

*Supply—Post Office*

gentleman has mentioned, has authority to permit the closing of the office for certain periods.

Mr. LENNARD: With reference to the point raised by the hon. member for Vancouver South in connection with extra help employed in the post office in Hamilton, there were 228 men employed, and the postal authorities there were instructed, before the men were hired, to employ veterans up to the number of fifty only. These names were to be obtained from the different veterans' organizations in that city, but the number was limited to fifty. It was not a question of how many veterans were out of work in that period. The names of the other 178 extra employees were obtained from another source, a political source.

With regard to the question discussed by the hon. member for Macleod, the position of sub-post offices, I may say that there are certain sub-post offices on the outskirts of Hamilton where, before these areas were taken into the city, the postmasters received seventy per cent of the sales. Now they receive only two per cent. In several of them the postmasters receive between \$15 and \$20 a month, and in addition to the great reduction in their remuneration they have been forced in the past two years to remain open on holidays. Not being on regular salary, they are not entitled to any superannuation, and I suggest that their case is one that the department should consider very carefully. It should make some improvement in the remuneration given them.

Mr. EULER: What sort of post offices is the hon. gentleman referring to?

Mr. LENNARD: I am referring to the sub-post offices on the outskirts of Hamilton. Before that area was taken in, the postmasters received seventy per cent of the sales, and now they get only two per cent. Another thing I do not consider fair is that there is no parcel delivery, the parcels being all handled through the post office. They have all the heavy work they had before and the same hours.

Mr. EULER: They would not have the same work in regard to first-class mails; they would have a letter-carrier service.

Mr. LENNARD: There is that difference of course, but they have to keep the same establishment for a longer period than before.

Mr. COLDWELL: With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green), the acting minister may not know of political patronage exercised in the Post Office Department; but

[Mr. Euler.]

from what we hear from time to time, Liberal committees at the present time have a good deal to do with post office appointments. Moreover, in constituencies represented by opposition members it is commonly stated—I said this in the house last year—that the defeated candidates are consulted from time to time regarding post office and other government services in those constituencies. I notice that, according to the press, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Hsley) has asked to have placed under the civil service commission another group of employees in his department. I assume he realizes that political patronage, whenever or by whom exercised, is an evil.

I am asking the acting Postmaster General if it be not possible that in that department the groups of permanent officials now not within the purview of the civil service commission be placed under that commission; and with regard to post office appointments in the smaller communities and the provision of post offices, they also should be removed from any semblance of political patronage. I notice that one hon. member shakes his head. Well, in my constituency there is at least one post office located in a building which is a disgrace to Canada. Ever since I have been here I have taken up, as I believe my predecessor also did, this matter with the government, but somehow no improvement has been made. I refer to the Pike Lake post office in the province of Saskatchewan. I have visited it. It is a tiny shack, built of cardboard and lumber, and because of the condition of the building there is a smell of dampness and unpleasantness; yet it is situate at quite a popular summer resort. Patrons have petitioned and protested but nothing has been done. What influence retains a service of this description I do not know. I am not blaming the person who is looking after it, because the amount of revenue is small, but I say that other and better buildings in the neighbourhood should be used. I am not thinking of any political appointment. There are in that community Liberals, Conservatives and my own supporters, some of whom, of all parties, could provide accommodation of a better type. But whenever one speaks of these matters, one is told that the person to consult is the defeated candidate rather than the member.

That kind of political patronage is an evil which saps at the very root of efficiency in public service, and the sooner we get down to a business basis in connection with our government services, the sooner this parliament will be more respected than it is to-day. I believe that one of the factors which are undermining the democratic institutions of this