

Postal Facilities in St. John's

knowledge of the support of the statement made by the Minister of Justice when he was being questioned on the matter of patronage in Ottawa. I say this is public knowledge because the *Ottawa Citizen* of yesterday quoted the Minister of Justice answering a question. For the benefit of the minister and the Prime Minister I would repeat the question that was put to the minister while on a television program:

During a CJOH interview, Doug Fisher, with his tongue practically sticking through his cheek suggested gently that since Turner was in the senior government spot of Ottawa M.P.'s, wouldn't he now be the one in charge of government patronage and handouts?

Said Turner, after maybe a half-second delay: "Whatever happens, I shall always consider George McIlraith the senior Ottawa M.P."

I call Your Honour's attention to the fact that the question put to the Prime Minister, despite the rules, was answered by the Minister of Justice. I take no exception to his answer, but it is clearly indicated in press reports that the direct question to the Minister of Justice was on the matter of patronage and no other question.

• (2:40 p.m.)

His answer, although he did not use the word "patronage"—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, if I have to put up with this cheering—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that the hon. member should be given the opportunity to complete his statement.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, as I was about to remark, it is very difficult to get a point across when the group on my right which acts as nothing more than a cheer leading group in this house continues to interrupt. In finalizing my question of privilege in this regard I would refer hon. members, especially the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Justice to the *Ottawa Citizen* of yesterday.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has made a statement. He rose on a question of privilege, but it would seem to me it is more in the nature of a clarifying statement. I doubt very much whether anything

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond).]

could be gained by pursuing the matter further. Yesterday we had a very interesting exchange on this subject. I hesitate to do anything at this moment which might precipitate a further debate of the nature we had yesterday. There are a number of other questions of privilege of which I have received notice. If we are to proceed with the business of the house this afternoon we might go on with the next one.

MR. MCGRATH—POSTAL FACILITIES IN
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is as follows. On September 26 I wrote to the Postmaster General pointing out to him that while the city of St. John's had almost doubled its population in the past 20 years, postal service had not kept pace with this population growth and that we still have the same number of postal stations we had 20 years ago. Specifically I asked the minister to have his department examine the possibility of a new post office in the northeast area of St. John's.

My letter was sent on September 26. Today is October 31 and I still have not had a reply even by way of acknowledgement. My question of privilege does not relate to the obvious administrative inefficiency of the minister—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McGrath: —although I may say in passing that if this is the way he ran the Montreal stock exchange—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must ask the hon. member to co-operate by stating his question of privilege.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, as I just said my question of privilege does not relate to the administrative inefficiency of the minister. Rather it relates to a situation which arose in St. John's yesterday. A private citizen and well known Liberal said he was authorized to announce on behalf of the Minister of Defence Production that the government intends to improve existing postal facilities and to build a new post office to cover the northern part of the city.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McGrath: My question of privilege is that as an hon. member of this house I am entitled to information concerning the administrative plans of the government, and am entitled to this information specifically