

S.O. 21

CANADA POST CORPORATION

COMPLAINTS ABOUT STANDARDS AND COST OF SERVICE

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, in an address given a year ago this month Mr. Michael Warren stated that the threefold objective of Canada Post was to attain financial self-sufficiency, better management-employee relations, and his number one priority, improved postal service.

Today we have a two-cent increase for mailing a letter in Canada, almost doubling the 17 cent rate in effect but 14 months ago, and a 6 per cent rise in the cost of mailing newspapers, advertising, and small parcels. The head of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is calling for the postponement of these increases until management-employee relations improve, and service is maintained and expanded.

So what, then, has happened during the intervening year? As far as Dauphin riding is concerned, I have received an absolutely astounding series of complaints from constituents on every conceivable aspect of their so-called postal service. I have letters concerning postal rate increases, letters protesting the shortage of rental boxes, the withdrawal of Saturday rural route service, the systematic reduction of post office operating hours, threats of outright closure, and letters about possible forced retirement.

I have a resolution protesting present regulations pertaining to utility bills, petitions calling for the reinstatement of withdrawn postal facilities, and letters from municipal councils voicing the sentiments of just about every Canadian when they ask me just what exactly is Canada Post's present service policy? The response that my constituents and I—

Madam Speaker: Order.

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MARINE TRANSPORT

NECESSITY FOR BRIDGE ABUTMENT PROTECTION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, the day after the collapse of a bridge spanning a shipping lane in Halifax, on the St. Lawrence, or in Vancouver, families of those who will assuredly suffer the loss of loved ones will not ask why it was that the federal authority would not accept primary responsibility for bridge abutment protection; they will ask why it was not done.

Five bridges in Canada have been identified as "high risk", requiring protection against collision. To date no agreement to resolve this potentially disastrous situation is apparent. Tragic consequences of bridge collapses from Sweden to Japan, from Canada to Australia, from U.S. to India, are too well known for us to continue to ignore remedying this problem.

Already we have learned of the difficulties the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission experienced this year in obtaining full insurance coverage for Halifax's two harbour bridges, pier protection being cited as the principal reason. We know that 70 per cent of such accidents can be linked to

human error. Ship traffic passing under the MacKay and MacDonald bridges in Halifax will increase this year to upwards of 1,800 transits.

I say to the Government, resolve this problem before God takes the matter out of our hands. Having said that, I appreciate the progress that has been made—

Madam Speaker: Order.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FORMER LEADER OF NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Madam Speaker: I am sure Members will want to applaud one of their former colleagues who is in our gallery today, the former Leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Tommy Douglas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON SEEKING ADDITIONAL BORROWING AUTHORITY

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Will the Minister confirm that he said that in this House on October 27, as reported at page 20081 of *Hansard*:

In the budget I intend to present early in 1983, I will review again the fiscal situation for the current fiscal year, set out estimates for 1983-84 and future fiscal years, and then seek additional borrowing authority as required.

Did the Minister say those words, did he mean those words, and will he now keep his promise?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, indeed I indicated my intention in that statement on October 27. That was my intention at the time. As the Hon. Member knows, however, his Party has been dragging its feet on passing the necessary legislation to deal with income tax amendments resulting from previous budgets. In the meantime, even though this Income Tax Bill has not been passed, it is important that the Government be provided with the necessary borrowing authority to fulfil its obligations. That is what I have done. It is not the first time that a very good intention has been sidetracked by Opposition tactics that delay adoption of good measures for the people of Canada. I hope that the measures will be passed soon by Parliament and then I will be able to introduce my budget.