

# Postmaster Is Living in High Style

By Jack Anderson

Out of the higher postage that the public must now pay, Postmaster General Elmer Klassen has squeezed thousands of dollars to improve his living style.

He keeps two chauffeurs busy, at public expense, tooling his wife and himself around town. Their favorite driver put in so much overtime behind the wheel last year that he nearly doubled his government salary.

Several times a week, a chauffeur fetches Mrs. Klassen to dine with her husband in baronial splendor in the penthouse facility that he built at postal headquarters. This cost the taxpayers \$50,000, which is a lot of postage stamps.

The taxpayers also pay a cook and a waiter to prepare and serve Klassen's meals with fitting elegance. Yet despite all this kingly treatment, the Postmaster General still complains.

Not long ago, a stern memo went out from the front office. "The two-pedestal diningroom table delivered in the last few weeks for Mr. Klassen's use in the Postal Service is too massive," protested the memo. "Mr. Klassen stated that he wants a smaller table that can be expanded if necessary..."

The matter of the Postmaster General's table was given top priority. Needless to say, the memo added, "the Postal Service will assume any additional costs involved in transportation, etc."

The after-hours chauffeur, incidentally, also tends the garden at the Klassen home, but a postal spokesman swore to us that Klassen pays for this out of his own pocket.

Last year, Klassen became bored with the two official Cadillacs at his disposal and ordered a fancy, new Lincoln Continental. In order to avoid channels, he had a trusted aide, Gen. Robert McCutcheon, handle the details of making the car over into a limousine. But the energy crisis made it awkward for government bigwigs to be seen shuttling around in gas-guzzling limos.

So Klassen quietly cancelled the Lincoln and ordered a more modest Chevrolet Caprice instead. But he is not one to carry economy too far. He ordered the Chevy seats ripped out and new power seats installed. The spokesman said the fancy seats were needed to accommodate Klassen's six-foot-five frame.

We recently reported that Klassen passed out expensive

stamp albums to his friends at Christmas. We neglected to mention that the Postal Service also paid for two sets of Christmas cards mailed out by the Klassens.

The first design displeased the pampered Postmaster General, because the crimson color was "funereal." He ordered another batch designed — at extra cost, of course, to the stamp-buying public.

These were delivered so late that Klassen had to pay his secretaries overtime to address the envelopes on a Saturday, so that the Postmaster General could meet his own Christmas mailing deadline.

Still, the Klassen Christmas story isn't complete. He also ordered postal artists to design a special card for his grandchildren.

It's the public who pays, meanwhile, at the stamp window.

**Washington Whirl**—As part of a hush-hush operation called "Eagle Pull," some 3,000 crack Marines are on constant alert in the South Pacific. The task force, some of it seaborne, is armed with helicopters, light tanks, heavy howitzers and other instant strike weapons.

Worried Marines have told us they fear they are being readied for a landing in Indochina. But Marine headquarters here insist the units are standing by to rescue Americans if Phnom Penh or other Indochina cities fall to the Communists.

We have been trying for months to get an accounting of the "Special Projects Fund," an annual, \$1.5 million, no-strings-attached appropriation for the White House. When the Senate-House Appropriations Committees couldn't even get an accounting, they cut off the money. The White House, astonishingly, was willing to give up \$1.5 million a year rather than disclose how it had been spent. . . . In its fight to avoid costly changes in radar standards, the Pentagon has sneakily tried to discredit Dr. Milton Zaret, the scientist who has successfully linked radar exposure to servicemen's cataracts. Recently, Zaret was criticized by a letter writer to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin who identified himself only as "Mark Grove," chairman of a scientific committee. Grove neglected to say he is a scientist at the Pentagon which has a multi-million dollar stake in knocking down Zaret's findings.