

Supply—Secretary of State

Mr. Caron: Was not his sickness due to overwork imposed upon him by the queen's printer?

(Translation):

Mr. Courtemanche: I do not feel qualified to answer that question.

(Text):

Mr. Caron: Can the queen's printer not answer that through the minister?

Mr. Courtemanche: My answer is the same.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, before this subject is departed from, as a former minister who was in charge of the bureau at the time this gentleman was performing his functions I should like to say that I never encountered anywhere in the public service a more devoted or hard working person than this gentleman.

Mr. Herridge: I quite appreciate the comments of the former minister. I want to ask the Secretary of State a further question. Is the same treatment that was accorded the deputy queen's printer accorded all civil servants? Are they permitted to have two years' absence on full pay because of sickness?

Mr. Courtemanche: He was away from the office for about nine months. When he came back he was unable to fulfil his duties, and that is why he was transferred.

Mr. Caron: What was his salary as assistant to the Queen's printer?

Mr. Courtemanche: It was \$12,000 a year.

Mr. Caron: What is his present salary?

The Deputy Chairman: I think that question is out of the realm of the Secretary of State.

Mr. Caron: I want to show that he never asked for the transfer but that the transfer was arranged by the queen's printer. He was not transferred in accordance with his wishes, and the queen's printer must know what has happened to that man after he left.

Mr. Winch: Will the minister explain whether it was just by a strange coincidence that after two years of illness—and we will not go into that, but I think it is going to be investigated—within a number of days after the question was asked by the hon. member for Kootenay West the transfer was arranged? Then the minister gets up and says he cannot find anyone in the position set out by the member for Kootenay West. Will the minister explain this most strange coincidence?

Mr. Courtemanche: The question was asked one month ago, and I can assure the hon. member that the day I was appointed I was advised of the illness of the deputy queen's printer.

[Mr. Winch.]

Mr. Winch: My question was, when was the transfer arranged? Was it not after the question was asked, so as to enable the minister to give an answer that would not be embarrassing?

Mr. Courtemanche: This transfer had been under consideration for the previous four months.

Mr. Argue: On what date was it made?

Mr. Courtemanche: It was made on August 1.

Mr. Herridge: That is just the point. My next question is, do the other employees of the printing plant receive the same consideration from the queen's printer with respect to leave of absence on full pay, in this case \$12,000 a year, that has been received by the deputy queen's printer? Is this a common practice? Let us have fair play for everybody, no matter how humble they are.

Mr. Courtemanche: His leave of absence was all because of illness.

Mr. Herridge: My point is, do other employees of the printing plant receive exactly the same consideration in connection with leave of absence for illness?

Mr. Courtemanche: Yes, as does any civil servant.

Mr. Winch: Would the minister be prepared to make available the record of leave of absence for illness of this same individual for the last five years, the record of illness or the record of being away from the job during the past five years?

Mr. Courtemanche: Yes, it will be tabled.

Mr. Caron: After killing himself on the job I am told that the man who was transferred has had his salary cut to half what it was when he was assistant to the queen's printer?

Mr. Courtemanche: I have no knowledge of that.

Mr. Winch: If the man was too ill to carry on his responsibilities, what was the basis for his transfer to another position; illness?

Mr. Courtemanche: He was transferred to a job that he was able to do because he was no longer able to carry on the work of assistant queen's printer.

Mr. Caron: It may help the minister if I tell him that the man is very happy since he has been away from the printing bureau.

Mr. Fisher: I wonder if the minister could provide us with the proportion of printing, both inside and outside, by the queen's printer that is in English and in French. I want a ratio such as 70 to 30 or 65 to 35.