

and just where we sit in the twentieth century. Change not only means disruption; it means tremendous disruption. It also means the need for people to be adaptable. The twentieth century is synonymous with change. "Future Shock" describes the terrific complications that exist as advances become more and more rapid.

I gather from this motion a suggestion that we should deny automation; we should deny this kind of progress and we should go back to the good old ways. But the good old ways were not good at all. The postal service was bad, not good as it is today. Can you imagine one saying: "Let us remain the same"? I do not take it as an acceptable argument that we should continue to have folksy spots in the country where people can go to communicate and where we do not have automation. This would be to deny recognition of all the problems we face as a government today.

Can you imagine the situation if that attitude were adopted, as apparently the official opposition suggests? Can you imagine the terrible situation we would be in a decade from now with our post offices? We simply would not be able to keep up with the demands of modern business.

We must realize that today there must be changes no matter how disruptive they may be. If we do not do that we deny the ability to cope with tomorrow because we cannot imagine what technological advances tomorrow may bring in the way of changes that will improve our situation and assist our people, yet will bring confrontation in respect of the number of people employed, and services. Having regard to the problem of reduced postal service from six days to five days, I think everybody on both sides of the House had some regret when that decision was made. When you look for your mail at a particular time, as each householder does, no matter how good the service you are still inclined to complain and blame the Post Office for not providing the service to which you are accustomed.

I know that people were unhappy when they could not go on Saturday and collect their mail. There was a reduction in service. There were problems in developing workloads when you had a build-up of business mail which hit the Post Office heavily on weekends, making a heavier volume of mail for delivery on Monday. I would like the parliamentary restaurant to open at five o'clock every day. I would like my secretarial staff to be available in the evening when I am here and could dash up to my office to do some work. However, we must be realistic about things.

We are talking about economics and we are talking about a modern society. We are talking about changes that must be made even when there is some regret in making a change that might in a way reduce service which we enjoy. When it is better economics to reduce that service, have it highly efficient and work over a shorter period, then surely that is facing up to the responsibility of making decisions in government that are in the best interests of the people and providing the best economy, particularly when government costs soar as they do these days.

When we talk about increased postal rates this goes back several years to the days of a former member of this House, Mr. Kierans, to whom I think the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott) referred a few moments

### *Post Office*

ago. It is true that costs have gone up considerably, but one of the greatest problems I face today, as I am sure other members do, is trying to make my constituents understand who is responsible for what, and what money they pay in taxes goes where. I am faced with the whole confusion of pinpointing where the money is being spent so that I can say whether it is being spent well or poorly.

We do not get extra revenue in the Post Office Department by charging so much for stamps so that we can pour off that money into another department. In fact, even though those rates have gone up the fact remains that the full cost is not covered by moneys that come in from the sale of stamps or the delivery of mail. A sizeable part of the funds still comes out of tax revenue. But surely that is how government should operate. It is important to me that as more and more we are able to identify for the taxpayers where their dollars are being spent so they can decide whether it is worth while or not, the better off we are.

It is all very easy to go out, as I said, and attack Bell Telephone because you had trouble with one particular phone call, or to attack the Income Tax Department because it is not a pleasant department, or to attack the Post Office because you have sent mail for years and have had no trouble but finally you wrote a letter to Aunt Mame and it did not arrive on time, but postal rates were increased to help match the increase in cost of providing this service today. No one is so naïve as to imagine for a moment that costs have not risen generally—and so have the costs of providing our postal service.

The postal department is still very much labour-oriented. It has a great many employees who have demanded better wages. The government was responsible for paying their wages and giving them increases, and this has increased the cost. Transportation costs have rapidly increased, and surely that must be faced up to and reflected in the price of the service. I think it is folly to pretend that services are not expensive. Increased postal rates reflect the increase in costs, and it is wrong to suggest to the public that it will not have to pay for these costs in higher postage rates, because it will. If it does not pay in postage, it will pay in some other way. If the public pays partially in the form of postage, then at least the people who are using the service will pay the increased costs.

Over the last six years, during my time in the media when I received a great deal of mail and also sent a great deal of mail, and now, when I am especially involved in receiving and sending information quickly and trying to deal with situations, I have come to the realization that we do have one of the most efficient postal systems in the world.

● (1620)

If we are to keep up, we must be innovative. The Post Office has been very innovative. It has tried to keep up, restructure, regroup and not begin something without following through during the period of months or years which sometimes is involved in some of its plans. Along the way it has said that it must move sensibly and quickly and that it must make adjustments. I think in the last couple of years—I have experienced this as a newsman covering some very serious confrontations such as the strikes we had five, six or seven years ago, especially in