

• (3:20 p.m.)

POST OFFICE ACT

AMENDMENTS AFFECTING RATES, ADMINISTRATION, SAVINGS BANK

The house resumed, from Monday, October 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Kierans for the second reading of Bill No. C-116, to amend the Post Office Act, and the amendment (p. 1623) thereto of Mr. Macquarrie.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, when the house adjourned last evening, I think that I had clearly shown the support given by Liberal members to the Canadian dailies which are complaining about Bill No. C-116 as brought before the house by the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans).

Mr. Speaker, I would like today to dwell on two points. In the first place, as for the conditions made to our newspapers, our periodicals, I feel that the American periodicals will take advantage of lower mail rates than those now suggested for our Canadian periodicals. In my opinion, this is a flagrant case of injustice, for our periodicals, whether they are dailies, weeklies or monthlies. The other point which I must draw to the minister's attention is the conditions made to our weeklies. Our small regional newspapers will certainly suffer from such provisions as introduced in Bill No. C-116.

Mr. Speaker, we have all received telegrams from managers of English and French publications. I have here a telegram from the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* signed by Mr. Moonigan which states:

[English]

As Canada's oldest surviving newspaper we resent government contention it is subsidizing newspapers. If government proceeds to raise second class mail rates to penalize newspapers, it must also forthwith stop subsidizing C.B.C., C.N.R. and other corporations run on public moneys. We urge reappraisal of government position. Post Office bill direct blow to our existence. It will mean abandoning 30 per cent of our subscribers. Is this just society promised by Prime Minister Trudeau?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, we spoke of this "just society promised by Prime Minister Trudeau" before the elections, and the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* "realizes it after the election".

Here, for example, is a telegram from the general manager and editor of the newspaper *Le Soleil* and I quote:

18 owners and senior staff members of the Quebec dailies met with the minister and Post Office officials Thursday stop Several ministers also

Post Office Act

seen stop Sending copy of brief to your Ottawa office Monday stop Refer you to our Thursday editorial and report page 3 stop Bill means end of subscriptions and delivery of dailies in rural areas stop Representations also made that subsidies not given to publications but to consumers stop If government policy is to eliminate subsidies it should also apply to state radio and television and others. Gabriel Gilbert, editor and general manager.

I could also quote telegrams from Mr. Blais, of *L'Action* of Quebec City, and from Mr. André Bureau, of *Les Quotidiens du Québec Inc.*

Mr. Speaker, the daily newspapers will not necessarily lose subscribers. Why? Because they do not have to increase their subscription rate. Everybody understands that, and they do too. What matters to them are the advertisements in newspapers, and if we look at the facts as they are, we see that the owners of daily newspapers tell us that they will not be able to provide information to the rural districts in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, it is the daily newspapers like *Le Soleil* of Quebec City, *La Presse* of Montreal, *Montréal-Matin*—an unimportant and trivial newspaper of Montreal—and other similar papers which, not only, during election campaigns, but at all times, support the system in which we live. Today, the minister is asking them to pay their share, to pay for the operation of their system, and they are against it. But when the time has come to dot the i's, they are not around. Today we feel sorry for the small people, whereas in fact the law will still allow the big to eat the small.

The little weeklies will have to foot the bill, will lose subscribers, will lose ground in the field of national advertising, because their circulation will not be large enough.

The big newspapers will increase their advertising rates, because they sell advertisements according to their circulation. They will probably keep the subscription rates as they are now but they will increase the advertising rates. The big dailies will stay alive and we will continue to see in Montreal's *La Presse* full-page advertisements by Simpson's, Eaton's and Morgan's.

Mr. Speaker, a big newspaper like *Le Soleil* or any other of its kind, will not have to increase its subscription rates. At this time, I would not forgive myself—and it would not be fair for me not to say so—if I failed to mention that, for several years now, *Le Soleil* of all the Quebec dailies, has probably been the most unbiased towards Social Credit, the Ralliement Créditiste. As to the Quebec