

*Increase in Publications Postage Rates*

register as second class mail, because they do not have any special rate.

Before the rate adjustments in 1967-68 we had no record of the total number of publications that were authorized, but the total number of publications that ceased publication was 358. In 1968-69, still before the rate adjustment, the total number of new publications authorized was 614, and the total number of periodicals that ceased publication was 287.

After the rate adjustments, in 1969-70 the total number of new publications authorized was 92, and the total number of periodicals that ceased publication was 41. From 1970 through to January, 1971, the total number of new publications authorized was 128, and the total number of periodicals that ceased publication was 91. Judging from these figures we can reasonably say that it would be totally unfair to conclude, every time a paper ceases publication, that this must be attributed mainly to the April, 1969, adjustments in second class mail rates.

We also made some inquiries of our own and talked to publishers to discover their attitude. As a result, we can report that there was no conclusive evidence that the recent rate increase caused the death of many publications. The principal response appears to have been a reduction in the frequency of issue, and the end of a widespread distribution of complementary copies. For these reasons we do not feel that an estimated cost of \$2,000 to produce the information requested is justifiable. Moreover, the results would not be conclusive.

There is no way to find out if these publications really ceased to be published other than to make further research. Even then, we would have to study their financial statements to see if the postal increase was the real reason for their death.

[*Translation*]

I merely want to say that even if we do all this searching through our files to locate letters informing us that if we increase postal rates or move periodicals from second to third class some of them will discontinue publication, we have no way of establishing whether those periodicals have really disappeared or whether they are still being published. That would require investigation carried out outside the department since the periodicals no longer have to be registered, as they are no longer second-class material.

Therefore, whether the investigations are carried out or not I do not think hon. members would gain anything thereby and I can hardly request incurring expenses of \$2,000 in order perhaps to find letters stating that if we increased postal rates some periodicals would cease to exist, when it is not known whether they have or have not discontinued publication.

We sympathize with the hon. member for Winnipeg North. The discontinuation of certain publications which, in most cases, provide a service to a certain category of Canadians, is unfortunate and we don't like to see them disappear. But between this and saying that they have disappeared only because of an increase in rates, there is a wide margin.

[Mr. Côté (Longueuil).]

I must suggest that whenever there is an increase in postal rates, whether for first, second or third class mail, there are always people who are affected by such a measure. Indeed some people will pay more if we want to get more revenues. If there is an increase in rates for first class mail, it will be said that certain agencies which provide essential services to citizens will suffer from it, because these organizations will make the average citizen bear the burden of this new expenditure, thus adding to his cost of living.

If we increase second class rates, some will say that it is detrimental to publications. If we increase third class rates, some will say that it is detrimental to some other publications. Some suggest that we should increase third class rates because this class includes a great deal of unsolicited mail. But at the same time, third class mail also includes publications and Christmas cards.

For instance, this afternoon I received a delegation requesting that third class rates not be increased, on the grounds that its organization would be enormously affected by such an increase. So would also be such organizations as the War Amputees Association, groups who sell Easter or Christmas seals and who are concerned with the health of many citizens.

Of course, each time there is an increase in postal rates, some people are affected. But the fact remains that a department such as the Post Office cannot afford to accumulate deficits of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. If we tolerated this situation, many people would say that we are really subsidizing the big customers of the Post Office who are often the companies and that instead of making users pay, we are collecting more taxes.

Whatever our course of action, we will always be criticized but we must act. If we do not do so and if we let yearly deficits of more than \$140 million accumulate, we will obviously have to find the money somewhere and it is the taxpayer who will bear the brunt of it one way or another.

During this fiscal year, we must try to be as fair as possible. I think that today's motion might have been of some avail before the 1969 increase. Had all these letters been available, it might have been possible to have a better discussion about the problem when the increase was enacted in 1969. The motion might have been more useful at that time, but as it is before this House for the third time I think that it is useless and it would certainly not serve anybody's interest if we were going to spend unnecessarily \$2,000 or so.

• (5:30 p.m.)

[*English*]

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House this afternoon in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) calls on the House to issue a copy of all letters received by the Postmaster General from churches, professional organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, credit unions and private organizations, indicating that as a result of the increase in postal rates they intend to discontinue or curtail their publications.