

postal service has not kept pace with the rush of settlers.

Mr. LEMIEUX. In no other department of the government can one see so well the wonderful progress and development of western Canada. New villages and towns start up every week, and I think I might say that up to the present date we have been able to meet the postal requirements of the west. Not a mile of railway has been constructed which does not give the best postal facilities. I can assure my hon. friends from the west on both sides of the House that whenever the department is asked to give necessary postal facilities they will not be refused. As to the post office officials in the west, we have found it difficult to retain their services at the present salaries. In Calgary and elsewhere we have been obliged to fill vacancies four or five times a year caused by officials accepting other positions. Such is the prosperity in the west that rather than accept government positions the young men prefer to go on the farms or work for the railway companies.

Mr. FOWLER. It is a good thing too.

Mr. LAKE. The Postmaster General says that just as soon as railways are opened postal facilities follow.

Mr. LEMIEUX. That is my experience.

Mr. LAKE. I am glad to hear that, but I can assure my hon. friend that it was not the experience up to a short time ago when trains were running and the mails were still crossing the country for long distances on the old trails. Has the Postmaster General been able to provide proper postal facilities on the Arcola branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and is there a mail car on that train? Before the daily service, there was a service every other day but the mails were only sorted at the terminal points which meant a delay of several days, so that the mail leaving Fillmore in the afternoon of Monday would not get to Creelman, which is only six miles away until Thursday. It had to go to the divisional point arriving in the middle of the night, was not sorted until the next day, and so lost two trains. A mail car should be provided at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. LEMIEUX. A report is being prepared on that matter and the hon. gentleman need have no fear that as soon as that report reaches me I shall give it my best attention. I have had many visits from western members as to postal facilities in the west and this is the first time I have heard that the department has been negligent in meeting the legitimate demands made upon it. If my hon. friend (Mr. Lake) will do me the honour of a visit before his departure from Ottawa I will be only too pleased to deal with his legitimate demands.

Mr. BLAIN. The Postmaster General is new in office—

Mr. LEMIEUX. I hope you do not mean fresh.

Mr. BLAIN. Oh no, and being new in office we do not wish to criticise him too keenly. There have been deputations waiting on him for increases of salary and we will leave that matter entirely in his hands. We have had considerable trouble in the past with respect to officials who have taken active part in politics and who have even been guilty of corrupt practices finding shelter in the different departments. The Minister of Agriculture has told us to-day that none such will find a refuge under him. I would like the hon. minister to give us a statement in respect to the Post Office Department as to whether men who are abroad in the land taking active and corrupt part in political elections can find any shelter when the hon. gentleman has any appointments to make. At the same time perhaps he could give us a statement as to what his policy will be with respect to officers taking part in political elections.

Mr. LEMIEUX. I may say to my hon. friend that during the last few weeks no report has been made to me against any of the thousands of postmasters in the country who happen to belong to the party of my hon. friend, and I suppose we are too far from the last general election to consider any complaints that may have been made against them at that time. At all events, I intend to treat with equity, fairness and justice the postmasters who belong to either of the political parties. I expect the postmasters throughout the country, if they wish to obtain an increase of salary, to keep quiet in office and perform their duties according to the law.

Mr. BLAIN. Speaking for myself, I am very well pleased with the statement of the hon. minister, and I am sure we shall look forward to the future of the hon. gentleman in his department with a great deal of pleasure.

Mr. FOWLER. While I was pleased to hear the hon. gentleman say what he was going to do in the west, I do not want him to forget the needs of the east in the way of postal accommodation. One of his predecessors was a little inclined to forget the interests of the people in the east, and shut up post offices which were not paying very large revenues. The general revenues of the Post Office Department are, I understand, very ample, there being a considerable surplus this year.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Nearly a million dollars.

Mr. FOWLER. That being the case, it seems to me that the outlying districts in the eastern provinces should be well provid-