

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Lalonde: Yes. When dealing with the figures, you may end up with thousands of decimal points, and this regulation would permit us to round out the figures to the closest point. That is the purpose of it.

Clause agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Some hon. Members: By leave, now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lalonde moved the third reading of the bill.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, in my eagerness to speak I rose to my feet before the third reading motion had been put. I merely have a comment one sentence long to make to the minister. Next time he takes one of our policies, if he would give us a little notice we would expedite his bill even more quickly than we did this time.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have just one short sentence to say, and I suspect the minister can hear it even before I say it. May the next bill to amend the Old Age Security Act include a substantial increase in the basic amount of the old age pension.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have taken note of the comments made by hon. members. The only question left in my mind is, if this was Conservative policy, why did the Conservatives talk so long and delay passage of the bill?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Perhaps the bill was too conservative.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

POST OFFICE—PURPOSE OF SURVEY OF FORMER EMPLOYEES—POSSIBILITY OF MAKING RESULTS AVAILABLE TO UNIONS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, there is no department of government that receives more attention than the Post Office Department. I think it has the highest track record for complaints which are debated on the motion to adjourn, and this has been the case for

[Mr. Alexander.]

some considerable time. I recall my predecessor on this topic, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), hit, I think, the highest ratings on the late show in bringing this matter up, and that record is being met in the present parliament.

The matter I want to discuss tonight with respect to the Post Office Department has to do with a problem that has persisted for a number of years, namely, the declining morale of the workers. The Post Office Department has been emphasizing automation at the expense of the well-being of workers. You cannot have a happy organization unless the people who are delivering the service are happy in that service. It is said that to err is human. I agree; but if you really want to foul things up, you must rely on the computer. This situation describes the present mess in the post office precisely.

● (2200)

The fact that the Post Office Department is not really coming to grips with the matter was demonstrated in a question that was fed to the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) today with regard to the group postmasters. Over the years, this group of employees served beyond the call of duty and never complained. These are the people who provide service in the small communities, the post offices in the corner stores. Even they are becoming a bit restless and unhappy because of the failure of the Postmaster General and the government to deal fairly with them in the wage negotiations that have been going on for over a year.

Many questions have come up in recent weeks. The one I want to deal with tonight arises out of the project adopted by the Calgary regional office of the Post Office Department. In an attempt to get to the root of declining morale among the postal employees in that area, demonstrated by the rapid turnover in staff, it took the initiative in instituting a survey among former post office employees.

On July 26 I asked the Postmaster General if it was true that a survey of this kind was being conducted. I took the trouble to notify him of my question earlier in the day because usually the Postmaster General replies with pious platitudes that everything is the best in the best of all possible worlds. But he confirmed this was so in the Calgary office. I agreed it was a good idea and asked whether the survey might be conducted right across the country. The minister said he would give this consideration.

I hope whoever is responding for the Postmaster General tonight will be able to inform us whether the very creative idea which originated in the regional office in Calgary has been carried forward across the nation in the interest of improving vital postal service as rapidly as possible.

I could have raised another question tonight. On July 17 I asked about the discontinuance of the directory service of the Post Office Department. This ensured efficient service to the people of Canada. The letter carrier kept an up-to-date list of changes of address. In its wisdom, the Post Office Department decided to add yet another frustration: this service was discontinued, notwithstanding the fact the letter carriers are willing to carry out this