

Supply—Post Office

Well, this is one thing on which we have been in touch with them, but we find that their statistics, like some which the hon. member quoted, were based purely on the number of arrests and convictions but not on the number of offences committed. That is the same as the figures my hon. friend gave. He did mention that the increase in break-ins of private enterprise, shops of all types, had been 14 per cent. Well, actually the increase between the last fiscal year and this year, as far as offences are concerned, was only 2.3 per cent as regards break-ins in the post office establishments, but there again it is very difficult to make any comparison because I believe the figures he gave were for convictions and not the actual number of offences committed. In other words, one is comparing two different types of statistics.

The hon. member did mention at some length what he considered was the unequal rate of pay for postal employees doing similar work in two different cities, and he referred more particularly to officers of the department in charge of postal stations in Montreal and in Toronto. These rates of pay and the grading are done by the civil service commission. A survey of the various establishments of this department and of other departments is made continuously, and the civil service commission establish the grading of the employee in his particular postal establishment.

In Toronto we have 18 postal stations; in Montreal, I believe, we have 28, which means that the volume of work in the postal stations in those two cities is not the same. The grading is made, following a survey by the civil service commission, according to the volume of work, the responsibilities and the number of employees for which the particular postal officer is responsible, and not necessarily the revenue, because it may well be that the postal station in the downtown business section of Montreal or Toronto might have a very high revenue, whereas there is actually very little volume of mail handled. That is the basis on which the civil service commission determines the salaries. But at the present time, as I mentioned, this whole situation is being surveyed, not only as between the offices in those two cities but from coast to coast.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, whether any other comment I might make could be made on the other items as hon. members ask their questions?

Mrs. Fairclough: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether there is any item on which the minister would like to comment with regard to the matter I brought up relative to the two a day delivery or the one a day

delivery and its relation to the number of persons picking up mail at letter carriers' wickets. Does the minister propose to comment on that?

Mr. Lapointe: As regards the number of business firms that pick up mail, as the hon. member has mentioned, I might point out that this is one of the services given by the Post Office Department, called the bag service. The firms pay a rate for it. They prefer calling at the post office and getting the mail addressed to their firms in one bag rather than using a box. But it usually is the case that they get such a volume of mail that one or two boxes would not be sufficient to meet their need. Therefore we provide the service at a rate which would be the rate for the maximum size of box in the post office. All their mail is sorted and put into a bag and they come and get it themselves, just as they would call for their mail in a mail box.

Mrs. Fairclough: I daresay that is true in some instances. I cannot believe it is true in other instances, particularly in a city where all the mail boxes are already rented. For instance, in the city of Kitchener all boxes are rented. In the city of Calgary there are almost as many persons picking up their mail at the letter carrier wicket as there are holding boxes in the post office. I cannot believe that is the complete explanation. In Edmonton, Alberta, there are practically half as many people picking up mail at the letter carrier wicket as there are holding boxes.

I grant you that that may be the case in a fair percentage of instances, but I do not believe it is the case in other instances. It has been brought to my attention, and it was brought to my attention particularly at the time of the increase in postal rates and the reduction to one a day service, that a great many people wanted to pick up their mail rather than have it delivered if it meant a 24-hour delay. That condition still obtains in the city of Hamilton in a business establishment within three blocks of the general post office. The business houses are receiving their mail 24 hours late by reason of the fact that they have one a day delivery and the mail goes out the first thing in the morning. Surely the minister could rectify that situation by either making available more post boxes or have two a day delivery to business houses.

Mr. Lapointe: I shall be very pleased to look into that, Mr. Chairman, but I am told that as a general rule the reason this service is made use of by firms is that they prefer to have it. Now, it may be that the situation varies in different localities, but that has