

*Post Office Act*

interesting to watch his first steps in parliament and we hope to find something new always.

This is a new minister but not a new department and after the many hours I spent listening to speeches, and especially to the minister's replies, I realized that the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) is still the spokesman of the faithful—and they just have to be faithful—senior officials led by other senior officials of the Post Office Department because it is absolutely necessary that the minister should be able to fulfil his duties and perpetuate that line of old timers, as the English would say, within that department which is, in my opinion, a particularly fruitful field of patronage, at least in my riding, and throughout the province, I would imagine.

The old game is still being played; nothing has changed. I feel that, in spite of his good will, the minister will not be able to do anything. He was put there and he will have to do the work he is told to do. Sometimes, when I see him looking up at the gallery where senior officials are sitting, while he is reading statements prepared by them, I get the impression that if I were in his shoes I would say: But what are you making me read?

Mr. Speaker, I respect the minister and I feel sorry for him because he has a heavy burden to carry. I do not know if the government put him there to destroy him or to eliminate him but I think that the measures he is asked to take are not of a nature to get him much sympathy in his province.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to tell you on behalf of our party that we are in favour of the amendment just moved. We think that the statements made to date by the minister are dictatorial. He simply asks the house to give him a free hand to do anything he wishes in the Post Office Department. However, Mr. Speaker, I still believe that we can act democratically, that we still live in a period of democratic government, but I do not think that the majority of the members even on the government side, would agree to pass to dictatorship, and that is precisely what the minister has been doing since he told us of his intention to introduce this bill. I think he would be more at ease in a dictatorship, like Russia for instance, to take such decisions. In fact, I will never admit that a minister is given unlimited powers to administer his department.

I say that we are here to protect democracy. We must progress democratically and I

urge the minister, if he still enjoys some prestige with his senior officials, or if he can free himself from the ties that bind him today, to give us at least one thing, namely, convince the house, through the will of its members, to refer the bill to the committee, as is suggested in the amendment, so that we can hear the voice of the people really concerned and play our part, in attending the meetings of the committee.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the minister is merely the victim today, because I saw the way he behaved in the past, and surely he does not have the qualities of a socialist dictator. However, the decision he just took and the position he maintains in this house are indicative of the most authentic socialistic attitude of our times. And that is why, this evening, I should like at least to urge him to come back to a more wholesome democracy, in this supposedly just society, for I have never seen a one-way just society or a just socialist society.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder why the minister still turns a deaf ear to all the opposition expressed in the house, as well as outside the house, when he has surely received the same telegrams that we did. He may have spent hours answering the telephone, trying to calm down the people, because this bill does not only concern newspapers, it concerns the whole population.

An attempt is being made, today, to tax the whole population and the people are fed up with taxes. We are interested in protecting our papers, both our dailies and weeklies. In my riding, we only have weeklies but we want them to be able to survive in this so-called democracy. The situation which is now being created for our weeklies, and our large newspapers as well, will no longer allow them to ask high enough rates for them to survive.

We, as well as the people in all the other areas—although I must say ours is fairly remote—are entitled to our papers and we are also entitled to having the government allow them to continue to exist. The government does not help them, and I do not think it has ever subsidized our newspapers as it has perhaps done in the case of the large dailies during election time by giving them rather large sums of money.

However, if we were dealing today with the C.B.C., with the whole system of state