

newspapers. This fact can be found in another clause of the bill.

The general newspaper class, as hon. members will realize, is now paying about 30 per cent of the cost and will, after the passage of this measure, be paying 80 per cent. This is an increase of about 166 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent or 170 per cent, but not 400 per cent.

Some remarks were made in connection with the north, particularly in relation to the *Edmonton Journal*. Let me point out that the total circulation of the *Edmonton Journal* is 134,000. In the year 1967-68 10,000 copies daily were delivered by mail. The actual cost to us was \$204,763, of which we recovered \$89,000.

• (3:30 p.m.)

Let me point out something else in respect of the *Edmonton Journal*. It receives one service that is being maintained rather than discontinued. As the hon. member knows, the Post Office Department has been flying these copies to the north at no extra charge. This is a service we will continue in the interests of the people of the north. We are not cutting down this service in any way at all. I have here a study with respect to the rural routes. Every time we close a post office or a sub post office, we do it only when we can provide a better service, and that is a rural route, which is a post office on wheels. In other words, we may close down—I am thinking of an example in the eastern provinces—three out of four small post offices and we add 2.8 miles to a rural route, where everybody gets service right to his door. The people are extremely happy about this. Why are we doing this? I have here the figures that have come to us as a result of this study: 2,430 of these post offices have an annual revenue of less than \$445 a year.

I am not the one who makes the judgment, Mr. Chairman. It is the people who use a post office of that nature who make the judgment. All they buy in a year is \$445 worth of stamps. The actual cost of the post office may vary anywhere from \$1,100 to \$1,200 or \$3,000. But when we do close it down, we provide an alternative service, a better service, and in nine cases out of ten the people are extremely satisfied.

Mr. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, would the minister allow a question at this time?

Mr. Kierans: No; I think you have had your say.

Post Office Act

Mr. McIntosh: The minister has just made a statement which I do not think is correct. He said that wherever they close down a post office—

The Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. McIntosh: All right; I will ask the question later.

The Chairman: The Postmaster General has the right to answer a question if he wishes to do so, but if he wants to continue he should be allowed to do so.

Mr. Kierans: If the hon. member wants to ask a question, fair enough.

Mr. McIntosh: That is what I said in the first place. The Postmaster General just made a statement in which he said it is the policy of his department, whenever they close down a post office in rural Canada—I believe he said eastern Canada, but I assume he meant all of Canada, or he wanted the Canadian public to believe that he meant all of Canada—they would provide a rural route. That is not correct. The minister should ask his officials about this, and he would find that what he said is not correct. In the southern part of my constituency, the southwestern part of my constituency, the southwestern corner of Saskatchewan, where there are many ranchers, the Postmaster General does not give them rural route delivery service.

Mr. Kierans: Wherever this is feasible.

Mr. McIntosh: It is feasible there.

Mr. Kierans: Let me answer the question. We had in Alberta a post office, and the 15 families of the area sent me a letter. They are along the United States border and they wanted this service maintained. When I examined the costs of this post office I found they were in excess of \$1,200 or \$1,300. The actual use those 15 families had made of that post office was exactly \$82 in an entire year.

Mr. McIntosh: You have the wrong principle.

Mr. Kierans: The wrong province, but it is all part of Canada.

Mr. McIntosh: The wrong principle, I said.

Mr. Kierans: This was decided, yes. Hon. members keep referring to this question and saying that if this measure had gone before a committee—your predecessor, Mr. Chairman, said this was out of order—the matter would have been settled a week ago. It was settled