

## Post Office Act

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, the amendment before us requires that this bill be referred to the standing committee on transport and communications. Why such a request, when the hon. members have all the necessary information to reach at once a just and reasonable decision?

Mr. Speaker, never have the hon. members received for the consideration of a bill, as much material, briefs and working papers as were submitted to us by the hon. minister. In fact, his 21 page document contains all the statistics and every information available to the department. I wonder what else we could learn in committee.

The hon. minister received representations from scores of associations of dailies, weeklies and magazines. Members of the opposition have stated that they have a copy of these requests before them. Mr. Speaker, what else will the representatives of these associations state before a parliamentary committee?

Furthermore, we have also read the editorials and my honourable friends opposite have quoted several this afternoon. All hon. members have also before them a copy of the hundreds of telegrams which were delivered during the weekend.

As was said this afternoon by the hon. minister, newspapers are not taken by surprise, and I quote what he said:

As for the allegation that the increase is sudden, this I cannot accept. This issue was raised in the house in 1964 and again during consideration of legislation last year.

The publishing industry, I submit, has been well aware for some time that changes were coming and were overdue.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition parties ask that the bill be referred to a standing committee for the sole purpose of making a little publicity for themselves. Therefore, let us pass the bill at once and later on, let us suggest to the opposition that it should ask the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to present a bill to subsidize newspapers. Then the N.D.P. members especially will be able to appear before the committee and bring their witnesses in order to justify that this house can pay a \$982,000 subsidy to the *Reader's Digest* and a \$864,000 subsidy to *Time*.

Mr. Speaker, what will be the response of the taxpayers to such a legislation? Is it not what the opposition wants to do indirectly today?

We have already spent five hours on that resolution and for the last four hours—

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** If the hon. member will allow me a question—

**Mr. Cyr:** I will conclude, Mr. Speaker.

We have spent five hours studying that resolution and now we are beginning the fourth hour before giving that bill second reading. Canadians want this house to study the bills quickly and post office patrons, especially all Canadians, approve the increase provided in the bill for first class mail.

**Some hon. Members:** Ah, ah.

**Mr. Cyr:** Certainly. I would say to the hon. member opposite that last Friday night on a radio program in Montreal I spent two hours answering questions from Montrealers and that all those who called were in favour of the bill introduced by the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans).

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am so astounded to hear the words just spoken by the member for Gaspé that I want to clear up the matter in the house. How is it that last week, he was the spokesman of the Liberal members in their opposition to the minister's bill? Why this sudden change of mind?

**Mr. Cyr:** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the member for Charlevoix for having raised this matter. We are in a democratic country, the party of which I am a member is a democratic party and all members have the right to express their ideas.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Asselin:** That sounds like a road roller.

**Mr. Cyr:** It is true that I have been appointed chairman of an *ad hoc* committee, as the minister reported in the house two weeks ago, but that was to consider the statement he had made concerning the abolition of mail distribution on Saturdays. Today, I congratulate the minister for his statement concerning the mail delivery service in rural areas.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Cyr:** Mr. Speaker, the bill under consideration has nothing to do with the mail delivery on Saturday. I feel that if we refer this bill to the standing committee of the house, that will be merely filibustering on the part of the opposition.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.