

you have used this much energy, but you yourself may confirm it if you read the meter yourself, having regard to bills you have received in the past, and I will tell you what that energy consumption multiplied by the energy rate is going to cost you". He gives them those figures and as a matter of convenience gives them on the spot, in such a way that they can be used as a form of reference.

● (1730)

These are important issues which should be dealt with in this House, not the issue of whether \$1.50 or \$12 is being charged for the rental of a post box. To deal with the issue of post boxes, I submit you must first deal with the matter of access to those boxes, which is far and beyond the considerations raised in this motion.

The post boxes are kept under lock and key. Thousands of people in my riding would like to use them, but unfortunately there is a limited number of boxes. The riding of York North falls in the category where home mail delivery is not available throughout the entire region, so the issue is when can people gain access to the boxes? The answer is, so long as the post office is open. This creates a problem that in the past has given rise to complaints from constituents who were not able to get boxes because they were not available and constituents who had to stand in line for half an hour at a time, at inconvenient times, because the wickets are not fully manned. This inconvenience to the public has been overlooked. These are the issues to which we should direct our attention, Mr. Speaker.

The concerns that must be dealt with as they relate to the economy in the conduct of business by utility companies, must be paramount in the minds of Members of Parliament asked by the government to restrain demands. The restraint in demands by the utility companies is illustrated by the desire to seek out economical ways to service customers. Because of the functioning of the Canada Post Corporation, that is done through a system such as I have just described.

I raise these issues because the regulations will be approved or rejected by the government. They are in the process of being drafted, and I feel that they are being drafted in a fashion that will preclude the functioning of utility companies as I have described it. That kind of draftsmanship does more disservice to a principal of objectives in this House, which is to cut costs to consumers for services rendered, not only by this government and provincial governments but by municipal corporations and their agencies.

Unfortunately there are no ministers in the House at the moment, Mr. Speaker, but I urge the members of the government who are present to urge the ministers to look seriously at this problem, particularly in light of the alleged government program to keep costs, in addition to salaries, at a level which will not exceed a growth of 6 per cent for the following year.

**Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion presented by the hon. member on the other side I should like to refer to a number of items, complaints and oddities that occur in some of the rural areas that result from the post office service and regulations. It might be helpful to read parts of some letters I have received which will

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outline the problems more clearly. The first letter, addressed to the Postmaster General, comes from Slocan, British Columbia and reads in part as follows:

Sir: Recently there has been a drastic increase in postal rates. Now I have been informed of another harsh increase, namely for rental of my postal box.

I strongly protest these outrageous increases without a vast improvement in service. Both increases are unjust and the latter appears to be discriminatory.

I, as well as many other residents in this particular rural area along Hwy. 6, must travel several miles, at extra expense, to collect my mail at the post office in Slocan. We are outside the village limits but do not have rural delivery.

I am told that petitions for such delivery have been submitted in the past, with no results.

In this age of statistics and inspectors why should a time-consuming petition be necessary? Your policies should be examined and revised.

Should there be a charge for box rental in the first place? Urban dwellers receive door-to-door delivery by letter carriers. Is the cost proportionate? We have a right to equal service for equal cost. The cost of a set of keys for a box should be adequate. We already pay that additional cost.

Are we being penalized for our preference of environment?

Another grievance is the antiquated policy of the Post Office in refusing payment by cheque for box rentals. Since we have no choice, this causes another expensive inconvenience, especially during winter months. In this area the banking establishments are a considerable distance away. I see no reason why the local grocery store should be expected to provide this service. If I am required to make such payment, I demand that I be allowed to submit a cheque.

I might add that the hours of access to the postal boxes have been curtailed to little more than the Post Office business hours. Access to the wickets is always denied during sorting of the mail—another inconvenience.

An additional insult is the fact that I am required to purchase a 30-cent stamp in order to inform you of these injustices.

I trust you will give these predicaments your immediate attention. I await your early reply.

That is just one example, but it deals directly with some of the problems in a rural area which were discussed by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert). There are other complaints dealing with post boxes and group boxes. The request being made is totally understandable and gives us an opportunity to raise some of the grievances in ways other than we do normally, either by dealing with the appropriate minister or now, of course, directly with the Canada Post Corporation, wherever possible.

In the past few months I think that most members will have found the administration of the Canada Post Corporation to be very receptive and to be working as effectively as is possible in a new regime. All of us are going to have to be on our toes when it comes to redrafting the regulations and definitions in an attempt to ensure that some of the current peculiarities are straightened out.

The hon. member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker) pointed out to me that, in an area that encompasses part of his constituency and part of mine in the lower Kootenay Lake area, group boxes were being installed by the local post office but that there were some problems with them. People who have subscriptions to magazines and newspapers found that group boxes do not provide any cover so some of the newspapers and magazines were received wet and in an unreadable condition. A constituent who was not satisfied with the group box went to the local post office and asked for his