

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

who performs the full range of duties specified for the position held by him shall be paid on an hourly basis calculated at the minimum rate for the group and level of that position.

Clause 88 states:

Notwithstanding anything in these Regulations, where a casual employee holds a position for which there is a minimum and maximum rate of pay, he shall not be granted increases in pay.

We can see the attractiveness of hiring casuals. They are not better but they are certainly cheaper because they do not receive pay increases. They are cheaper, but perhaps only in the short run. Finally, I should like to draw the minister's attention to the fact that the dead letter office was eliminated. This office saved the public much distress and time. According to page 38 of the postal operations group manual a position in this office is a preferred position requiring extensive experience and knowledge of the Canadian postal service. It was only the title that was eliminated. There are people doing virtually the same work that had once been done by people who occupied preferred positions. I wonder what Mr. Justice Freedman would have to say about that.

• (10:20 p.m.)

I have tried to draw these matters to the minister's attention. I know he is bright and able. I hope that he is fully informed on these problems and will attempt to deal with them. I ask that he look into these matters to our mutual benefit.

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, on the proceedings on the adjournment motion the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose) seems to have been talking about the effects of changes in the number of casual employees on the positions of inside workers. Let me say that whether there are more or less casual workers in the post office at this time, there has been no effect at all on the position of inside workers. I can assure the hon. member that when we began to discuss the plans for changes in the post office a statement was made that those presently employed on a full

time basis by the post office would continue to be employed. In other words, there was security of employment to those inside workers.

Following that, of course, at the beginning of the plan in October we began to use more casuals than we normally had, and the reason should be obvious to hon. members. We used casuals to fill temporarily those positions which were opened by retirement or for other reasons, including people who left the service. We kept these positions open so that when the new conditions went into effect between February 1 and April 1 these positions would be available to men who, because of the five day week, had been found to be in a surplus category. These very same employees would then be moved into the vacant positions.

In the meantime, these casuals have been employed. There will always be a need for casuals, and the positions they occupy sometimes become permanent. This has happened and we are diligently working out this sort of situation. You might ask why we need casuals. On the first of every month when the bills go out and there is exceptionally high activity, we require extra employees. At the middle of the month, and at the end of the month when family allowance cheques and old age pensions cheques are mailed, there is tremendous activity. There are very many fundamental and commercial reasons for this activity. This is not a question of jobs or of labour in any form.

Of course, it is true that for many reasons the use of casual employees is fully justified. Sometimes this employment is used to supplement those on low incomes or low family wage earners. Let me hasten to say that if there is any position in the post office in this casual area filled as a result of nepotism, we have every intention to rout that out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): A motion to adjourn the house is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this house stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.26 p.m.