

*Government Organization*

it serves doctors. At this time there is a bill before the house in respect of drug prices which will necessitate another publication. This will be in the form of a booklet on drugs issued every month at a tremendous cost to the taxpayer. And mailed to whom? Why, the doctors. One need only look back over the records to see the thousands of dollars it costs to publish such a booklet. The minister is penalizing one publication to the same people on the one hand and subsidizing another on the other hand. The people will have to pay the cost of publishing these drug booklets to be sent out once a month by the Department of National Health and Welfare. This is a great way to run a country.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I want to dwell for a minute on the question of mail that has been slowed up across the country. I have mentioned medical publications because they are a striking example of what has happened in other fields. If these people cut down and down on their publications, in the long run it will defeat the purpose of the minister of obtaining more revenue. We would like to know how this mistake could have been made. Was there any fiscal investigation of what would happen in this area that would justify the minister being mistaken to the extent of the difference between \$1 and \$5?

Businesses in my area have been adversely affected by the new postal policy. I have received complaint after complaint and letter after letter, even from the city of Toronto, saying that businesses have had to use telephones and telephone attachments, thereby adding more and more to their costs. In the long run this takes revenue from the Post Office and in itself defeats the objective of the department.

Saturday's mail comes in on Monday and office staffs have two days' mail with which to cope. It is not all dealt with on Monday, Tuesday or even Wednesday and is finally distributed on Thursday or Friday. Then the vicious circle starts all over again. This policy of a slow mail service means that because only so much can be done on any given day, businesses suffer. They must add to their staffs in order to cope with this problem, thereby adding to the cost of doing business. I repeat that this is a defeating movement. It results in a backlog in the post offices. The backlog commences with Saturday's mail, which has to be delivered with Monday's mail; then Tuesday's mail is heavy and there is a backlog. The point is, how does the

minister intend to cope with this situation? This is the reason mail delivery is being delayed across the country. This is why business is being slowed down. This must be the result if businesses do not employ extra staff. This all adds to the expense of doing business.

No wonder the Postmaster General has a rebellion on his hands. I sympathize with him. I have a great deal of appreciation for the postal workers because on the whole they are a pretty dedicated group of people. I believe that the minister's superiority complex has got him into trouble. A more conciliatory attitude to the public and to the workers in general, and a little fairer treatment of the postal workers, might have avoided this situation. But the minister is smart, and he probably knows it. As far as I know, Canada is the only country in the world where a week's mail is delivered in five days.

I have received letter after letter from men who have to work on Saturday to keep their businesses going, and in many cities across Canada they cannot even buy a postage stamp on Saturday. Many of these people are on the road during the week and come home on Saturday to clear up a great deal of their work; then they start out again on Monday.

I ask the minister to consider the harm he is doing to the publishing companies and small newspapers with large rural circulation because of this policy. I have here a letter, part of which I should like to read to the committee. This is a typical case. The letter was written to the minister on February 6 and reads in part as follows:

A typical case in point concerns the newspapers for Mr. N. R. Atkinson, 154-175th Avenue, Redington Shores, Florida 33708.

Mr. Atkinson wrote to us on February 3 noting that he had not received any papers since January 23, at which time he received a copy dated January 16. This means that 14 consecutive copies of the newspaper, all of which were definitely wrapped and dispatched from our mailing room and posted from the Orillia post office, have not been delivered. Mr. Atkinson was told at his Florida post office that none of these papers had arrived there. I do not understand why the arrangements that have served Mr. Atkinson and so many others for so long in the past should suddenly founder so completely.

What can be happening to all these papers, and where are they going? I can assure you that Post Office regulations as to the addressing, wrapping and dispatching of newspapers are being strictly adhered to now, as in the past.

I would be most grateful for your comments or suggestions.