

say that the postmaster general of that day convinced me that postal employees were the guardians of public moneys passing through the mails, and that there must not be any easy way of escape from the consequences of violation of the statute. He pointed out, further, that the penalty given must be sufficient to act as a deterrent. I believe that was the principle underlying his philosophy. It was a deterrent to everybody else, showing that they could not do this sort of thing and escape with only a suspended sentence, or a light term of imprisonment. I did not, of course, agree with him entirely at that time, because I had in my mind an offender who, I thought, had been dealt with harshly under the provisions of the statute. I therefore invite the Minister of Justice, when he closes the debate, to give us the underlying reasons which have caused the Post Office Department to change their views in connection with this important matter.

I have nothing of importance to say respecting section 4 of the bill. I think the minister pointed out a cogent reason why there should be a change, and certainly he is much more familiar with the administration of justice in his own province than any of us who are not from that province could possibly be. Sometimes I think there are too many judges in this country, especially since in this time of war they do not seem to have much to do. In my province, at all events, we could get along with a lot less. However that is a matter of—

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Within a matter of hours I have had representations to the contrary from the law society of the hon. member's province.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They did not ask my advice, that is all I can say; they lost a good opinion.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I shall be glad to have the hon. member's opinion to use in my reply.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): What I think they have in mind down there is that the government of to-day should fill vacancies when they arise, and not hold them back in the hope of holding them over for perhaps some incompetents to fill before or after an election. That is what they are objecting to in New Brunswick. If we are going to have a panel of three appeal court judges in New Brunswick, then let us have them. If we are going to have four King's bench judges in New Brunswick, then let us not get along with only two, and one ill, and one vacancy. That is what we object to in New Brunswick—the holding of vacancies. If they tell the Minister of Justice the whole truth and nothing but the

truth, he will find out that that is the reason. I happen to be just about as close to the active practising barristers down there as anyone could be, and I believe that is the view. However, I apologize for interjecting those remarks.

Then there is another thing. We are going to have an election down there pretty soon, and there are two or three would-be applicants who are being forced to run over the course before they get their reward. I know it is very difficult—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Of course I know it is difficult to satisfy five applicants with just one plum.

Mr. SLAGHT: How does the hon. member know that? Is it through his own experience with a former government?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would say I would take a good deal of pride in the judicial appointments and recommendations I made in 1935.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. SLAGHT: The hon. member is reflecting on the whole bench.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No, I respectfully dissent from that. I have a very high regard for the bench as a whole.

Mr. SLAGHT: One would not think so, after the hon. member's last remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask hon. members to address the Chair.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would not have said what I did if the hon. member for Parry Sound had not interjected; and I am not going to say any more on the subject. I am inviting the Minister of Justice to illuminate this discussion by telling us just what has changed the policy of the Post Office Department.

Mr. PAUL MARTIN (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think these amendments are certainly long overdue, particularly that one having to do with the inclusion of the words in the present section which provide that it is mandatory for a judge or magistrate to impose a sentence within the ambit of the phrase "or for any term not less than three years." This provision has called for amendment long before this. The hon. gentleman who has just spoken mentioned a case in the province of Ontario. Chief Justice Rose has given an *obiter dictum* to the effect that the magistrate has power to impose a suspended sentence, and