

have to do with it, the better it would be for them, the better for the House of Commons and the better for the country as a whole.

Mr. DUNNING: And for the ministers.

Mr. HEAPS: And for the ministers. I cannot understand why hon. members should be so anxious to have patronage bestowed upon them. Some hon. members may say that I am not on the government side and do not realize the pressure to which they are subjected; they may say that I am freer to speak than they; but there have been one or two occasions when a little patronage has been offered to me and I was happy to have nothing to do with it. I do not think patronage brings any friends to a member. I think the member who tries to dispense patronage to his constituents or to his friends ultimately makes more enemies than friends.

Patronage has a demoralizing effect upon the public life of the country and I for one would like to see it absolutely abolished. I know the minister will realize that I am not speaking in a personal way. I do not know of any minister who has been more anxious to do away with the evils of patronage than the minister who is taking charge to-night of the estimates of the Post Office Department. For years, whenever a change in government occurred, whether from Liberal to Conservative or Conservative to Liberal, the question of patronage in the Post Office Department has always come up. I remember in 1930 and 1931 when there was a great outcry from members of the Liberal party about the many changes made in the postal service. I quite agreed with them that those changes were entirely unjustified and were not in the interests of the Post Office Department.

There is one particular form of patronage to which I desire to direct the attention of the minister at this particular time. I do not believe the minister or the officials of the department can give efficient and sound administration so long as patronage is handed out by hon. members to their constituents or friends. I am informed that in the post offices in the principal cities certain persons are permitted to sell stamps to the public. I am told that these people get this privilege through patronage. I cannot understand why private individuals should be permitted to come into a public institution to sell stamps. The stamps are sold to these private concerns, as they might be termed, and they in turn sell them to the public at a slight profit. I am informed further that the stamps purchased by the government, stamps produced by the government, are purchased through

these contractors who make a certain profit on the sale. To me that is almost unbelievable.

Has the minister any information in that regard? I have been told that this condition exists in most of the large cities. Why should a private concern be permitted to sell government stamps in a government building? If this condition does exist, I should like to know if the minister intends to take immediate steps to see that it is ended. The government should sell its own stamps in its own buildings.

Mr. SPENCE: I happen to know the owner of the old post office referred to by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol). The man was in the same business in which I was engaged for many years. I consider that the action taken was one of the most unscrupulous things a government could do. The acting minister may not be able to give a full answer, and I do not think we would expect him to. This building was built by Mr. Calderone at the suggestion of the Post Office Department in Ottawa at a considerable cost to suit their purposes. The change was not made by this government in order to save money; it was made to help some friends of my hon. friends who had two stores on the other side of the street a little further down which could not be rented at a reasonable price. Calderone had no opportunity to offer the government extra space. When we were in power he told us that he would increase the space if necessary and at that time we took a lease for three years.

I do not think any minister can rise in his place and defend the Post Office Department for the action taken in this particular case. This post office was built to the order of the department. I say that because the architect of the department in Toronto knew all about the specifications and plans. As the hon. member for Davenport has said, extra space could have been obtained at a cost no greater than what is being paid to-day. Even if the cost were greater, this government should have done the decent thing. It makes no difference to me personally as I am no longer engaged in the food business, but I like to see everyone get a square deal.

I am not so down on patronage as my hon. friend to my left, but I believe the benefit of the doubt should be given when it does not cost any more. In this particular case it was a matter of helping friends of my hon. friends who had two stores that they wanted to rent and could not. Calderone will have to tear out the whole front of his store at a probable cost of \$4,000 to \$5,000 to make it