

the amended Civil Service Act of 1919, were conferred on them that no commission in any country in Canada are in possession of. We cannot blame the commission for carrying out the law as laid down. The blame must rest with the government who enacted these powers, as well as the government that continues to perpetuate them. Again, the Civil Service Commission, as we understand their regulations, have the power to increase salaries for added duties. Letter carriers have at least four added duties to perform since their classification was made. Why does the commission not recognize this?

The next paragraph is an important feature:

In 1918 a Canadian letter carrier with a bonus of \$350 was in receipt of a salary of \$89 a year more than the U.S.A. carrier. To-day a U.S.A. carrier gets \$600 a year more than the Canadian carrier, both performing the same duties. While the government and the Civil Service Commission have advertised increases for letter carriers several times, the only increase—

He means change.

—which ever reached us was a reduction of \$156 a year.

That is a statement from one who is interested in the matter and who knows the facts. I want to ask the minister whether he is taking any steps to fulfil his promise of last session and the previous session to increase the salaries on the minimum rate and, if so, what steps he has taken.

Mr. HEAPS: Perhaps before the minister answers I might ask a similar question, and I might be allowed to read some correspondence which was tabled this afternoon and which may partly answer the question which has been asked by the hon. member for Vancouver South. For a number of years very determined efforts have been made on both sides of the house to obtain for the lower paid men in the service, not merely those in the Post Office Department, a minimum rate of pay of at least \$100 per month. The other day when the minister spoke of this question I believe he stated that there were approximately 8,800 people working in the postal service under his supervision, in the various grades. He stated also that between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of these men were receiving the minimum rate of pay, which is \$1,020 a year. That means that at least 2,000 men employed in the postal service are receiving approximately \$90 per month. I have the exact figures here if the minister wishes them.

Mr. VENIOT: I gave the exact figures to-night.

Mr. HEAPS: Yes; they totalled 8,851, as I took them down, and the Postmaster General said from 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the men received the minimum rate of pay. As I understand it, a man must work

[Mr. Ladner.]

three years in the postal service before he gets the first increase. He enters the service the first year on the temporary staff, and while he is on the temporary staff he does not get any increase over the minimum rate. I am told that as a rule he stays on the temporary staff for two years before he is placed on the permanent staff, and then he has to be on the permanent staff one year before getting his increase. Consequently that man has to work three years for \$1,020 per year before he is entitled to any increase in pay, and that is why I believe there is such a large percentage of these men in the postal service working for this low wage.

For three sessions at least we have made determined efforts to get the department to do something, particularly for the lower paid men, but so far we have been unsuccessful. I have asked in previous years what the minister expects these men to do and what remedy they have for bettering their condition. That question has not been answered as yet, and it cannot be answered. These men have only two courses open to them. They can come to parliament and ask to have their grievances redressed, but what happens when they do that? When they come to parliament they come to the proper and logical place, but then they are told that parliament is helpless because of the Civil Service Commission, and during the past few years the result has been that these men have not been given the increases which they requested, because the Civil Service Commission claimed they were not entitled to such increases. There is only one other course of action open to them. If the government does not see fit or does not desire to give these men an increase in pay the only alternative open to them is to go on strike, and if they go on strike what happens? The government declaims against them, calling them almost every name they can think of, for having the temerity to go on strike against conditions which we all agree are almost intolerable.

However, I wish to say, having looked over the correspondence the Postmaster General laid on the table to-day, that he must be given credit for persistence in trying to redress the grievances of some of these low paid civil servants. Let me read some of the correspondence, which I have glanced over hurriedly since it was laid on the table this afternoon. First there is a letter dated May 2, 1928, from the secretary of the Civil Service Commission to Mr. L. J. Gaboury, of which the first paragraph is as follows:

I am directed to advise you that at a meeting of the commissioners this morning your recommendation for increased compensation for the classes letter carrier, mail porter, postal