

time in the letting of government contracts. In years gone by both Liberal and Conservative administrations have adopted a similar practice in connection with private bills approved by parliament. When private bills for the building of international bridges were before us we inserted a wage clause, and so far as the Canadian side of the bridge was concerned we compelled the contractors to supply the government with information respecting the purchase of goods and the wages paid. If that practice has prevailed when private contractors have sought privileges from parliament, is there any good reason why a similar provision should not be inserted in government contracts? If we insisted upon a manufacturer or producer of goods supplying the government with a sworn statement as to the wages paid by him in the manufacture of those goods, would we be doing any harm?

Mr. GORDON: We are doing that now.

Mr. HEAPS: The contractor produces a sworn statement to the department?

Mr. GORDON: Yes.

Mr. HEAPS: Is that examined subsequently by government officials?

Mr. GORDON: Yes.

Mr. HEAPS: If that is so I have very little to add, because I am told that what I am suggesting is to-day an established fact. I hope the conditions which in the past few months have revealed themselves and which have to-night been mentioned by other speakers, the payment of miserably low wages will henceforth be a thing of the past so far as government contracts are concerned.

Mr. GORDON: The hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps), who is one of the foremost proponents of labour, will find that in all factories rates of wages must be posted in a prominent place. The Department of Labour requires a sworn declaration from all those who work on government contracts, and the contractors do not receive the balance of their money until they satisfy departmental officials that the schedule of wages set out has been complied with.

Mr. SANDERSON: I should like to say a word or two in reply to the Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) who, I am sorry to say, has vacated his seat. The minister has stated that on the vote in 1929 concerning rural mail delivery I voted against the resolution. That was a resolution placing the rate on a basis of \$70 per mile. I did vote in that way, and I have no apology to make.

[Mr. Heaps.]

I would point out to the committee, however, that in 1929, the average rate of pay to rural mail carriers was very much higher than it is to-day. The rate was on a standard which permitted each contractor to obtain a fair return. I will not say those carriers were being overpaid, but they were paid fair wages for the work done. But under conditions which have existed during the last five years the pay of the rural mail carriers has decreased by at least fifty per cent.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No, no.

Mr. RYERSON: I should like to hear the hon. member prove that statement, because I know it is not true in my constituency.

Mr. SANDERSON: The hon. member for Brantford City (Mr. Ryerson) has said that statement does not apply to his constituency, and I must accept his word. In the constituency I have the honour to represent, however, I could indicate contracts let by tender through the Postmaster General where the price has fallen forty per cent, fifty per cent and sometimes almost sixty per cent below the price paid prior to 1930.

Mr. MOORE (Chateauguay): On their own tenders.

Mr. SANDERSON: The hon. member says, "On their own tenders"; yes, but he forgets that under the government he has supported every man in Canada has been glad to get a little work at any price, and these men have been glad to cut their prices.

Mr. MOORE (Chateauguay): That does not prove anything.

Mr. SANDERSON: Yes, it proves that this government has not been functioning to the advantage of the people.

Mr. MOORE (Chateauguay): You do not believe that yourself.

Mr. SANDERSON: I am not going to enter into a controversy this evening with hon. members opposite, but if ever there was a party which asked for the votes of the Canadian people, which made wild promises and then fooled those people, it was the Conservative party of 1930. I have no apology to make for my vote which is recorded as the Minister of Railways and Canals has indicated.

Mr. SHAVER: Don't explain it, then.

Mr. SANDERSON: If the hon. member does not wish to hear the explanation he may leave the chamber so far as I am concerned. The government has not a leg to stand on so far as rural mail delivery is concerned, nor can they substantiate the promises made during the campaign of 1930.