

Interim Supply

police magistrates of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The county court judges across the country had their salaries raised. I placed a question on the order paper, and I obtained a copy of the recent order in council appointing a magistrate, for the Yukon, and I noticed that the salaries paid in the north are still \$10,000 per annum.

I recommend most strongly to the minister that he consider this matter with a view to raising the salaries of these two justice officials in the two northern territories so they might be on the same level as county court judges across the country.

Let me return now to the department of the Postmaster General and the conduct of that department, particularly in the Yukon. The minister will see, if he examines his files, that since 1958, when I first came to this house, I have advocated a policy of the calling of public tenders for every contract for the carriage of mail, whether by ground or by air or any other means. Mr. Pageau, who was then director of the transportation division of the department, will concur in that. I am sorry to see that the department is now departing from this fair course of action.

Mr. Denis: On a question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) claims that I am departing from the policy of calling tenders. I should like him to state names so that an investigation may be undertaken to prove whether he is right or wrong.

[*Text*]

Mr. Nielsen: I will be pleased to do that. As a matter of fact I was about to do that on Friday when I had to resume my seat. The particular post office where public tenders have not been called is a newly established one at Ross River. I understand that the procedure followed by the department was for certain selected companies to be asked to tender for the carriage of mail to that post office from Whitehorse. In fact only one company was invited to tender, a company in Whitehorse. The department subsequently received a further offer from a company in Teslin in the Yukon, and this was rejected for reasons which I am forced to agree, because of the size of the post office and other considerations, are acceptable. But there is more than one company in Whitehorse and in the Yukon capable of carrying mail by air to that post office.

In the past public tenders have been called and advertisements have been placed not only in newspapers but in post offices throughout the territory. To return to the

[Mr. Nielsen.]

policy of selecting certain favoured individuals or companies and saying "would you like this job" is not my idea of giving a fair opportunity to every Canadian interested in supplying a public service.

I have given only one instance. I am sure if the minister would check he would find that what I have told him is accurate. Whatever the minister does in any other constituencies in Canada because of pressures brought by his own backbenchers and in his party's caucus, we in the Yukon want to be fair minded about these contracts. I think even the supporters of his own party have gone on record as saying that they want to get back to the system where everybody has an opportunity to tender on contracts for public goods and services. From a personal point of view I think the situation should be the same all across the country.

Certainly situations should not be allowed to exist such as that which existed in the riding of the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac, where the postmistress at Enterprise was thrown out of work peremptorily and arbitrarily despite the fact that she was a veteran.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. I deny categorically that, arbitrarily and against the law, I dismissed the postmistress the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) is talking about.

First of all, she was not postmistress, except temporarily until someone was appointed on a permanent basis. When five, six or eight people apply to be appointed postmaster, the Postmaster General must choose one of them. Therefore, I say to the hon. member that this procedure is far from being arbitrary and that everything was done according to the regulations of the Post Office Department.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that is rather an argument and that there is no question of privilege. I ask the hon. member for Yukon to proceed.

[*Text*]

Mr. Nielsen: Certainly I am bound to accept the minister's explanation of this matter. I can only go by what I read in press reports, and the press reports are quite firm in stating that this veteran of the last war, who has five children, did not even know she was fired; and despite the fact that a petition was signed by over two thirds of the people in the village of Enterprise, the minister went ahead with the decision to dismiss this veteran. Not only that, but he did it in