

*Post Office Act*

• (5:00 p.m.)

Then we are advised, Mr. Speaker, that there is a course in artificial insemination, say, at the University of Saskatchewan. In another story we are informed about the condition of fall pastures and how they can be improved; such a release probably comes from the experimental station of the Department of Agriculture. Then there is another story about pastures and how cattlemen can build an economic operation by better development of pastures. This is the sort of information carried in these farm weeklies and the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa spends a fair amount of money sending releases to the publications that carry them. They also spend a fair amount of money sending smaller releases to individual farmers.

If this type of publication is going to be discontinued, then how and by what method will this information be disseminated? I think that is a fair question to put to the Postmaster General. I also think it is fair to ask him whether or not he feels that this particular type of publication should continue under the new situation, or whether he knows that it will. After all, these publications do fulfil a vital function.

Let me make myself clear, Mr. Speaker. I hold no brief on behalf of these publications. Quite often I do not agree with their editorial policies. But I do say that they perform one particular function in the communications system on the farming scene. This is particularly the case in the farming area from western Ontario—in fact, the *Free Press Weekly*, I suppose, is distributed farther east than that—through the prairies clear to the Peace river and into the interior valleys of British Columbia. As I say, these papers perform a communications function that is as essential as the function performed by the C.B.C.

I think that this situation should be carefully examined. What strikes me about it from getting information from publications in my area is that the increases affect different publications in different ways. Local newspapers such as the local weeklies face some increased charges but they are not too serious. However, there is a more marked difference in the case of papers like the *Union Farmer*, house organs published by farm unions and that type of organization. The increases will also affect papers like the *North Battleford News-Optimist* and similar papers in British Columbia and Manitoba.

[Mr. Gleave.]

I should like to know what will be the effect of this legislation upon major farm newspapers such as the *Free Press Weekly* and the *Western Producer*. If these papers can afford to pay the increase, fine and dandy. But if they cannot or will not and this means that we will lose this particular method of communication, then we should consider what is going to replace them. For example, the *Western Producer* provides what it calls an open forum which for years has been a vehicle for the exchange of views between its readers throughout its circulation area. It provides an open forum of debate, a place where people can say what they think about the issues of the day and where other people can write in and express differing views. This is what I am concerned about, Mr. Speaker, and if the Postmaster General has an answer I would be happy to hear it.

**Mr. Kierans:** Does the hon. member want it now?

**Mr. Gleave:** At the minister's convenience.

**Mr. Kierans:** I would be happy to answer now, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Monteith:** But not close the debate.

**Mr. Kierans:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. There is no fear of closing the debate. The minister is speaking to the amendment.

**Mr. Kierans:** Mr. Speaker, I thought we were speaking to the debate itself, the subject matter before the house. The hon. member wishes to have some details in connection with the *Free Press*; we can close the debate later.

**Mr. Monteith:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want it clearly understood that if the minister answers the question at this time he is not closing the debate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I thought I made that clear. The minister is speaking to the amendment, or to the debate arising out of the amendment, and is not closing the debate.

**Mr. Kierans:** Mr. Speaker, is there any reason why the debate should not be closed?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak in this house to defend the interests of my