

Mr. EULER: It is not only head office that constitutes the Post Office Department.

Mr. BENNETT: But it is only the departmental administration item that we are dealing with.

Mr. EULER: Of course, if business has increased throughout the country, it will result in an increase in business at head office.

Mr. BETTS: Can the minister tell us the increase in terms of pounds of mail carried?

Mr. EULER: No, I have not that information.

Mr. BETTS: Can it be dug up for the information of the committee?

Mr. EULER: I am told that it can be obtained for the air mail routes and the rural routes fairly quickly, and perhaps for the rest of it, but that would take some time.

Mr. HANSON: When hon. gentlemen base their criticism of the Post Office Department on the results shown by some other post office establishments, they must realize that Canada is a young country which is trying to develop its resources, and that it is still in the pioneering stage. To criticize the Post Office Department for not making money is wrong. Having lived in a pioneering country myself, I realize that the people are trying to establish themselves, and they need all the facilities which can be placed at their disposal in order that they may be able to get in touch with the outside world. The only agency through which they can do this is the Post Office Department. They are asking for post offices and for postal facilities to enable them to get in touch with the outside world, and I suggest that Canada is a bit too young to be classed with some of the European countries so far as the postal service is concerned. It is unreasonable to expect the department here to show a profit.

I congratulate the Post Office Department upon the efforts it is making to help this Canadian nation to develop its resources, and even if the department shows a loss at the present time it should still be encouraged in the work it is doing, because I believe that eventually there will be a revenue from it. I am not able to say exactly what should be done; but I am sure the department is doing everything in its power to assist pioneers in Canada, and I have no doubt that eventually the department will be in the same category as the post office departments in some of the older and more developed countries and will show a profit. It is to the credit of the Canadian government that it is doing what it can to help the pioneers in this way and I support it.

Mr. SPENCE: I regret very much that the Postmaster General is not here. I am sorry to hear that he is sick; I was not aware of the fact until to-day. There is not much satisfaction in criticizing the acting Postmaster General, because he has just taken the job in hand. A couple of years ago when the estimates came down they did not appear to be in good shape and there was more or less criticism, from myself and others, about the administration. I accused it then of being antiquated, and I did not blame the Postmaster General any more than I blame any other Postmaster General, because no matter who originated it, it is antiquated. Last year the method of presentation of the estimates had been improved considerably and the Postmaster General promised that this year he would try to make it perfect. I think it has slipped back into the same old rut. We have heard only about the total revenue taken in, and no wonder, because they have no accounting system. Now they come to the conclusion that they have \$3,037,000 of a surplus. Goodness knows where they got it! They will never know how much the post office makes or how many millions it loses until there is a proper check-up on the services rendered by the Public Works department.

I have made a close study of what happens in Toronto. When we were in power I took particular notice. Hundreds of dollars worth of material and time are spent in the different post offices tearing down walls and building them at the instigation of the postmaster in that or other cities. For instance, the old post office on Adelaide street in Toronto was all changed about inside four or five times during our term of office. None of that was charged up to the Post Office Department. When they moved the administration to the present quarters the postmaster—he is not called postmaster now but has some highfalutin title—had the walls pulled down in the building at the corner of Yonge and Front streets and other walls put in, and so on; many thousands of dollars were—I would not say wasted, but used there in making the place to suit him. That was done under this government; but I am not criticizing any government in particular, the whole system is so absolutely—I would not like to say what I was going to say—antiquated.

Mr. EULER: That is a much longer word than the one the hon. member was going to use.

Mr. SPENCE: I made this suggestion to the Minister of Public Works in the former government, and I suggest again that a proper accounting system should be established in the Department of Public Works to keep track