

*Supply—Post Office*

it there although I admit there were two pages torn out of that newspaper. Certainly it is not on record in the library. I finally sent my secretary to see the hon. member for Timiskaming but he could not produce any clippings either.

Actually I have nothing to say about the subject, except that it does not seem to have any foundation whatsoever. That is the sort of case that is supposed to have been made against us, and against me personally, contending that patronage is being practised in this department. In the Post Office Department we make something approaching 1,000 appointments every year, 850 of them, give or take a few, being made on my own authority as Postmaster General. Those who carp about patronage machinations on our part can only come into this house with about three or four trumped up incidents, every one of which can be immediately thrown out as having no effect. That is all I have to say about that subject.

**Mr. Richard (Ottawa East):** I am not going to follow up, because I am not an expert—

**The Chairman:** I believe the minister only yielded the floor, and unless the hon. member is rising to put a question he is out of order.

**Mr. Hamilton (Noire Dame de Grace):** The hon. member is not going to follow up at this time, Mr. Chairman, because I am going to continue with a few remarks.

**Mr. Richard (Ottawa East):** I thought you had concluded your remarks.

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** No.

**Mr. Richard (Ottawa East):** Because you spoke so loudly I thought you had finished.

**Mr. Hamilton (Noire Dame de Grace):** The hon. member looked at me with his eyes and jumped up with his mouth.

I have dealt as briefly as I could with the general comments which seemed to permeate the debate, as well as a few specific items. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam and the hon. member for Middlesex East urged that the regulation in respect of letter carrier service be reduced from 2,500 to some lower figure. It is difficult to assess the exact result in a case like that, but I would suggest—

**Mr. Thomas:** I rise on a question of privilege. The minister said the hon. member from Middlesex East. I think he meant the member for Middlesex West.

**Mr. Hamilton (Noire Dame de Grace):** Middlesex West is right. We have a hurried estimate in this regard, and have arrived at the conclusion that if we dropped our limit to 2,000 we would incorporate probably 30

to 35 communities. The cost involved there alone would be somewhere between \$1 million and \$1,500,000. We are not discarding the idea by any manner of means, but when an expenditure of that volume is in prospect I feel it is certainly something deserving further consideration.

The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam seemed to feel that small post offices were being eliminated in order to enlarge metropolitan post offices. This is not done as a matter of policy or choice. It does happen on occasion, when it must be done in the interests of efficient mail service. He criticized the Vancouver tunnel, a favourite subject of his. It was built under the preceding administration. It is not as effective as it was hoped it would be, but it is still a project which will bring savings, paying for its cost in about 20 years, so the presumptions he made in that regard were quite wrong.

The hon. member had much to say about Pitney-Bowes of Canada Limited. I can briefly say that it is not the only company in Canada in the postal meter machine business. There are a number of other machines in operation; Commercial Controls Canada Limited have one, the Friden Calculating Machine Company have another. There is another one called Postalia, and one called Neo-Post. This is not a monopoly field. In so far as we are concerned we rent certain equipment from this company merely because we feel it is cheaper from our point of view than to purchase them.

The hon. member for Port Arthur referred to second class mail rates. There is not much for debate in this regard until we are in possession of the O'Leary commission report. The fact remains, however, that the attitude not only of this government but of the preceding government in regard to second class rates has been that they are a concession designed to encourage the circulation of reading material which otherwise might not be circulated, and to that extent we can see value here. In answering another suggestion of his, I might say there is no doubt the post office has made progress as a result of decentralization.

In respect of progress, I would like to express my own personal appreciation to the president of the Canadian postmasters association who, when he introduced me last night, made the following statement, and I am reading from today's *Journal*. He is reported as saying:

—Mr. Hamilton had done more for his department than any of his predecessors.

I appreciate that remark and commend it to the attention of the hon. member for St. Denis.