

Supply—Post Office

In this particular case I did not even inquire whether or not Senator Pirie made a recommendation for the simple reason that we did not proceed with the appointment of a postmaster. We did not proceed because certain influential people of the vicinity made representations to the Post Office Department that we should abolish the various post offices that were in existence at that time. One of the letters to which I wish to draw the attention of the committee is dated December 8, 1947, and is addressed to Mr. Herring, superintendent of land and air services. It reads:

I am of the opinion that the following post offices, in the upper end of Carleton county, should be done away with and a free delivery service inaugurated, namely, Holmesville, Mineral, Killowen and Moose Mountain. These four offices are in one group and as a free delivery service has been inaugurated all around them I do not see why they should not be served by a free delivery. I might say that these offices are situated in one of our best farming districts and the farmers are deserving of a better mail service. I wish you would have an investigation made, or probably it has already been done, and in the spring, when the roads are in better condition, have this change made.

Mr. Herring answered this gentleman that an investigation was taking place. The letter of the 8th December which I have quoted is signed by H. H. Hatfield, the present member for that district, which shows that some influential people, other than Senator Pirie who was mentioned by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, are consulted on such matters. There is another letter, also signed by Mr. Hatfield and dated December 31, 1947, the purport of which is the same. He is asking that rural mail delivery be instituted instead of post offices. The charge made to the effect that this was patronage is ill founded because there was nothing done on whatever recommendation Senator Pirie might have made for the good reason that the post offices were dispensed with. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre then proceeded to say that we went on with rural mail routes and that we advised Mr. Bishop of our intention to ask for tenders. Apparently the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton was also informed that tenders would be asked for. That appears in the letter of December 31, 1947, over his signature. Tenders were sought, and the lowest tenderer was a man by the name of Saunders Giberson. The amount of the tender was \$1,200.

It is true, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, that Mr. Herring advised Mr. Bishop to the effect that the lowest tenderer was Mr. Giberson in the amount of \$1,200. It is also true that Mr. Bishop upon receiving this information wrote a letter, which has already been read into the record, in which he complained that Mr. Giberson was a most irresponsible person. To that letter Mr. Herring replied that the matter

[Mr. Rinfret.]

would be looked into at once. Mr. Bishop then, as indicated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, wrote a second letter saying:

I have considered the matter and I find that this man is not as irresponsible as I thought.

The conclusion drawn by the member for Winnipeg North Centre is as follows, as appears from page 4243 of *Hansard*, June 27:

First of all the department writes telling him that invitations to tender have been sent out. Later on they tell him that so-and-so is going to be awarded the contract. He says no, that fellow is no good; don't give it to him. The department says they will hold up the contract. Then Mr. Bishop thinks it over again and says Mr. So-and-So should get the job, and he gets it.

On the next page the hon. member says he could go on. Well, I wonder why he did not go on. If he had gone on he would have found another letter, also addressed to Mr. Bishop, under date of May 15, 1950, which happens to be the first letter under the cover of the order which he asked for. It reads as follows:

With reference to previous correspondence concerning contract arrangements for the conveyance of mails over Bath rural route No. 3, I wish to advise that information has now been received to the effect that Mr. Saunders Giberson would not be qualified to perform the duties of contractor.

We are therefore proceeding with the awarding of the contract to the next lowest tenderer, Mr. Wendell W. Wyman, Bath rural route No. 3, at \$1,495 per annum.

This shows that, after Mr. Bishop had made certain recommendations, and after he had withdrawn the recommendations, the department, independently of the recommendations that had been made by Mr. Bishop or anyone else, continued its investigations and found that Mr. Giberson was not a responsible person. They did not award the contract to him, as the member for Winnipeg North Centre said.

Mr. Knowles: I thank the Postmaster General for the attention he has given to this matter. With regard to the point he made at the conclusion of his speech, I suggest that the very fact that the department finally discovered this man should not get the job shows that they should not have been paying any attention to Mr. Bishop at all throughout the whole piece.

Mr. Rinfret: He was the one who drew our attention to it in the first place.

Mr. Knowles: He gave you advice both ways. And what about the advice Mr. Bishop gave with respect to the various mail routes? The other point I want to answer is this. The Postmaster General says the department follows the practice of getting advice from influential people, and that they invite people like Senator Pirie—