

*Postal Service Policies*

After ten years of faithful service all he rates is six days' notice and the good wishes of the district director of postal services. The minister could at least have sent his good wishes, considering that the future of this man does not look very bright. The minister does not understand this. Where can this man get a job in Raleigh, Newfoundland, a province where approximately one in every four men is unemployed? You cannot just pick up a job.

In a question on the Order Paper my colleague, the hon. member for Bonavista-Trinity-Conception (Mr. Moores), recently asked the government what their policy was with respect to reviewing those post offices intended to be closed. In his reply the minister stated:

When a definite decision is made to close an office, all available information relevant to the case has been carefully checked beforehand to ensure that the decision is just.

If that did not come right out of a computer, I do not know where it came from. I submit that the decisions made in the two cases I have just mentioned could hardly be described as just—and these are only two among countless others unless, of course, one does not consider the effect of the decision on the people directly involved as "relevant information". In that case it might be just. That really sizes up the main reason for the complete failure of this one-time man of promise as Postmaster General. At no time, can it honestly be said, have people ever been considered to be "relevant information" or just plain "relevant," for that matter.

The pretext under which the minister set out to reform the Post Office might have been fine had he been dealing with the assembly line in an automobile factory or in a furniture factory. But he was not. He was dealing with a human institution, the Post Office.

I hope that hon. members will not misunderstand me. I believe in reform. That is why I sit here as a Progressive Conservative. I believe in progress, in change if it will improve things. However, I do not believe in change, the change that was mentioned all the way through the minister's speech this afternoon, simply for the sake of change. When we have a good thing going for us that is serving the people, let us not destroy it until we have something better with which to replace it.

The minister said in his remarks this afternoon that dentists, doctors and banks have gone. What are we going to do? In the name

of heaven, why does the minister not spend some time in Newfoundland? The people I am talking about never saw a doctor or a dentist, and they have never been in a bank. What doctors? What dentists? What banks? It shows a Montreal or Toronto orientation. I am afraid that we have already destroyed our postal service.

Perhaps if the minister would resign we could get a new minister who planned his reforms in advance instead of commissioning three quarters of a million dollars worth of studies and then proceeding with reckless abandon from whim to whim. The minister appears to be obsessed with the idea of the Post Office paying its way. Could he tell us whether his expensive studies and his bright young executives have paid their way? I wonder if in fact the minister himself has paid his way.

The minister has said repeatedly that the Post Office must pay its own way so that those who do not use the postal service will not be stuck with picking up the bill through their taxes. I ask: Is that what Confederation is about? Although I come from a province that is very new to Confederation, I think I understand it a little better than the minister. Did not the four provinces unite in 1867 for their mutual benefit? Did Newfoundland not join Confederation in 1949 for the mutual benefit of both Canada and Newfoundland, and have we not both benefited from that union? As a province, have we always borne our share of the financial burden? The minister does not have to tell me the answer because I know that we were and still are financially less fortunate. But some day we will make it up, and the same applies to the government.

I suppose that if the present Postmaster General were Prime Minister there would be no Canadian armed forces and no Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Historians would probably have to pay to do their research at the public archives. If we called the RCMP to our homes to investigate a felony, we would probably have to pay for the house call if the Postmaster General were Prime Minister. I wonder who would pay for the services of Members of Parliament. I guess Members of Parliament should be thankful that he is not Prime Minister, just as all the people who live in rural Canada are thankful that religion and education do not fall under his jurisdiction, because our churches and schools would probably be closed. One never knows, the Department of National