

2. From what railway point are mails forwarded, what is the distance covered, and how often do these mails arrive?

3. What other post offices have been established in the Territory of Athabaska, and when were they first opened?

4. How many letters were received and despatched from Lesser Slave Lake during the last four years?

5. What was the revenue collected and the expense incurred in connection with the Lesser Slave Lake post office?

Hon. SYDNEY FISHER (for the Postmaster General):

1. 1st June, 1903.

2. The railway point from which mails are forwarded to this office is Edmonton, which is 318 miles from Lesser Slave Lake. The immediate point of departure for the mails for Lesser Slave Lake is Athabaska Landing, which is 105 miles from the railway at Edmonton. The service is once per month.

3. Lesser Slave Lake has been in operation for some time, and three other offices were authorized in February last, viz.: (a) Spirit river, (b) Peace river crossing, (c) Vermilion. In addition to the service thus in operation for the service of Lesser Slave Lake, there are two trips made annually to the far north, beginning at Lac la Biche, which gets its mails from Edmonton via Fort Saskatchewan, Whitford and Saddle lake, and ending at Fort Resolution, passing through the following settlements in Athabaska, viz.: Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, Smith Landing and Fort Smith.

The Royal Northwest Mounted Police are also taken advantage of in their patrol trips. They carry a mail bag with them and undertake the conveyance and delivery at the first regular post office they come to of all matter handed to them.

4. As no record is kept of matter mailed at an office, this information cannot be given.

5. The revenue of Lesser Slave Lake is as follows: 1903, \$20; 1904, \$66.13. The salary of the postmaster is \$30 a year.

The expense in connection with the service is as follows: For the monthly trip from Athabaska Landing to the post office at Lesser Slave Lake and to Peace river crossing, which is not a post office, \$125 a trip or \$1,500 a year is paid. For the service to the far north, which extends into the Mackenzie district, \$525 a trip or \$1,050 a year is paid.

Therefore, in 1904, there was only one post office for that whole district including that portion of Athabaska which is not taken into the province of Alberta; and the revenue derived from that post office, in that district to which they propose to give two representatives, is \$66 a year, and the mail delivery is made once a month. How do you propose to get the members down to the seat of government to meet the assembly? If any argument was needed to satisfy the First Minister, if he desires to be fair in this matter, that that country is not ripe for representation at present, it is the fact that in the whole of the district of Athabaska there was only one post office in 1904, and the revenue derived therefrom was \$66. Yet to that district you are giving two representatives—greater representation than you give to the constituencies in the south

such as for example Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Pincher, Cardston, or High River. If any argument were needed to satisfy him that the time is not ripe or that their interests cannot be represented in the local house by the member for North Alberta just as well as they can be looked after in this House by the member for Edmonton it is afforded by this return which was brought down and which is to be found at page 7271 of 'Hansard.' There is no navigation in that country and no means of communication as far as the returns show. A question in regard to that matter was asked in this House a week or ten days ago. The answer is that as far as the government know they have no evidence of it. I want to point out that some few years ago the Hon. James Ross, who now occupies a seat in the Senate, reported on the advisability of giving Athabaska a representative in the then local house, and he made the statement—and I do not think he will deny it—that the distances were so great, that the means of communication were so few and that settlement was so sparse that it would be absolutely impossible for any man to attempt to adequately represent that constituency, and if you divide that territory into two the argument of Mr. Ross equally applies. When I am charged across the floor of this House by the hon. Minister of the Interior with saying that the people there are not fit for representation I reply that he is placing a meaning in my words that I do not intend them to convey. I do not pretend to say that they are not fit for representation, but I do say that the time has not come and that they will be done no more injustice by giving them representation in the local house with the northern part of Alberta than you are doing to the district of Nipissing, the northern parts of the province of Ontario and the outlying parts of the constituencies in the province of Quebec. If the argument applies that they should have representation because there is no person representing them in the local house, and that, as the hon. Minister of the Interior says, they are contributing man for man their share towards the revenue of the country, then, why not give representation in this House to Athabaska, Mackenzie, Ungava, Franklin or Keewatin? The men living in these districts are contributing equally their share man for man towards the revenue of the country. Why should an exception be made in this case? What is it that requires special representation up there? Is it an agricultural country especially? The returns of grain or of wheat shipped in or out of Edmonton might be interesting. They have two flour mills up there, but it is simply because they tell us of the great distance they are from where that commodity can be obtained. What particular trade is there which requires representation? Is there any shipping, lumbering or fishing? There is simply the fur trad-