

telling me is that the new men are not coming in and that some come in on a temporary basis and do not stay in. There are greater lures, advantages, career opportunities in other areas, so that the service is no longer competitive.

Mr. BELEN. The older employee has a sort of built-in reason to stay because of the retirement program. But I think every industry will tell you—and we are light industry in a sense—that there is a high rate of turnover in the new hires.

Mr. REID. What is that rate?

Mr. McMILLAN. Regular employees, it is only 8 or 9 percent. In the temporary category, it ran as high as 80 percent at one time.

Mr. BELEN. And lots of times, you know, when new employees enter the postal service, they find it is a tough job, being a carrier is a tough job, and being a mail handler is a tough job. It is a materials-handling kind of operation. I know even some of the summer people have been surprised at how hard they have had to work to move this 200 million plus pieces of mail. Much of it is heavy.

One example: Last December 20 to January 20 we moved 58 million pounds of catalogs, coming in from just five firms.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Belen, did you say 200 million pieces? Didn't you mean 80 billion?

Mr. BELEN. 200 million a day.

Mr. BROOKS. Oh; pardon me.

Mr. REID. I thank the chairman for yielding. I would just have one final question. I am aware that the other committees have interests in this; but what, Mr. Belen, would you suggest that would be imaginative and creative that would make a substantial difference to this morale question? If you could just speak in broad terms of what you would like to see, what do you think would be of most help here to really start to build up certain areas where you do have this turnover rate?

Mr. BELEN. In my judgment one of the greatest things for morale is supervisory consideration. This is something that postmasters and supervisors and Postmasters General just have to give. I can tell you that Mr. Watson, on his weekends off, has been going around to post offices and meeting employees. As he did in Cincinnati last Saturday. All of our officials do that. We go to employee conventions. We try to be responsive to the things that concern them.

But what you are talking about I think has to be done by the local post office leadership.

Mr. REID. I think it goes a little deeper if I may say so. I think it relates partly to the conditions of employment and career opportunities.

I am sure you are doing what you say, and I think that is very helpful; but there is no substitute for making a service competitive with private industry. What I suspect is that, increasingly in certain areas of the postal service, they are not competitive in career terms. What I would ask you is not what you can do in a public relations sense, but what structurally could you do that would make a major difference?

Mr. BELEN. Of course, what you spoke about, acceleration, going to the top of the grade is not the solution. Once the top step of a grade is reached, there is the problem of the man with 25 years of service saying "I have been in the same grade for 20 years."