

• (10:10 p.m.)

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council): On behalf of the Postmaster General, I should like to reply to the question asked by the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Mather). The answer will be somewhat similar to one which was given last Monday night, I believe, to a question asked by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie).

The basic reason for the increases in second class mail rates is well known to hon. members. There has been no substantial increase in second class rates since 1938; unless the rates were increased, the Post Office, and therefore the Canadian taxpayer was faced with a deficit of \$130 million which amounted to a subsidy by the general public to above-average users of the Post Office. The principle behind the rate increases is that of user-cost; the user pays for the service he receives. An exception has been made in the case of the publishing industry, and the total post office deficit on the handling of newspapers, magazines and periodicals will be in the order of \$30 million for 1969-70.

The increases themselves are undoubtedly substantial, and had to be if any progress was to be made in reducing the deficit to bearable proportions. The amount of the increase in much less striking, however, when it is considered in dollar terms rather than in percentage terms which are misleading because of the low starting base. The average monthly magazine will be able to offset its increased mailing charge by an increase in its subscription rate of about 50 cents a year. This, surely, can be managed by an organization which is providing a valuable and well-regarded service to its readers.

As to requests for specific exception from the rate increases for particular, and worthy publications, the reason why it is not possible to meet them is obvious. Any single exception would re-open the entire field. Rather than accepting a special concession from the government, such publications will have to turn to their readers and to their supporters, in whose best interests it would be to make the necessary adjustments. In other words, those who benefit from a particular publication will have to take the responsibility for supporting it.

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

HOUSING—POSSIBILITY OF REFERRING TASK FORCE REPORT TO COMMITTEE

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): A few days ago I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) in charge of housing to refer the task force report on housing to the appropriate standing committee of the house so that the committee might examine the outrageous recommendation with respect to public housing and urban renewal.

I had three reasons for doing this. First, no standing committee of the house has ever examined the problem of housing or had an opportunity to offer any practical solutions for it. In fact, since I came here in 1965 no committee of the house has ever been called to deal with this subject, even though the opposition has made numerous requests for one to sit. Second, the composition of the task force makes one wonder as to its adequacy. When one thinks of the academics, the successful builders and the mortgage men who composed this task force, one asks the question: why was no trade union representative, or representative from the Consumers Council, or representative interested in public housing, invited to join that force?

In the third place, the report of the task force on housing failed on three counts. It did not cope with the serious shortages of housing stock, more especially with the housing needs of the two-thirds of Canadian families whose incomes are less than \$7,500 a year. It placed too much reliance on the private sector to supply the housing requirements, and de-emphasized the nature and the role of public housing and urban renewal. It did not indicate adequate solutions to major problems involved in buying a house, such as mortgage financing, high interest rates and the high cost of land.

Tonight, I wish to deal briefly with my criticism that the task force placed too much reliance on the private sector to supply housing requirements, and de-emphasized the nature and the role of public housing and urban renewal. When I read the recommendation in the report that the federal government initiate a thorough research program into the economic, social and psychological issues of public housing, and that until such a study had been completed and assessed no new large project should be undertaken, I was shocked. Seemingly, this conclusion was the result of the task force's examination of Toronto's Regent Park development, north