

*Supply—Post Office*

**Mr. Rinfret:** These four post offices about which we are talking pay, if my memory serves me right, \$280, \$91, \$83 and \$55 or something like that.

**Mr. Gillis:** A soft explanation such as the Postmaster General has made just now, if made last night, would have avoided a whole lot of discussion. In listening to this discussion I was led to believe that in New Brunswick appointments to the post office were made on the basis of recommendations by someone who did not get elected in the last election who wrote in and said, "I want this fellow appointed." It is clear that is not so.

**Mr. Riley:** A good idea.

**Mr. Knowles:** The member for Saint John-Albert says it is a good idea.

**Mr. Gillis:** I got the idea from something that was said that was the way it was done all over the country. It is done on the basis of patronage and there is no use of denying it. Until such time as we have the regulations changed, it will be done in that way.

**Mr. Smith (Calgary West):** No one will deny that.

**Mr. Gillis:** That is the way members want it, and by and large that is what the Canadian people voted for. I do not see where we have any reason to squawk about it. I am glad to find out that the civil service do perform some function in the postal department, with regard to employing people.

Item agreed to.

270. Post offices, including salaries and other expenses of headquarters and staff post offices and supplies and equipment for revenue post offices, \$42,247,430.

**Mr. Shaw:** When notification is given that a vacancy has occurred in a post office and that a postmaster is required, I believe it is specified that he must be a patron of that office. But is it also specified that he must have resided in that district for a specified period of time?

**Mr. Rinfret:** He must be a patron of that office for one year.

**Mr. Shaw:** One year?

**Mr. Rinfret:** Yes, before the vacancy.

**Mr. Adamson:** When the minister opens up the new revenue post office in Islington, in order to allay any suspicion of patronage in York West I hope that he will invite me to the ceremony.

**Mr. Catherwood:** I believe that employment is carried out through the civil service commission for the post office, and I understand that the postmaster is not consulted

[Mr. Gillis.]

about that appointment. Yet he is responsible for any losses should they occur through the inability of those employees. I wondered if it could not be arranged as for the civil service, where provisions are made for burglary insurance through the post office guarantee fund. Why could not these employees be placed on the same basis as those under that fund?

**Mr. Rinfret:** We have in the Post Office Department a similar reserve fund for that purpose.

**Mr. Catherwood:** Does that apply to the employees who are engaged by the civil service commission and where the postmaster has to make up that loss if there is any loss incurred?

**Mr. Rinfret:** The postmaster is only called upon to make up for the losses when he is responsible.

**Mr. Hatfield:** I should like to point out to the Postmaster General that I requested the building of a post office at Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, in 1939. The site was secured and tenders were called for the post office at this place, but the work was dropped on account of the war. I took it up with the former postmaster general, Hon. Mr. Bertrand. He told me two or three years ago that there were twenty post offices, I think, in the same category. The work had been stopped on account of the war after tenders had been called and let. He grouped those twenty post offices together and said that they would have the first priority.

In this town of Plaster Rock the revenue has trebled since 1939 and it is almost \$10,000. It is a prosperous agricultural and lumbering town. The Fraser Company have built a new mill there and they have spent a great deal of money. Two schools have been erected there in the past year, and they have cost nearly \$1 million. It is a large centre. The post office building that is used in this place is not becoming to the town. I pass over to the Postmaster General a picture of the present post office. Last session he promised to give the matter consideration, and I should like to ask him if they will recommend the building of that post office.

**Mr. Rinfret:** I have received the photographs that have been sent me by the hon. member. I might say that some other members have also made recommendations about the same Plaster Rock post office. We know that the accommodation is not satisfactory but, unfortunately, under the rules of the department we cannot recommend a public building because the annual revenue has not yet reached the \$10,000 mark. We are now