

suitable for business purposes. To my mind, the action taken was a most unscrupulous thing for a government to do.

Mr. GREEN: Would the minister explain the manner of engaging help in the cities for the Christmas rush? At the last session it was suggested to the Postmaster General that soldiers engaged at Christmas should be engaged through the veterans' assistance commission. As the minister knows, honorary committees were set up in many cities under this commission for the purpose of trying to get work for unemployed veterans. As I say, we suggested last session that all soldier help should be obtained through these committees. Despite this suggestion and a tentative promise by the Postmaster General, very few if any of the soldiers engaged in Vancouver were engaged through the honorary committee there. I believe all appointments were made through the Liberal association. This is most unfair to the unemployed veterans and to these local committees under the veterans' assistance commission. The members of these committees serve without remuneration of any kind, and I suggest to the acting minister that the practice of which I complain should not be followed during the coming Christmas season. The department should go to these honorary committees and get the names of unemployed veterans, and there should be no interference at all by political organizations.

Mr. EULER: My hon. friend inquires as to how the appointments are made for the Christmas business. I can speak from personal experience in my own riding, and I take it that the same thing is followed pretty well throughout. First of all, there is an eligible list which the civil service commission has, and which, as the hon. gentleman knows, is made up largely of returned men. In any particular post office where extra help is required, this list is drawn upon and when it is exhausted other sources must be found. In my own case, which I believe applies in probably all other cities—and I know of no such committee as my hon. friend speaks of; at any rate it did not exist in my own district—the practice that has been followed has been usually to apply to the soldier organizations to suggest others to supplement the eligible list when it has been exhausted. In some instances perhaps a few other men may be added. Perhaps I may be criticized for what I am about to say, but I for one would not say that absolutely in every instance a returned man must be chosen. The great majority of them are, of course, returned men, but it is quite possible that a man with a large family who has been out of work for some time might be taken on.

There may be instances where such men with large families are given jobs, one or two or three of them, and that would be justifiable. Otherwise the practice, as I have stated it, applies pretty well throughout the country.

Mr. GREEN: I am not complaining about some of the men engaged being civilians, but there are fifteen or twenty cities in which this government has set up honorary committees to try to find work for unemployed returned men, and in Vancouver there were over five thousand returned men registered with the local committee. We understood that the post office, in getting soldiers for employment at Christmas time, would go to that committee instead of obtaining the men through political sources. It is a bad principle to force men under these conditions to get political approval, and I would ask that the practice be changed during the next Christmas period.

Mr. HANSELL: I wish to call the attention of the minister to a matter of some importance, and that is with reference to the hours in which the smaller post offices are open. About a year ago I believe the rule was changed. Some of the post offices had been allowed to close for half a day a week, and the rule was changed compelling them to remain open six days in the week. That new rule is working some little hardship on the small post offices, because I believe they are kept open for that extra time at the expense of the postmaster, and in many instances they are not rendering sufficient public service to warrant their being kept open for the full six days. There are some small towns that have a sort of civic half holiday once a week. These smaller towns are situated in farming communities and the post office might as well remain closed on these half holidays. I was talking to a postmaster on one occasion, and he told me that he remained open one Wednesday afternoon when all the stores in the town were closed and that he did business to the extent of selling a three-cent postage stamp. This nevertheless necessitated his turning on electric lights about four o'clock in the afternoon, burning extra coal and incurring other expense. I would ask the minister, if that arrangement is to be continued, to leave it more or less in the hands of the inspectors and make the rule elastic enough to permit the post office to close for that particular afternoon if the officials so advise.

Mr. EULER: My hon. friend could not have been here the other evening when we discussed this same question. I have a good deal of sympathy with what he says. On that occasion I told the committee that the district inspector, in cases such as the hon.