

Inquiries of the Ministry

16 and that the Secretary of State again promised last November 7 to present a report within two weeks, is the minister now in a position to provide us with a report on the state of bilingualism within the civil service?

[Text]

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to ask the chairman of this independent commission whether the report is yet available. As soon as it is I will bring it to the attention of the house.

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question. Does the government intend to keep the promise it made a few months ago and give a bonus to bilingual employees?

[Text]

Mr. Pickersgill: That is a question of policy, and it is not normal to announce matters of policy in response to questions on orders of the day.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CANADIAN WINNER OF
FRENCH AWARD

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Megantic): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Did the government send official congratulations to Dr. Leo Marion, vice president of the national research council, who is the first Canadian to receive the Jecker award from the Academie des Sciences of Paris?

[Text]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as it happened I wrote him a letter myself this morning on behalf of the government.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

REQUEST FOR STAFF HOLIDAY ON BOXING DAY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. E. Pascoe (Moose Jaw-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Postmaster General. Postal staffs are working at full capacity to handle a terrific flow of Christmas mail, and their great efforts should be suitably recognized. Will the Postmaster General consider granting a holiday with pay to regular postal workers on Boxing day, Thursday, December 26, when most places of business are closed? In this regard I am thinking particularly of the men who deliver the mail. By December 24 they will have earned a holiday with pay.

[Mr. Gregoire.]

[Translation]

Hon. Azellus Denis (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of sympathy for the postal employees and especially the letter carriers. I want to congratulate them in advance for the excellent job they will be doing, as they have done in the past, during the Christmas rush.

I am glad the hon. member made this suggestion. I am taking his question as notice and I shall give my answer in the near future.

[Text]

REPORTED USE OF PATRONAGE IN STAFF
APPOINTMENTS

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister any comments to make concerning the hiring of part-time employees in Montreal and Ottawa, during the Christmas period and at some other time, especially following the statement made by the head of the postal employees' association to the effect that this procedure was only a means through which the patronage handlers within the department could dish out their favours?

Hon. Azellus Denis (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, the question asked by the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm is surely not supplementary to one put to me by the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre (Mr. Pascoe). In any case, I want him to know that there is no patronage as far as part-time jobs are concerned.

When the time comes to hire employees for the Christmas period, all applications are considered. As a matter of fact, all those made by persons who went to the Montreal post office, among others, were examined and more than 4,000 people were put to work.

Furthermore, as soon as school opens students from the various schools go to the post office and their names are taken down. At this moment most of them have been asked to come to work during the Christmas rush.

[Text]

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): My question is generally on the same subject, but it is addressed to the Prime Minister. It is prompted by the fact that the deputy minister of the Post Office Department engaged in a debate with some of his employees which led to the conclusion that there was patronage in the department on an accelerating scale. I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he