

*Post Office Act*

of increasing the cost and cutting the service to the Canadian people.

**Mr. Skoberg:** First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate the minister on his appointment to the office he holds. Second, I would like to extend my sympathy and condolences to himself and his party on the lack of feeling displayed in this situation by denying the right of individuals to appear before the various committees and make their case.

I would like to repeat something of what I started to say the other day when the honourable knock came on the honourable door, and I would appreciate it if in due course the minister answers some of the representations that have been made to him. He has received a delegation from representatives of trade union journals. As I was finishing the other day I referred to the fact that these publications suggest there will be a 500 per cent increase in their mailing charges. No doubt the minister will give a reply to this. It may be that the amendment which the minister has prepared will cover some of the points I wish to raise, but for my own satisfaction I would like an answer on certain issues.

It is suggested that the increase in mailing costs will go from five-twelfths of a cent per copy to 2.5 cents a copy. I would like the minister to confirm or deny this. This means that for a total of 37,000 copies mailed from Toronto the cost will increase on an annual basis from \$7,398 to \$44,400. I submit that this is a considerable increase in over-all costs.

It is suggested that the United States is suffering from the same difficulties with its post office, but the problem there has been alleviated to some extent by progressive postal rates.

I would also like to add my voice to those who have spoken on behalf of the war amputees, and the situation which they face as a result of the proposed mailing increases. It is suggested that they will suffer an increase of approximately 66½ per cent.

Correspondence has been received along the same line from the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers. They point out that one provision of the bill—

—clearly implies that when a periodical devoted primarily to the sciences, agriculture, etc. "is published primarily for the benefit of the members of a particular profession," viz: those who can really benefit from such a publication and in most need of same, it shall not be eligible for the advantages of second class mail.

I would like to know if this is entirely correct.

Another point I would like to bring forcefully to the attention of the minister concerns the effects of the proposed postal rates as described by the President of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association. I would like to know whether this association has had an opportunity to present a brief to a committee or to the minister.

They suggest that the main burden of the increases in second class privileges will fall on newspapers in cities of 10,000 to 20,000 people, particularly in areas like North Battleford where the local newspaper has a large rural circulation and where it is impractical to distribute it other than by postal delivery. Does the minister agree with this?

Another point they have made is that under the proposed legislation the big dailies and their week end inserts are given certain privileges. The minimum charge per newspaper changes from 2 cents per pound in one area to 2 cents per copy. That in effect quadruples their cost of mailing, but dailies at the 5 cent per pound rate would only increase their cost from 4 cents to 5 cents per pound or a 25 per cent increase.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Of course the point they are bringing to the attention of the minister is the difference between the 400 per cent and the 25 per cent. I feel certain the Postmaster General can appreciate the situation in which they find themselves, if these are the actual figures and facts. We also realize the main problem is in respect of the semi-weekly and tri-weekly newspapers in market centres of more than 10,000. It would appear in the areas where semi-weekly and tri-weekly papers are recognized as daily newspapers that these papers find themselves in an untenable position. I am particularly concerned about this because of the fact that these papers represent a great many people. In fact their membership represents the major proportion of the membership or subscribers of papers which are members across Canada of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association.

I am sure the representations of these people should have been heard, if they were not heard. If they have not been heard, then I wonder why the minister did not inform them in time so that they would have an opportunity to present a good submission before him. If there was a general hearing or a private hearing before the minister at any time since the bill was introduced, I believe they should have had an opportunity to make their representations.