

Supply—Post Office

the 30 patrons at R.R. 4, St. Thomas, were going to have their mailing address changed to R.R. 1. I know they would wish me to thank the minister for receiving their petition giving the reason they wish to remain at their present mailing address, and they will not have to change their postal address.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, like the other speaker before me, I think we are all quite happy today to be able to congratulate the minister on his presentation. Indeed I admit that some of the notes I prepared in the event of a different approach have now been hastily tucked away, and since he has been so charming and sweet with us I think he will find the house will tend to reciprocate. I think all of us who listened to the minister are coming to the opinion that we are perhaps on our way toward getting a fairly intelligent method of accounting worked out for the post office so that those of us who are interested in it—which in fact means most members of the house—can study it and make some sort of intelligent contribution to the minister's job.

I should like to suggest to the minister that these studies that he is publishing are of considerable interest to us. Many people consider his department to be a fairly dry and dull one, but I have found from past examination that it is an intensely interesting department, one which is very important to most of the people of the country. If instead of merely waiting for us to come to the minister—I am sure he will understand that in a busy day it is not always easy to do this—he could make available to the house some of these consultative studies, either by tabling them or preparing a white paper—it is of no consequence how we get the information—we could then study them at leisure and make a contribution.

I am sorry the minister did not feel that he had time to go on longer because I think that for the first time we were getting a fairly interesting insight into the workings of this very important department. I was also impressed by the complexity of the department and the enormous amount of time which the minister has had to devote to preparing these important figures. I think this bears out a submission I made to the government when we were considering the legislation under the National Housing Act, namely that the minister frankly is just going to have too much to do fixing up the Post Office Department and conducting these intensive studies to have very much energy and thought left

over for the carrying into effect of the National Housing Act amendments, which are also very important and far reaching. I think he has given me additional evidence to strengthen my case for the appointment of a full time minister of housing in Canada under a full time department.

This afternoon, Mr. Chairman, we do not want to discuss the resolution dealing with the postal rate increase, but I do think it was appropriate for the minister to lay all this information before us so that we can discuss it and study it over the summer recess, so that when the resolution comes back before us we will be in a position to consider it. The minister will recall that the main objection of our party with regard to first class mail was based on available information to the effect that it appeared to us that the particular mail service was showing a very handsome profit and we could not see any justification for increasing the rates. The minister this afternoon has presented evidence and is prepared to present more which he says will convince us that first class mail is actually operating at a deficit, and if this is the case then perhaps we may find a meeting of minds when the resolution comes back before us.

Before leaving that aspect of the discussion I want to mention second class mail, because in some ways the minister has not really met our objections. He was frank enough to admit that a large deficit occurs in this area of second class mail, some \$20 million or perhaps slightly more, and that this is justified on the grounds of economic policy, really.

Mr. Nicholson: Political.

Mr. Scott: The minister is putting words in my mouth so I will use them. It is political policy. I do not say that this is necessarily a bad policy. It started 100 years ago when newspapers were very small. There was very little advertising so that it was necessary in some way to subsidize them. No one would quarrel with that at that time, but as we have tried to point out to the government times have changed and the newspapers are no longer necessarily the struggling little county papers which required this sort of assistance.

The minister felt that he could not discriminate, but he does that now in his rates between papers over 2,500 circulation and papers over 5,000 circulation. Different rates are set for them, so that if the minister really wants to get at the metropolitan dailies, *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, or any of the wealthier