

I don't think you can say there is going to be an opportunity under our present situation for new people coming in to become supervisors in a matter of a year or two. There could be an odd promotional situation, or circumstances where an employee is promoted because no one else is available. But in an organization such as those in New York, it is very difficult to move. I understand that it is a very difficult situation; but to try to solve it just seems to create other problems.

Mrs. HECKLER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. REID. Certainly.

Mrs. HECKLER. Mr. Belen, I understand that you have recently increased the number of women carriers in the postal service. Is this true and what are your figures on it?

Mr. BELEN. We don't have very many women carriers, but they do have the opportunity to be a letter carrier if they wish. But, the carrier pack is 35 pounds and is difficult to carry. Most of our women employees go into the clerk part. Of course, we also have a lot of lady postmasters and they do a tremendous job, I might say.

Mrs. HECKLER. Do you have any women carriers?

Mr. BELEN. Yes. I am told it is about 3,800 out of a total of 215,000.

Mrs. HECKLER. Isn't it possible for women who would be interested in this kind of work to have some kind of a cart rather than merely carrying the mail as the men do?

Mr. BELEN. We have lots of vehicles of all kinds. Of course, they can have carts, and I believe they do have.

Mrs. HECKLER. Do you have more women mail carriers in certain sections of the country than in others?

Mr. BELEN. Most of these are in large cities, as far as I know.

Mrs. HECKLER. Why is it that women are becoming interested in this? Is it because there aren't enough men?

Mr. BELEN. I would say pay is one of the factors. Probably another reason they take the carrier job is because of the hours. When you go into the postal service as a clerk, you have to take the least desirable tour since that is based on seniority too. And so they come on the late night tour, and it just doesn't work out familywise and in other ways. That would be one major reason I imagine, since the clerks' jobs seem to be more adaptable to women than the carriers' jobs.

Mrs. HECKLER. Isn't the number of women, or the very fact that women have become carriers, a recent phenomenon?

Mr. BELEN. We did not encourage women to come into the service until recently.

Mrs. HECKLER. How recently?

Mr. BELEN. Well, it has been a national program for how long?

Mr. McMILLAN. We had an Executive order, Mrs. Heckler, about 4 years ago, I believe, that said that there would be no discrimination because of sex. However, we have had some women employees even on carrier routes for 20 to 25 years.

At one time back in the past we had separate registers for men and women. In other words, this was because there were only certain duties in a post office that we then felt women were capable of performing. The registers were combined a number of years ago, 20 or 25 years ago, and since that time there has been no bar to employment of women except the physical limitations of the work.