

a commendable policy, but with regard to post office services I believe that certain policies of economies are being observed which are unwarranted. I know, in my constituency, there is a tendency to reduce daily mail routes to deliveries three times a week. In some places where this reduction has taken place there are threats that there will be other reductions. There are many people living along these routes, and in one instance patrons on the route are getting daily papers. Along a rural district, where in the course of the years the people have educated themselves and taken a keen interest in public affairs, I cannot conceive of anything that is more unpopular than to see a daily route which has obtained for the last seventy years, reduced to a service of three times a week. They can hardly realize why it is that in this dominion of ours where the people are supposed to be modernized they should have to put up with a condition which reduces them to the horse and buggy days. These are things that they cannot understand.

I also appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Red Deer. I do not believe that the chief concern in granting the people a rural mail service is the fact that possibly the revenue from that post office is not commensurate with the cost of operation. When we cool off after the debates have taken place, which are sure to go on for some time to come, and set up a commonsense select committee, that is one of the matters which should be dealt with fully this session.

Mr. McLURE: Like all other hon. members who have spoken, I am in full sympathy with the principle of this resolution. Before very long we shall have the bill before us. I should like to suggest to the Postmaster General that after listening to the remarks made this afternoon if the bill is not ready to be brought down he should take time to revamp it because, judging from what we have heard today, the bill will have to be satisfactory to all before it will get very far in committee.

Mr. ISNOR: I should like to support my colleague the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond in his plea with reference to the rural districts of Nova Scotia. If we are to keep our people on the farms and in the fishing villages we must give them the service which they deserve. We have had the odd service, which for many years was carried out as a daily service, reduced to a service of two or three times a week. That is a mistake, if we are to keep our people on the farms. There are now a great many persons in the industrial centres who would be serving their country

and themselves better on the farms than in the industrial centres. The Post Office Department would be well advised to give the constructive remarks of my colleague from Nova Scotia serious attention.

My experience with the Post Office Department and its officials is somewhat different from that which was expressed by the hon. member for Lambton-Kent. I have not yet approached an official of the Post Office Department without receiving courteous treatment. I complain from time to time in an effort to get better service. If I have a good case they are prepared to listen, and I have not yet heard an expression used such as that referred to by the hon. member for Lambton-Kent to the effect that the official was in a bad humour and was not prepared to give consideration to a suggestion for improved service.

It is only fair that we should speak in an honest and frank way in regard to officials of the post office or any other department. They are working under regulations of the Post Office Act which calls for "publicly advertised tenders. Their aim is to procure competitive tenders, and they are bound to accept the lowest tender.

I was surprised to hear those who, like myself, support free enterprise say that they did not think the tender system is a good one. It brings about a large saving to the country at the present time. The tender system may not produce to those who are tendering the returns which they would like, but it protects the country and the taxpayer. If there are four or five persons anxious to tender on a route, there is no other course open than to accept the lowest tender. As has been pointed out by some hon. members, it is difficult to set a stated figure such as \$50 a mile. One hon. member said that in his constituency it was \$30 or \$35. Personally, I do not see how any contractor could carry on at that figure unless he had some other means of support. If a man works in the city while living in a rural district, and if he can combine his work with the mail service and thereby save the country \$10 or \$15 a mile a year, it is good business from the point of view of the department, and we should not be too critical of the action of the post office in accepting such a tender. I feel, however, that there are cases where in all fairness to the residents in the rural constituencies there should be taken into consideration various factors such as road conditions, the number of boxholders and so on, and if it runs over \$50 or \$60 and there are several tenderers—in one case I know of there were six or seven tenders, the lowest being \$65 a mile—after having called for public