

*Post Office Act*

taken by the house to deal with the preceding one, and is subject to any unforeseen contingencies.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Do I understand that it is the intention of the government that the house should deal with the post office bill before we can deal with the farm bills and that we will not be allowed to deal with the budget until the two farm bills have been completed?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Of course, if in the course of a particular debate we reach a decision on a stage in one or other of these three pieces of legislation, it will be up to the house whether to continue with that or go on to another bill. Certainly it is the hope that a decision will be reached on all three bills at an early date and that we can then proceed to consideration of the budget.

**Mr. Baldwin:** As a supplementary question, would the house leader give some consideration to discussing the matter of an extra sitting so we can get to these very important farm bills so essential to the economy of western Canada?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I will welcome any opportunity to discuss with hon. gentlemen opposite a procedure whereby we can effectively get through the program in this house.

**POST OFFICE ACT****AMENDMENTS AFFECTING RATES,  
ADMINISTRATION, SAVINGS BANK**

The house resumed, from Wednesday, October 23, 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 (page 1623) thereto of Mr. Macquarrie.

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, since the minister is new to this house one can understand his enthusiasm in wanting to exhibit his wares, his experience and his many abilities by trying to produce legislation fairly quickly for consumption by members of the house. But it has seemed to me and to other hon. members that so far the minister has not received the best of advice from his senior civil servants and colleagues. I refer first to the advice given him with respect to the pay of rural mail contractors during the recent postal strike.

I give full marks to the minister of at least being flexible enough to pay attention to

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

representations from both sides of this house and elsewhere and change his mind with regard to the advice he had previously been given. Likewise, after receiving representations from all quarters of this house and many other places with regard to cancellation of six day rural mail delivery, the minister again exhibited his flexibility of mind. He listened to those representations and made the necessary change so that six day rural mail delivery will continue.

Because the minister has exhibited a great deal of flexibility of mind and shown his willingness to listen to reason and sensible representations, I am quite surprised he has not followed the example of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) who, when he was minister of finance in the last parliament, agreed to send a very elaborate piece of legislation amending the Bank Act to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Representations were made to the finance committee, witnesses were called and, if I recall correctly, the minister accepted some 40 amendments moved by members representing both sides of the house.

On another occasion a former minister of transport, Mr. Pickersgill, now head of the transport commission, presented an elaborate piece of legislation, the National Transportation Act. It was a complex piece of legislation with many ramifications, but after it received second reading Mr. Pickersgill agreed to send it to the committee on transport and communications and, as I recall, he accepted over 70 recommendations made largely by opposition members but some also made by government members.

That sort of thing is parliament at its best. It is true that it does not get much publicity in the press because it does not raise disagreeableness. But that is the way this house should operate. Although the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) appears to have made up his mind I still hope he will consider the excellent examples set in the past by his colleagues and friends.

The minister may reply: It is quite true that the Bank Act and the National Transportation Act were sent to committees but they were very complex bills; the postal bill is much less complex. To that I say that in view of two pieces of advice already given the minister which did not seem to be too good, and in view of the fact that the minister himself has reversed certain initial decisions, a case exists for sending this bill to a committee.