

Supply—Post Office

Mr. Martin (Essex East): In view of the fact that the hon. member for Port Arthur has announced that he does not intend to run for parliament again, would the minister consider the appointment of the present hon. member for Port Arthur as the successor to the present deputy minister in the Post Office Department?

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): The only thing I have to say on that matter is that undoubtedly if it were done he would be much happier under me than under the other supposition that the hon. member for St. Denis would be postmaster general.

Having as definitely as I can dispelled any of the suggestions made by the hon. member for Port Arthur with regard to the deputy postmaster general, I want to thank him very much indeed for the compliment. The long experience and background of the present deputy and the contribution he has made to the department over the years mean that his shoes are going to be big and difficult ones to fit. Anyone who is even considered for the post should certainly be proud.

Listening to the comments of the various opposition members and the criticisms of the department I could not help but remember a story. I think this perhaps sums up their attitude as I see it. This is the story of the guide who had a rather remarkable hunting dog of which he was very proud. The guide took a member of the opposition out duck hunting. They got into the blind, and after they had been there a little while the ducks started going in. They shot one of the ducks and it fell into the water. The guide turned to his remarkable dog and said "Fetch". The dog started off after the duck, and the remarkable thing about the dog was that, having large paws, he ran across the water rather than swimming to pick up the duck.

He picked up the duck and brought it back into the blind. The member of the opposition said absolutely nothing about this. The guide was rather upset that nothing had been said, and he turned to the member of the opposition and said, "Didn't you notice anything remarkable about the dog?" The member of the opposition said, "Yes; he can't swim".

It seems to me it is possible for the opposition to overlook all the accomplishments of all the different groups in the department and at the same time pick away, without foundation in most cases, at a few things which some hon. members suggest imply that there is something wrong. As far as I am concerned the criticism that has been levelled against me by hon. member after hon. member, of taking too much pride in the Post Office Department and its accomplishments and reporting them with too much pride to this house—to the extent that this criticism

is made and is true, I am very happy. I am immensely proud of what this department and every person in it has accomplished. I have no apology to make for the way in which my statement was presented on behalf of the department.

I want to thank all hon. members who have participated in the debate. Their helpful ideas will be given every consideration. I will reply now to as many of the points as possible. Others can be raised on the individual items, or where we have not the information available now we will answer by correspondence as rapidly as possible.

I want to say to the hon. member for St. Denis that I regret the general attitude he took, that this debate is a time for buffoonery. The House of Commons has ample opportunity, and sometimes ample need, for humour. Certainly we appreciate it, but the House of Commons is not a burlesque house, as I felt some of his remarks tended to make it. The report of his speech made news right across the country. However, it was not the type of news which I think in general helped the reputation of this house as a chamber of serious debate. The height of his contribution—if one can dignify any particular item by having any height, though I suppose that among mole hills almost anything is a mountain—was the question of automation, mechanization and postal progress.

I gather that the hon. member is against such measures, although it is a little hard to tell. He is reported in *Hansard* as saying, and I use his exact words:

(Translation):

I am all for progress, but I am against it—

(Text):

The English translation of these remarks is officially:

I am all for progress, but I am against it.

Again on the same item, as reported at page 3640 of *Hansard*, the hon. member said:

(Translation):

I am all in favour of forging ahead and keeping in step with other countries, but... I think it is time to put a stop to such experiments—

(Text):

The official English translation is:

I am all in favour of forging ahead and keeping in step with other countries, but... I think it is time to put a stop to such experiments...

I do not think we have ever heard a better example of being on both sides of the fence at the same time and being completely illogical. I think these two quotations from page 3640 of *Hansard* will go down in history in that respect.

Nor are the hon. member's figures any more dependable than his reasoning. The hon. member's statement that the parcel post rate changes will yield a revenue increase of \$22 million is quite wrong. The revenue increase,