

Supply—Post Office

Mr. Lapointe: And the member.

Mr. Knowles: Was the member for Victoria-Carleton advised of this?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Knowles: Of course not. I know I have never received a notice of any vacancy in the post office service in my constituency.

Mr. Rinfret: You told me the other day you did not want any.

Mr. Knowles: And I do not, but I am asking a question, whether influential people who might be in a position to advise the Post Office Department include senators, Liberal members, and defeated Liberal candidates, but not members for constituencies concerned who were elected by the people but who sit on the opposition side of the house?

Mr. Rinfret: And the Canadian Legion.

Mr. Knowles: All right, put in the Canadian Legion. I ask if influential people from whom advice is sought include in addition to senators, Liberal members of parliament, defeated Liberal candidates and the Canadian Legion, members of parliament who sit on the opposition side of this house?

Mr. Wright: The Postmaster General has just said that the Canadian Legion is informed about vacancies that occur in post offices. I should like him to read again the correspondence he has from the Ridgedale Canadian Legion with respect to the post office at Ridgedale.

Mr. Knowles: I should like to have an answer to my question, and I should also like to know if the Postmaster General is aware of this fact, that I did not read all the letters—

Mr. Lapointe: Just those which suited your purpose.

Mr. Knowles: There are some letters here which would have suited my purpose very well, if the solicitor general wants it that way, including several letters from Mr. Bosse, an executive secretary to the minister in another department.

An hon. Member: And a good man.

Mr. Knowles: I have no doubt about it, but a civil servant in another department writing officials of the Post Office Department and telling them what, in his opinion, should be done by the post office down in New Brunswick surely is not a good practice. Does the department include among those influential people, senators, Liberal members of parliament, defeated Liberal candidates, civil servants, but not the members on the opposite side of the house?

Mr. Rinfret: I think it would be correct to say that Mr. Bosse made the same suggestions as the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Hodgson: I should like to correct the Postmaster General: not the member for Victoria, but the member for Victoria-Carleton.

Mr. Rinfret: I am sorry.

Mr. Knowles: Can we not bring this questioning to a close by having an answer yes or no as to whether members of parliament on the opposition side are considered influential people whose advice can be sought; yes, or no?

Mr. Ferguson: If my hon. friend wants to bring it to a conclusion, I can tell him that I have been consulted about post office work in my riding.

Mr. Knowles: Anyone else?

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Knowles: No, no one else.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, the discussion just carried on would lead one to believe that, in so far as the post office was concerned, there was no civil service. Until tonight I was of the opinion that mail carriers in the postal department had to write a civil service examination, and were hired by the department on a merit basis. Postmasters, clerks and junior clerks in the post office must all write civil service examinations.

In view of the discussion we have had tonight, based on the documentary evidence supplied by the postal department to the member for Winnipeg North Centre, I do not think that can be so. I believe the Postmaster General was ill-advised to bring up that question at this particular point in the session. My assumption now is that the civil service does not exist so far as the postal department is concerned.

An hon. Member: You wish it did not.

Mr. Gillis: It does not, as the member for Winnipeg North Centre—

Mr. Rinfret: I believe I can help the hon. member by saying that all post offices where the revenue is less than \$3,000, according to the Civil Service Act, come under the supervision of the Postmaster General. For all the post offices where the revenue is over \$3,000 the appointment of postmasters is under the Civil Service Act.

Mr. Gillis: That is the thing that has not been made clear in all of this discussion concerning appointments to the postal department. The Postmaster General did not say whether those offices came within the category of those for which appointments are made on the basis of patronage.