary mail land service had been reduced over a quarter of a million dollars per year under the tender system. Now if it was wrong, and I was severely criticized in 1929 and 1930 for not giving proper remuneration to our mail contractors, how much more should the present government be criticized when it is shown that in the province of New Brunswick alone the contract system under this government reduced the remuneration to mail contractors renewing their contracts by over \$30,000 in the year 1933.

But let me go further. Not only was the department of the Postmaster General satis-