

who have been or who are handling mail at present who would be quite prepared to undertake such a service.

• (4:40 p.m.)

I might say that the primary consideration of some of the Postmasters with whom I came in contact was not the matter of revenue. Rather it was that he was providing a community service, be it from a garage, service station, store or some other community facility, and operating the post office was one way of rounding out the service that he was providing to his patrons in the community. Of course, it also helped to ensure that people would return to his place of business for other services as well. I hope the minister will take a close look at the suggestion I have made, namely, that where it is difficult to justify a full post office, a sub-post office be established under the jurisdiction of a neighbouring post office and postmaster. I feel this is vital because other elements of government policy being advanced at the present time seem to indicate that the government wants to find ways and means of saving rural Canada, and of maintaining viable rural communities. The provision of postal services has to be integrated in any such proposals. Thus, I commend the suggestion that I have made to the minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the debate on Bill C-240, but I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister for the good service provided so far by his department.

Insofar as the service is concerned, between Ottawa and Quebec City for instance, I can say that it is practically a success. Furthermore, when it comes to first class mail between Ottawa and Quebec City, or any area in Portneuf, it is always a 24-hour service, which means that a letter posted in Ottawa around two o'clock in the afternoon will arrive at its destination at about the same time the next day.

On the other hand, the service between Quebec City and Ottawa is always slightly slower. I therefore ask the Minister without Portfolio responsible for the Post Office (Mr. Côté) whether a little investigation might not help bring about some improvement in that area.

With regard to second class mail, delivery may be a bit slower, but I feel the employees of the department honour their commitments according to the standards set up for that class of mail.

I should like to point out one more thing: I fail to understand why, in a municipality like my own, two contractors should have Post Office contracts to deliver the rural mail and do not work during the same hours. One of them serves 150 homes, every day, in the afternoon. The other, serves 65 homes in another area, during the forenoon, and delivers the newspapers of the previous day. Considering the fact that the people of that municipality, 30 miles out of Quebec City, receive their daily papers only on the following day, I would not be surprised if some of the news had lost some of its interest.

They claim that they provide a better mail service through morning delivery, but most families complain

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that they get their newspaper the day after although they do not live far from Quebec City.

I have already mentioned the fact to the hon. minister who sent me the following reply on October 14, 1970:

Dear Mr. Godin:

I refer to previous letters about the representations you made to me in order to have mail and newspapers delivered to customers of Rural Route No. 1 in St. Basile Station (Que.) the day they are received at the post office.

An investigation has revealed that the bulk of the mail is received at 8:30 a.m. and for this reason on Rural Route No. 1, St. Basile Station, the delivery is preferably made in the morning. Moreover, the rest of the mail and the dailies *Le Soleil* and *L'Action* arrive in the afternoon.

We have also established that out of 64 customers on that rural route, only 12 have subscriptions to the two dailies. Consequently, so as not to delay the delivery of the bulk of the mail, we think we must maintain the morning service and not change it for afternoon delivery.

Another advantage of morning delivery is that it can be made in daytime throughout the year, thus reducing for carriers the risks of accidents which would undoubtedly be more numerous if they had to work after sundown.

Yours truly,
Jean-Pierre Côté

Now, the minister states that there are 12 subscribers to the dailies. It is obvious that they are not interested in obtaining the newspapers of the previous day. We can imagine what would happen if a headwaiter waited until the following day of a wedding to purchase the wedding cake. He would certainly lose some customers! Now 12 out of 64 families receive Quebec City newspapers. It is ridiculous. The service is simply bad, at least in that area. Moreover, the St. Basile rural route which services the other section of Cap-Santé parish—part of the rural route of which is on Highway 10—is serviced in the afternoon and without accident. Therefore if a carrier can service 150 families in half a day without accident in 10 years, I feel that another carrier who must service only 64 users along country roads could certainly do so without accident.

I feel that we must change our methods so as to find the means to give satisfaction to the people of the whole region.

Another matter which, to my mind, should be revised by the department is the present requirements on the minimum number of families for the establishment of home delivery service.

In large cities, there is no problem; everyone gets good service and the people are generally satisfied.

In rural districts where villages are rather small, where everyone can call at the post office for his mail without having to cover too great a distance, things are not too bad.

All rural regions are fairly well served by the carriers who deliver rural mail. But considering that the rural population of Portneuf, the riding that I represent, is only 10 per cent of the total population, some modern small towns get very poor service indeed.

I do not blame the minister for what is taking place now. But I would point out to him that if such is the situation in our modern small towns, an old regulation is