

Postal Service

his department than any of his predecessors ever did. Much of his knowledge, I can say in all honesty, is the result of efforts on the part of members of this party who have expended considerable effort in the last months to bring him to a state of education and increased awareness of the problems of his office. In addition to the education which we have generously and kindly given him, he has the advantage of the experience of his officials and the departmental information to which only he is privy.

• (3:40 p.m.)

We have confirmation that the minister is aware of the problems in the Post Office as one fruitful source of criticism of the department's procedures and performance has been the minister himself. I shall quote the *Financial Post* of the other day:

But I admit the attitude in the Post Office isn't good. It isn't as good as it was two years ago. Management and labour just aren't working together and the service is suffering.

In that respect he was reciprocating by giving us a good quote, and that I appreciate. But the time for stating problems, as the minister occasionally does, is over. The time for action is here. Every member in this house can criticize the Post Office. We have listened to the pleas of our constituents, the patrons of the Post Office. The minister knows the problems. We all know the problems, but he alone among us is able to do something to remedy a situation which is deplorable and is growing worse.

This is the challenge that faces him. It is not so long ago that the minister in a kindly reference likened me to Cassandra. He said he liked to hear my Cassandra-like utterances. I will accept that as a description more accurate perhaps than many of his forecasts. Cassandra did go about prognosticating woe. She did; she preached that things were not as they should be, and like myself she was not believed either. But she was right. I and others told the minister that publications in this country in the non-profit sector which perform a most valuable service in communicating essential information to the Canadian people could not stand the rates which he imposed upon them. The publishers said that. But he said, of course, that they did not know and that they were selling him a bill of goods. Well, they are not selling him such a bill of goods now because many of them already are out of business. Cassandra is not always wrong.

We also advised him from time that the people in his department did not care for the regulations imposed as a result of the five-day delivery week. He said that despite what they said they were happy and the disproof did not come to him apparently until there were strikes, walk-outs and all the rest of it. Now we have adjudication and in fact at this very moment the matter is sub judice. We also said that the conglomeration of five-day delivery in one part of the country and six-day delivery in the rest would not work. Let us just look at our own mail to see how the service is working today.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): What mail?

Mr. Macquarrie: "What mail", the hon. member in front of me says. So I would say to the minister that I do not mind being called Cassandra and I do not mind making doleful prophecies when he gives me little material upon which to make joyous ones. I say to him further that while it is all right to call me Cassandra he is in a situation that poor King Priam never had. Priam did not know enough to listen when he was being warned and receiving information. King Priam in his self-confidence went on until his city crumbled in destruction. The voice of Cassandra was not heeded.

I say to the minister how many more times do we, representing the troubled patrons of the Post Office, have to tell him that things are in bad shape? How much more time does he want to get things straightened out? How much longer does he need to snow us with a forest of mimeographed reports? How much longer will he go on assuring us that all is well in the land when everybody agrees with him except everybody who uses the Post Office? While it is fun, of course, to dabble in the sky, to be Buck Rogers on Monday and, a Star Trek hero on Tuesday and ride the waves of the future, there is still such a thing as mail. There are still people who like to communicate one with another and there are still some humble Canadians who think that their government is doing something for them at considerable cost—we recognize that—in taking their communications from them to the person or persons to whom they are addressed.

In all humility I suggest to the minister that he might address himself to this elementary problem and that the way to the future might begin with a little communication in the present. I would hope that this new and costly postal service which he has imposed