

Supply—Secretary of State

Meanwhile, I had also written to the president of the civil service commission asking for explanations about that case.

The president of the civil service commission told me that the matter was outside his province. Here are the contents of the letter he sent on November 25:

I am fully conscious of the obligation of the civil service commission to protect classified employees of the civil service and I know where my own duty lies as chairman of the commission, but we must not forget that Mr. Ste. Croix, as assistant lightkeeper is not and has never been under our jurisdiction.

Now, here is what happened. After that man had worked for seven years as assistant keeper, the civil service commission was asked to open a competition. Mr. Ste. Croix was invited to compete, which he did, and he succeeded, as was indicated by both the Minister of Transport and the chairman of the civil service commission, since his result was 75 per cent; but another person, who had obtained 72 per cent, but who was entitled to veteran's preference, supplanted him.

I do not complain of the fact that a veteran should come ahead of one who is not. What I do complain about, however, is the fact that as a result of a competition in which he succeeded, Mr. Ste. Croix was dismissed from his employment, after spending seven years in a position with which, by then, he was thoroughly familiar, while his successor knew nothing about it. He was laid off, he is now seeking a job and depending on unemployment insurance, notwithstanding the fact he is the father of seven children.

Above all, I complain of the fact that the Minister of Transport and the civil service commission are both passing the buck to one another. It is clear that lightkeepers come under the Minister of Transport, but assistant keepers come under the keeper himself, in accordance with a contract. That is the situation which has been existing for years. But it has been established in the Department of Transport for many years that every effort would be made to provide work to assistant lightkeepers who might find themselves in similar circumstances.

Perhaps his political affiliation may have been taken into account—but I would not like to raise that matter, although he wrote to tell me he had been dismissed only on account of that. I do insist on the fact that the policy which has been in force in the Department of Transport for years has not been adhered to. In this particular instance, I complain, above all, of the fact that the Minister of Transport wrote me to tell me that the matter

[Mr. Chevrier.]

comes under the civil service commission, while the civil service commission states they have nothing to do with the matter, as indicated in the letter I received from Mr. Hughes. When the civil service commission, according to Mr. Hughes' letter, says that Mr. Ste. Croix obtained 75 per cent, while the other obtained only 72 per cent, I say, Mr. Chairman, that this is an injustice. If the Minister of Transport to whom I sent a note to advise him of our intention to raise the matter were in the house, he would partly agree to my assertions since one of his letters implied that the department would try to find a job for that assistant lightkeeper.

Mr. Ste. Croix has unfortunately been out of work since last November and despite the efforts of the Minister of Transport—if he made any, and I am willing to believe that he did—he is still unemployed.

Therefore, I wish to bring that case to the attention of the Minister of Finance because it involves a serious injustice to the above-mentioned person.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, I will be pleased to communicate the representations of the hon. member for Laurier to my colleague the Minister of Transport.

(Text):

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

A—Department—

668. Canadian representation at international conferences—further amount required, \$31,500.

Mr. Cardin: Mr. Chairman, there is a further amount required of \$31,500 under this item for representation at international conferences. I know it is quite difficult to estimate the actual amount of money that will be spent on conferences such as these, but I wonder whether or not this particular amount has been earmarked for a particular conference or whether it represents a general increase in expenditures?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It will be voted as a general increase, but there were several conferences in particular, the holding of which has led to this additional requirement. There is the multilateral tariff conference of the contracting parties to GATT which has been proceeding at Geneva. This is one of the meetings that has led to this additional requirement. There is also the cost of representation at the resumed session of the general assembly of the United Nations this month. In addition there was the NATO ministerial