

Government Organization

Post Office must have been carrying laboratory supplies for a good many years.

I think, Mr. Chairman, and I have said this before—I have not been alone in saying it—that I find many Canadians are saying there is too little concern for purely Canadian publications under the impending new rates, particularly the non-profit publications. The minister has heard about this very directly and critically from some of the largest bodies of people in Canada, most recently the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Learned societies and many people who publish scientific and technical journals have tried to point out their problems. Some have expressed anxiety, and that is a mild word. It is known that Canadian associations of professional men have great difficulty in getting out publications, but they also have great need to get out publications. It is also known, and I am sure the minister knows this, that many of these publications are now already subsidized out of general membership funds.

Even in the electric age, even if the satellite is functioning, beaming messages and programming magnificently, the printed word is still of importance.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

The Deputy Chairman: Is it agreed that the hon. member may continue his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Macquarrie: I must apologize, Mr. Chairman. This is the first time in 11 years I have ever gone beyond the set limit. It is only in emulation of the minister. However, I take the responsibility. His is the example; mine is the responsibility! I thank the House for its courtesy.

I would just like to say that on the question of publications there is a new and important element which is worthy of the most serious consideration and that is that in many fields the government itself has its own publications. The farm organizations try to get out their farm letters and magazines, and they have great difficulty because of the new rates. The Department of Agriculture brings out its bulletins under the franking privilege, which it has every right to. The people interested in international affairs have trouble getting out publications, but the minister's department

gets out a magazine every month which contains the speeches of cabinet ministers. I do not think the Postmaster General has ever appeared in it, but others do who have more orthodox views. But you would not find much of the criticism of people like Professor MacNaught in that, so the people interested in a discussion of public matters will find that certain vehicles of opinion will not appear for their consideration; that organs of thought will be forbidden because of repressive rates from expressing views contrary to what might be described as the official line. This is a very serious matter.

The same thing applies to labour organs. Many people tell me that if these rates are not withdrawn many groups will have to depend for their member readership on the production of American magazines which are brought into Canada and, of course, carried free by the minister's employees. I repeat that this is a very serious matter.

We try our best, when we think about it, to develop the Canadian identity in thought, culture, and so on. Yet these measures are making it extremely difficult for Canadian ideas, Canadian ideals and Canadian points of view to be expressed by people with opinions and with a contribution to make.

● (3:10 p.m.)

Therefore, the competition which always is heavy from United States publications which have a much larger circulation is being made more difficult by competition from the government itself. The minister of communications, in my opinion, has responsibility for this. Surely, he has the responsibility, if his new portfolio is to mean what he seems to imply for the furthering and assisting of the transmission and communication of ideas. It is that of course which makes a nation breathe; the stimulation of thought and development of opinion whereby a democracy can become healthy. So, I bring this responsibility to the minister's attention.

I shall close my remarks by wishing him well in his new portfolio and in all the speeches he will be making in the future on whatever topic.

Mr. Schreyer: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Hillsborough has shown a very profound and genuine interest in the field of communications policy. He told the house he would speak for only 20 minutes and then proceeded to speak for a much greater length of time only because, as I say, he has this