

Supply—Post Office

take the chance of throwing the route open to public tender. He did get a small adjustment when the Mail Contracts Supplemental Payments Act was inaugurated during 1947 and 1948. A small adjustment was made then, but since that time no adjustment has been made. I would say, too, that in the suburban areas where the contracts are made for four years initially, the number of boxes may have been comparatively small but boxes may since have been established all along the line and the carrier may have twice as many boxes to serve. There is no way around that.

Again I say the system of public tender is wrong. I quite appreciate that the post office officials, efficient as they may be, feel that it is a difficult job to set up a system where public tender is not necessary; but I wonder what the deputy postmaster general or some of the senior officials, who get a fair salary as the public accounts will show, would think if they were asked to put in a public tender to compete for their jobs. You would say, and they would say, that would not be fair at all. Of course it is not fair, but at the same time that is the system they have followed throughout the years with respect to these carriers. I would say that there are a lot of injustices in the present set-up.

Under the present Post Office Act there are no regulations which say that rural mail service can be extended on this spur or that spur. It is left entirely to the discretion of one or two men in the Post Office Department, and I do not think that is a fair way of doing it.

I am quite pleased that the Postmaster General has stated that he is willing to set up a committee to study this problem and report to the house, as a possible method of getting away from the public tender system. Well, that is all right I quite agree; but it is nothing new. That has been suggested for many years. The fact is that it has never been approved and although it is a good idea it would be so slow in operation that I do not think it worth while at the present time.

So I would say to the Post Office Department that they should re-establish the system in force in the postal service during 1947 and 1948. They then gave the rural mail carriers and those handling the mail some degree of equality of pay across the board. I think that could be done again; but this system you have now, the \$1,000 plan, gets away from the idea entirely and you have the same inequalities of pay that you had before. I would entreat the Post Office Department to re-enact the Mail Contracts Supplemental Payments Act again to take care of the injustices that

[Mr. MacKenzie.]

do exist in the post office service, and specifically among rural mail carriers, until such time as you have a committee set up which can bring in something that will be fair, equitable and just to a body of men and women who do give good service in this country, and who are not used as fairly as other post office employees.

Mr. Hosking: I take part in this debate because I think it would be advantageous to the minister, who is assuming a new portfolio, to hear and learn some of the problems that confront his department as they are known to members who live in various sections of the country which are serviced by his department.

I would like to congratulate him at the outset on his announcement that at the next session a committee will be set up to look into the service given and the operation of his department. I believe he will obtain much information from that committee which will make it easier for him to give the service that his department is capable of giving. I think we as members should appreciate the fact that he has made this announcement. However, I think it would be wise at this time to state a few of the principles upon which his department has grown.

The postal department has always been very proud of its record and of the tradition that "the mail must go through". As long as I can remember I have always understood that there was nothing more important than Her Majesty's or His Majesty's mail, and that the mail must go through. That feeling is built upon tradition, and is one which most of the employees of the department fulfil at all times.

I cannot help but feel that in the last year it has been greatly jeopardized. In fact I do not think I would be very far wrong in suggesting that the instigation of the one delivery a day gave all employees across the board a feeling that it did not matter if the mail did not go through. To me that is one of the serious objections to this one delivery a day. If that change has broken down the high spirit, the integrity, and the strong feeling of urgency all employees should have that the mail must be delivered, that they must get it out, that it is not theirs, that they are handling it for the Queen and it must go out; if the feeling that they need not bother delivering the mail today has permeated those delivering the mail, then I think we have done a great disservice to this country.

I live in a city that is affected by this one delivery a day in the residential areas, and I hope this minister will make every