

ference to government publications such as the reports on agriculture and other reports which are of importance to the agricultural community but which are scarcely important enough to send in separate envelopes, it has been my practice and the practice of many other members of this House to have an understanding with the postmasters in the rural districts by which they would place these documents on the counters of their stores, so that the farmers coming to the post office could take copies if they desired. The postmasters were quite willing to do this, and it was a great convenience to the members of the House as well as to the agricultural community. The circular of the 15th of April referred to in the letter which I have read appears to have contained instructions that postmasters must not continue this practice. I made an effort to see this latter circular and I telephoned to the Deputy Postmaster General—the Postmaster General being absent—and he informed me that the circular being a departmental matter it could not be seen. For this reason I am unaware of its actual contents. We know that the corridors of this House are piled up with reports that involve too much work for the members to send out in separate envelopes, and it would seem to me that the practice to which I have referred of distributing them through the medium of the rural postmasters, is a practice that ought to be encouraged rather than prevented. At all events I am unable to see what right the inspector had to ask the postmaster to find out what was in the mail parcel that I forwarded from this House. I presume he may have been looking for such infringements as hon. gentlemen are said to have been guilty of in the past in sending out advertisements, &c., but there should be other ways of finding that out without violating the secrecy of the mails. It seems to me that this letter should not have been sent out by the post office inspector. I draw the attention of the government to the matter with the expectation that some explanation will be given. I may say that we do not hold the postmasters responsible for the distribution of mail matter sent in this way; we merely send each postmaster a private letter asking him to place this departmental literature on the counter of his store if he has no objection, and I cannot see what harm there can be in that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I am sorry the Postmaster General is not in his seat to-day, but he is expected to-morrow or the day after when I shall make it my duty to call his attention to the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Barr). I hope that at next sitting we will be able to give my hon. friend the information he asks; I do not know whether he will be satisfied with it or not, but at all events he is entitled to it.

Mr. BARR.

#### CROW'S NEST PASS RAILWAY—PASSENGER RATES.

Mr. J. HERRON. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to inform the right hon. Prime Minister that I have had several communications from gentlemen who reside in the district through which the Crow's Nest Pass Railway runs, complaining of the high passenger rates charged on that railway which I understand amount to four cents per mile. These gentlemen consider this rate very high and they have requested me to bring it to the attention of the government and to inquire if it is not one of those matters which might be brought before the Railway Commission for investigation.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. This is a matter which ought to be referred to the Railway Commission. I do not think the government can have anything to do with it. I shall look into it and have it investigated by the Railway Department.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The government has undoubtedly the right to interfere if it sees fit.

#### THE AUTONOMY BILL.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would like to mention what has already been discussed between the First Minister and myself and that is the date at which we shall take up the remaining clauses of the Autonomy Bill. I understand that, owing to the indisposition of the Minister of Justice we cannot take them up to-day nor before Tuesday or Wednesday of next week.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Some time next week.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. My right hon. friend is not able to fix the exact date?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. When the subject was last discussed, I think the Minister of Justice informed us that the clauses would be taken up in the order suggested from this side. Is that the understanding of the right hon. gentleman, or will he give us an idea as to the order?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have not considered that at all. If the Minister of Justice agreed upon any order, I have no objection.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. My understanding was that he would consult the wishes of hon. gentlemen on this side and follow the order we suggested.

Mr. PATERSON. I think he said he would leave the schedules to the last.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Yes, he desired to have the redistribution clauses left until the end; but apart from that, he was willing to leave the order to us.