

senators, my information is that there is no policy to close rural post offices. Canada Post Corporation does not have any plans to effect widespread closures of rural post offices.

Some communities may experience future changes from the current methods or locations of postal service. However, any changes will result only through natural opportunities such as the resignation, retirement, or promotion of the postmaster, loss of the post office site, or on the initiative of the community itself.

These cases allow the corporation to review its services as part of its ongoing business management.

Senator Frith: Now try reading that again without smiling.

Senator Bonnell: Honourable senators, there is no doubt that all postmasters will retire some day. Even senators will retire when they reach age 75.

Senator Molgat: They may even die one day!

Senator Bonnell: Some of our postmasters have been giving us good service for many years. We do not expect them to go on forever; they do not have that dispensation from above. Therefore, this government is insinuating that they are liable to put it out on contract to somebody to run a second-class Post Office and to give some of our citizens second-class service, while others get first-class service.

If you happen to live in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, or perhaps Ottawa, you will get first-class service. But if you live in Victoria, Alberton, or Murray River, you will get the kind of service we are getting now in Atlantic Canada: Not good enough, Mr. Leader of the Government in the Senate. Use the strength which you have; use that strength on St. Patrick's Day—and I want to wish you a happy St. Patrick's Day—to go and tell your Prime Minister that he will never make it again if he does not do something for our rural people.

Senator Frith: Well, then, don't tell him! We don't want him to make it again.

Senator Bonnell: Tell him that he will never make it again if he does not do something for the poorer regions of this country. And tell him, for God's sake, not to interfere with the mails—it is bad enough now!

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I am glad to have the honourable senator acknowledge that some Canadians are receiving first-class service from the Post Office. That is an improvement over what it was under his regime.

Let me say that at least 90 days' notice of any change will be provided to allow those affected to make representations. Members of Parliament will be the first to be notified by Canada Post and provided with as much information as possible to ensure the best possible communication with their constituents.

Senator Bonnell: Honourable senators, 90 days' notice of the closing of a post office? Just enough time to get a horse to go farther!

Are senators members of Parliament? Will we be notified, as senators, or will just members of the House of Commons be

[Senator Murray.]

notified? Advance notification that a post office will be closed in 90 days is not much good. Will they let the representatives of the people speak and will they listen to them, or will they pay no attention? That was the case with the CNR in relation to Prince Edward Island. They notified us, they listened to us, but they removed our passenger trains. That was some years ago and, I must admit, your party was not in power.

● (1450)

Senator Murray: There will be consultation.

Senator Bonnell: Will you put the railroad back? I understand the intention is to take the railways off ferries and that we will have a causeway with no rails.

There is no sense in notifying us if you are not going to listen to us and heed what we are saying.

Senator Murray: The honourable senator is attempting to conduct a debate on the basis of hearsay and rumour. I have just told him what the policy of the Canada Post Corporation is. I would have hoped he would have welcomed that policy and that he would have particularly welcomed the fact that no change is even being considered except in the circumstances that I mentioned. If any change is contemplated there will be 90 days' notice in order that everyone may make representations. "Everyone" emphatically includes my honourable friend and other interested senators.

Senator Bonnell: Honourable senators, we are told that there will be no change apart from certain exceptions. Those exceptions may include places like Borden, Crapaud, Victoria and Murray River where those involved are close to retirement age, that is, 65 years of age. The honourable gentleman said that retired persons would be excluded, yet the changes will be made in those areas I have just mentioned.

If I were being told that a new, young postmaster was to be appointed in order to keep the post office operating, then I would happily sit down.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, as I have said, the Post Office management will review its services in the event of retirement, promotion and these other hypotheses that I have put forward. It will review its services as part of its responsibility to manage the operation.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

MICMAC TREATY—MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT

Hon. Robert Muir: Honourable senators, I should like to draw to the attention of the Leader of the Government a matter that is causing me some concern. I shall say to him, as I said to the Leader of the Government when I sat on the other side of this chamber, that I do not expect him to carry this information around in his head but I would ask him to take the question as notice.

Recently, the Supreme Court of Canada held in the *Queen vs. Simon* case that the Treaty of Halifax (1752) is still existing and in force. This was a treaty between the Micmacs and the government of the day. This treaty secured the