

Inquiries of the Ministry

authorities to discuss the subject. I suggested a meeting in Ottawa on Monday, January 26. I have not yet received word whether that date is satisfactory to him.

(Translation):

CONTROL OF MINING RIGHTS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. J. Robichaud (Gloucester): I should like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, the hon. Mr. Comtois.

Has the minister conferred or exchanged correspondence with the provinces concerned, with regard to the federal government's intention of "controlling" mining rights in areas located below territorial waters?

Hon. Paul Comtois (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): No, Mr. Speaker.

(Text):

HARBOURS

LAKEHEAD—LOCATION OF FACILITIES AND REPRESENTATION ON COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I should like to address a question to the Minister of Transport on an issue that is causing considerable confusion in my region. Can he tell us whether the lakehead harbour commission, not yet appointed, is to choose the site of the harbour terminal and whether the western provinces are to have a representative on the commission, as recently announced by the government's representative in Port Arthur constituency?

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, when the new commission is appointed, which I expect will be in about two weeks time, it will confer with the government regarding the site of the new harbour facilities. What was the second part of the question?

Mr. Fisher: The second part had to do with the western provinces having a representative on the commission.

Mr. Hees: It is my understanding that representatives who are interested in harbour matters in the two lakehead cities have been in touch with the government of Manitoba discussing the possibility of someone being on the commission who would be in a position to represent the interests of that province, and I believe agreement has been reached as to that person.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

YORK TOWNSHIP—REPORTED REMOVAL OF POST OFFICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Postmaster General, of which I have given him notice. Can the Postmaster General say whether the report in this morning's press is correct that two inspectors in his department removed the post office from the business premises of Nicholas Manfredo in York township because this gentleman had written to a Toronto newspaper criticizing the government?

Hon. W. M. Hamilton (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, that certainly was not the reason.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Robichaud: Was it only a coincidence?

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Mr. Manfredo had been appointed on September 4, 1958, and on November 27, 1958, the hon. member for York South, the area in which the sub-post office is located, informed me that this sub-postmaster was engaged in partisan political activity and recommended his dismissal.

On December 3 I directed that this sub-post office be closed because of the partisan political activity of the sub-postmaster, but that in view of the heavy pressure on the Post Office Department during the Christmas period the closing be delayed until the Christmas rush was over. On December 9 confirmation was received from the postmaster in Toronto that the office would be closed following the Christmas season.

Appointment and dismissal of these sub-postmasters is the direct responsibility of the Postmaster General. My action was taken in accord with long-standing practice that where a member of parliament personally certifies to the partisan political activity of a public servant, dismissal may be ordered by the minister concerned. I might say that the limited action which I have taken in this regard has been on a completely non-partisan basis, and has included the dismissal of a postmaster for political activity in support of the present government which was requested by one of the Liberal members of the present house.

The preceding Liberal government, when it took office in 1935, embarked on a wholesale campaign in this regard—

Mr. McIlraith: Order.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the hon. member has given a very complete answer.