

not want a mail carrier to go three and four miles up a road, turn around and then retrace his steps. In that case the farmers place their boxes at the corner of the road.

As I say, I have no doubt that the service could be improved, and we are trying to improve it all the time. I hope the time will come when we can deliver mail by means of helicopters to almost every village. If it were not for the conditions we must face today I am sure we would be able to improve the service. The hon. member for Lake Centre has said that this bill will give the Postmaster General more discretion, but I do not think it will. We cannot grant a bonus for a new contract to someone who has had the contract for less than a year and that only when an application is justified and in accordance with the rates paid in the vicinity. What the hon. member was saying might happen, possibly can happen, but I do not think it will. I shall be glad to give the answers to many of the questions that have been asked when the bill is before the house.

Mr. SHAW: My colleagues and I are prepared to support the principle of the resolution at present before us. We supported the payment of bonuses to rural mail carriers when that policy was inaugurated and we feel that to discontinue the payment of those bonuses as and from the 31st March would result in indescribable chaos. I know, as far as my own district is concerned, approximately four out of every five mail carriers would quit immediately if the bonuses were discontinued and there would be a noticeable reluctance on the part of people to bid should tenders be called for. However, we want to make it abundantly clear that we reserve the right to deal with the bill in whatever fashion we see fit.

I agree with the hon. member for Peel that a committee should be set up forthwith for the purpose of examining into post office matters. I would not want this to be considered as a reflection upon any one. In discussing post office matters with the district director in my area—incidentally he is a very fine man and his officials are most cooperative—we constantly find that we are bumping our heads against policy. We can agree as far as certain things are concerned, and then we find ourselves up against the question of policy. The policy with respect to certain remote rural areas is entirely antiquated.

I have noticed more than once that there is reluctance to establish a service in isolated rural communities, even though those communities have been established for forty or

fifty years, if it is thought the service will not pay its own way. I recognize the desirability of having each operation pay, but I feel that when a community which may have been settled for decades asks for a mail delivery service the officials should not be governed by one important factor, namely, will the operation pay its way? I would sooner see the Post Office Department, which has an annual profit of two, three or four million dollars a year, provide proper services for communities of this type, even though certain operations do not pay.

That is only one illustration of something which I should like to see discussed by the committee. I concur in the observations made with regard to our rural post offices, but I shall not go into that phase of the matter because I realize that it is not covered by this particular resolution.

I agree with the hon. member for Kootenay West that there have been some peculiar happenings with respect to the treatment accorded to veterans who have endeavoured to procure positions as postmasters. I know of one man who was wholly and completely established, who was given a position in preference to a young veteran who had given five or six years of exceptionally good service to his country. The veteran who did not receive the position was a capable young man; in fact he had had a certain amount of post office experience. I know the Postmaster General would not condone actions of that kind if they were brought to his attention. I hope yet to have an opportunity of bringing this case to his notice.

Let me conclude by saying that we support the continued payment of the bonus. We also support what, I believe, is a general request for the setting up of a special select committee for the purpose of doing that which we cannot possibly do when the estimates are under discussion.

Mr. McGARRY: I approve the principle of the resolution and I intend to support it. On the other hand, I approve the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Peel in his advocacy of the establishment of a select committee to deal with this whole question. I also approve the note struck by the hon. member for Peel when he injected into this debate a matter which in one sense might be regarded as a little outside this resolution, namely, the matter of our rural patrons receiving adequate service. That is one matter which should be given careful consideration if, as and when this committee is established. I know every hon. member will regard any economies which departments can exercise as