

day They are to receive about 78 cents a week increase in pay while the proprietors of the newspapers, without any solicitation on their part, are to get \$500,000. We should keep that money and give it to the letter carriers and the railway mail clerks. That is one point I want to make. There is another suggestion I would offer the government, and that is with respect to railway mail clerks. I think the government should consider the advisability of carrying an insurance policy, covering the lives of these men, of from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Having regard to the fact that these employees work in the very front of the train, I think the state might well provide a system of insurance for them. I think these 4,700 men are being very badly used. Their danger has not been appreciated. The minister says frankly that he will do something to meet the situation and of that we are glad. I do think, however, that the money which is being given to the publishers of the country as a result of the reduction in the rate on newspapers might go to the letter carriers, who I repeat carry 100 tons of mail matter on their backs every day.

Mr. ROBINSON: I have received from the letter carriers of the border cities a statement showing that in 1924, until March 1, they were receiving \$1,557 a year while from April 1, 1925, they received \$1,440. In 1926, with a bonus of \$18, they got \$1,458. These letter carriers, owing to their arduous duties, seldom remain in the service the 35 years, or whatever happens to be the period of service that entitles them to superannuation. Having to climb stairs and hills with heavy mail matter on their backs, they succumb to the strain in a few years. In places like the border cities, where the cost of living is high and rentals are double what they are in cities like St. Thomas, Chatham and London, the letter carriers should receive a bonus. In St. Thomas, for a frame house of six rooms a rental of from twenty to thirty dollars a month is charged, and for the same house in the border cities it is anywhere from forty-five to sixty dollars a month. Having studied the condition of the letter carriers I am quite sympathetic towards them and I urge the minister to take this matter into his serious consideration and do something to help them to meet the cost of living.

Mr. TOLMIE: I want to endorse what the minister has said with regard to the necessity for a reclassification of these men. When may we expect it to be done?

Mr. VENIOT: That depends on the authority to whom we have to apply. I can

assure my hon. friend that there is no man who has a greater sympathy than I for the employees of the civil service in all classes, but especially for those men who have to deliver letters and mail.

Mr. GEARY: I take for granted that the object of those in charge of the salary revision is to continue paying to the employees of the government at least a living wage. The living wage in 1924 was admitted to be \$1,458; that is to say, the salary was only \$1,260, and in order to bring that up to a living wage a certain bonus was added, of which I believe \$99 was removed by some sort of revision. But what happened in 1924 when the revision took place? There was no change in the cost of living but the sum of \$180, previously called bonus, was called salary; with the sequence to the man who received it that his superannuation percentage would be deducted from that amount, which had not been the case with the bonus. No one can say that between 1924 and 1927 there was any substantial decrease in the cost of living; rather, I think, the contrary has been the case. So if the department was alive to the fact that a man must get a living wage and that he must have some security in his labour, and implemented that understanding with a certain revision in 1924, it seems to me that the department must be bound to at least continue that salary and not call it a raise. It has not been admitted by the minister, but doubtless he will quite frankly state that the Post Office Department in 1924 recommended a salary of \$1,560 for letter carriers. In some way this recommendation was tossed about between the department and the Civil Service Commission, and only this year we find the Civil Service Commission acting. I would like very much if the minister would tell us whether the recommendation now before us in regard to these classes is exactly as it was received from the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. RINFRET: I may say that it is.

Mr. GEARY: Then, Mr. Chairman, may I recall to the minister that on June 15 of last year this question was very much alive; on that date I asked a question, which is to be found at page 4492 of Hansard, as follows:

I wish to ask a question in reference to the report on the salaries of the civil servants. I understand that action has been deferred pending the appointment of the two other commissioners, there being only the chairman at the moment. There being no Civil Service Commission fully appointed, will the question of salaries have to remain in abeyance until the next session of parliament?