

Canada Post Corporation

cent is from individuals to business. In other words, even the 12 per cent of mail from individuals to business is business-related. I suppose in the main it is people paying their bills. However, only 8 per cent of all mail is from individuals to individuals, and when people complain about mail, the complaints are mostly about that aspect of the service. I suggest we recognize that 80 per cent—or 92 per cent, if we include all business-related mail—is in effect a subsidy to business and should be looked on as such.

There is one other small item I think should be put on the record because I find it somewhat amusing. It might be of interest to hon. members that it costs the post office 55 cents to sell one dollar's worth of postage stamps. I find that figure to be quite extraordinary; nevertheless, that is the answer to question No. 271. If a machine is used, the cost is reduced to 30 cents on every dollar's worth of postage stamps sold. I suppose we could use more machines, but I sincerely question the 55 cents on the dollar cost to sell postage stamps.

What is all this about? I suggest there should be a little more thought on the part of post office personnel. They should realize that the more than 800,000 people in this country who are not entitled to mail delivery to our residences have for years gone to our local post offices to pick up our mail without question. We have saved the post office a very considerable sum of money which otherwise would have been spent on postal delivery. I have suggested that we should pay purely a nominal sum for the post office boxes we use in post offices. A study has been going on—and it continues—since 1974. I will not at this moment suggest the extreme. I have suggested before in this House that perhaps we should abolish residential delivery entirely. That probably will bring some squawks! However, there are many of us who use local post office boxes. We have been saving the post office money and should no longer be penalized by what I consider to be picayune attempts to pick up a dollar here and a dollar there. I sincerely request that the study to which I have referred concludes, in 1982, that we be left in peace, as we were before, to pay our \$6 a year for the privilege of using a box and that it be left at that. I ask that the post office leave us alone to lead our lives in a normal, peaceful fashion.

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed a very graphic demonstration of the impotence of members of the government party in persuading both the minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation and that monster we unleashed as recently as a few short months ago upon the unsuspecting public. We have heard some tales of woe from the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), who has indicated that he had to pay \$1.50 for a change of address card and that he was obliged to pay \$12 for the rental of a post box. Having regard to the wording of his motion, the hon. member might have drawn some very significant matters to the attention of the House, but he did not do that.

In the riding of York North there is an impending battle dealing with the pending regulations under the Canada Post Corporation Act between the Markham Hydro Commission and the corporation. It seems that the Markham Hydro Commission, in its wisdom and desire to save users money, has

decided to incorporate the process of both reading a meter and at the same time rendering an account with respect to that meter to the householder. Canada Post Corporation believes that will deprive the corporation of substantial sums of money, and that is absolutely true. In the event the process adopted by the Markham Hydro Commission is effective, one can expect that every hydro commission in the country will adopt the process. The Markham Hydro Commission has an ingenious device which permits the meter reader to tabulate the exact cost of energy consumed and leave a copy of that calculation with the householder while doing his job. Technically, the post office says, that constitutes the delivery of a letter, over which it has a monopoly. There can be no letter delivered, except in the event that three times the normal postage rate is paid and except through the services—loosely referred to—of the Canada Post Corporation.

This raises some rather interesting prospects. As I was thinking about the process employed by this ingenious utility corporation, I thought about a neighbour going to visit a friend across the way, finding his friend away from his house, taking out a pen and paper and leaving a note on the door saying: "I called for you, but you weren't home. Please call me." Conceivably that is a letter, as Canada Post Corporation would like it defined, and the perpetrator of that horrible offence, having delivered a letter without using the services of the Canada Post Corporation, is subject to a fine. To think that this House permitted that kind of loose interpretation to slip into a piece of legislation passed by this House is an abomination. Every time I had an opportunity when dealing with that issue—and recognizing the problem that bill created—I drew it to the attention of the House.

Originally the minister now responsible for the Canada Post Corporation, who at that time was the postmaster general, made two statements in the House. I do not have them in front of me, but *Hansard* will confirm them. On one occasion he said it was perfectly all right if utilities wished to use the services of someone who might deliver bills because he fully recognized that it was less expensive to do it in that fashion. Later he changed his mind and said it was illegal for utilities to use that service. It was apparent from the wording of the statute that it would be illegal.

The process employed initially by the Markham Hydro Commission, however, is a deviation from that illegality, I submit, because what it is is a situation in which no one is being sent out for the purpose of delivering something prepared in another place. The person who actually performs the reading of the meter, which is a service completely unrelated to a letter in any form or fashion, at the same time makes a note, and that note is to be used for two purposes. The first is the purpose of indicating to his headquarters or office the amount of energy consumed. He knows the rate to be charged and, on his calculator, he determines what that is. As a convenience to the householder he tells the householder—as though the householder had come out and said to the meter reader, "Tell me what you have found"—"I have found that