

Post Office Act

tricks to try and run down those who do not agree with him.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I will not labour that point further because, once again, there are serious things to be discussed and we shall try rather to cover that serious aspect of the discussion; I repeat that differences of opinion are surely legitimate, as to the way of financing services, and that the formula advocated by the minister, namely to have them paid by the users, seems to be acceptable.

Everyone wants to make suggestions in the discussion which is now taking place but the opposition has not yet made any constructive suggestions as to how to make up the deficit; all they have said is: "Refer the matter to the committee of the house".

Now, we in the house are doing the work of the committee of the house and, if there are any constructive suggestions, I am sure the minister will be ready to accept them for he had already said so. He told the members of the opposition: "A group of Liberals have made suggestions to me; do the same and I will listen to you". He is still ready to do so, Mr. Speaker.

The minister has still time to amend his bill, if the matter is to be taken seriously, of course. But if there is to be opposition just for the sake of opposition, the subject, in my opinion, is shrewdly chosen; demagoguery can have a field day, because the public readily applauds any opposition to tariff or tax increases. It is all too easy, but will this settle the problem the nation has to face? I wonder, because if we take into account that a \$100 million deficit in one department, may increase next year by 25 or 30 millions or more, I think that all those who reason objectively and set aside all personal and party considerations, probably feel that something should be done to settle the question.

Instead of putting the blame on the minister, we should, on the contrary, admire his courage, for he has enough political experience to know that the measure he is proposing is not popular. However, it is a must; he has done his duty come tide or high water.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said during this debate that we were expressing the views of our constituents. I have 54,000 constituents and, during the week-end, we have had many meetings and consultations, concerning various measures which are introduced in this house. The question has been raised, but I heard no protests as bitter as those of members in the house. The question was raised,

[Mr. Mongrain.]

explanations were asked for, and when I told the people in my riding the amount of the deficit of the Postmaster General's department, and told them that it would increase at the same rate in the future, they said: Well, somebody has to pay and what not the users; it seems to be the most reasonable formula.

Some tried to say that it was an injustice, Mr. Speaker. Some pretended that the just society in the making, was in fact unjust. To the contrary, I think we apply distributive justice by making those who use the service pay for it rather than the non-users. If the government took the latter action, it would be accused of charging the taxpayers for the deficit of the postal service.

Some say it will impair information. Mr. Speaker, the statement is at least grossly exaggerated. In fact, there would be other sources of information, even if all newspapers were to disappear tomorrow morning. Nobody thinks that all newspapers will disappear tomorrow morning, or next month or next year. There will surely be ways to relay the information. Newspapers will not be bothered and they will be able to say what they like to the Ralliement Creditiste, or to the Liberals, we shall not cause them any trouble. However, when it comes to the newsprint the use and sell by means of advertising, they will have to pay for its distribution. This again seems to be perfectly compatible with distributive justice.

Then the honorable minister was blamed for not having heard those concerned. On the contrary, I know that he has had extensive conversations with all those concerned, not only with newspapermen, but with all kinds of people connected directly or indirectly with the press. They had the opportunity to submit any possible suggestions or criticism. What would be gained by referring this to a parliamentary committee? Things would remain stalled a little longer, Mr. Speaker, and most probably the end result would be the same. It is no secret that in life everything must get paid for and paid by somebody, and it is only normal that those services should be paid by those who use them.

Some more or less serious comments have also been made, for example the comparison by an honourable member with the National Arts Centre. He said that we had invested \$50 million which could have been given to the Post Office Department to make up the deficit. It would be a "band-aid". It could have remedied the situation for a year, but Canada would have been deprived of that monument