

number of years. When I started in the insurance business I can recall getting my letters ready to go to Toronto from my home village of Burks Falls and I would take them down to the train station. I would be out working all day trying to make a living and I would do my book work at night. Of course, this was when the passenger trains were running. It provided an excellent service and as there was a mail car on the train I could post my letters as late as 12.50 in the morning and I knew that those letters would be delivered some time that morning to the various companies. I also knew that if I phoned for an insurance policy which had to be in the mail that day it would arrive in my home town the next.

Today that is an absolute impossibility, or at least highly improbable. The same kind of thing applies to real estate deals. Any real estate broker knows, as do lawyers, that there are certain clauses in real estate transactions which stipulate that time is of the essence, the offer must be delivered or accepted on a certain date. If it happens that the documents are not received on that date then the contract is null and void. The real estate broker would be out a sizeable commission.

In my particular business we cannot trust the mail. The salesmen will drive to Toronto, or London, or wherever the offer must be delivered. He insures that the vendor signs it and then he comes back to his home base. If it is not convenient for him to travel that distance then time and again the buses are used. The buses have an excellent record when it comes to giving service. The new postal corporation certainly will not be able to give that kind of service. I see no reason in the world why the couriers should not be continued.

Last week I made a point of checking the letters which were to be picked up by a courier service from the family business which my sons now operate. They are picked up around five o'clock in the afternoon and each one has the price marked on it. It costs more than 17 cents for the smallest letter but a larger envelope containing five or six different policies will actually go cheaper than first class mail. I certainly feel that businesses like insurance should not be discriminated against when the new postal corporation comes into effect.

The present estimates for the year 1981-82 in the Post Office have increased by about \$200 million, I believe, to a total of \$1.7 billion. That is a great deal of money. Even with the increase the Post Office will still end up in the red to the tune of \$557 million. This sum will be borne by the taxpayers. The government is proposing staff changes, eliminating 461 positions but adding 200 others. I understand the cutbacks will be in the areas of marketing, administration and mail processing. The additional workers will be hired for mail collection and delivery. We are well aware of certain areas where the population is booming, for example, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. In these cities the people are crying for mail delivery but the postal budget at present makes no provision for the mail carriers who are so necessary. I strongly suspect that the planned changes in personnel will not result in better mail service, but perhaps the contrary. Some 200 of the jobs being eliminated will be in the mail processing segment of the Post Office. These are positions held by people inside the Post

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Office who sort mail by hand and by machine. A great deal of this work is done by hand because the machines which were supposed to speed service cannot handle certain sizes of mail. I think Members of Parliament are well aware of this since we have all been notified that there will be a different sized envelope used by Members of Parliament in order that these letters may be sorted by machine without being rejected or damaged. If those 200 positions were designated as letter carriers the mail would still be bogged down inside buildings. These 200 people, who will be used in the entire national system, will hardly make an impact on the service. I know that I will not be holding my breath in expectation of any great improvement in service, and I am sure not too many others will be, either.

The Postmaster General has accepted the fact that there are fundamental problems with the postal service in this country. He seems to think all our problems will be solved once the Post Office is turned into a Crown corporation. In committee he predicted that the service would improve three years after this happens. I hope that there will be some improvement before that, but it could be 33 years, or even more, before we see the type of service that the Canadian people feel they deserve.

The government's proposed bill to create this corporation will not solve all the old problems. It certainly may very well create new ones. If mail service in Canada is to improve the Postmaster General has suggested that the new corporation will have to meet with its employees to establish an acceptable new strategy. "Acceptable" is the key word. Acceptable to whom and at what cost? The minister has suggested that the establishment of this Crown corporation would lead to greater advancement for workers. This is an admirable and understandable, business practice but only when based on undeniable merit and requirements. If the proposed amendments are simply for the purpose of creating more chiefs in the system, then I would suggest to the government that there are plenty of chiefs now and we could do with a whole lot more Indians.

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The Postmaster General also spoke of greater productivity and mentions the possibility of bonuses and incentives for workers. This, too, is an admirable ideal, but again one wonders about reality of such thoughts. The stated goal of the proposed Crown corporation is revenue self-sufficiency. Even someone with the most rudimentary knowledge of mathematical expertise would be able to calculate the postal rate increases necessary to cover the costs involved in attaining that goal. I do not think any of us would want to have to pay what the cost of stamps would be to make the Post Office self-sustained. We are well aware that it is a service, and even with the Crown corporation it must be within the means of the great majority of Canadians. Unless postal rates are allowed to soar to unspeakable heights, the corporation will have to rely on government funding assistance for quite some time. Thus, these proposed bonuses and incentives which cannot apply under the structure of a government department will either be paid for in an indirect manner by the taxpayers or delayed, perhaps forever.