

*Post Office Act*

tell the minister right now that the relationship between the upper level and the lower level of employees just stinks. Employees are dissatisfied with some of the practices that have been prevalent in the department. Some efforts have been made to improve them, but how on earth can you have an efficient operation where the bottom, or main base of the operation, is not pulling along with the top?

We also want to know whether the minister is satisfied that the increased wages paid to postal clerks, delivery men and other employees will be matched by an increase in productivity. If it is not, then all we are doing is stoking the furnace of inflation. The settlements, the strike, and all that took place last summer will go for naught. As an aside, Mr. Speaker, may I say I think the strike was unnecessary. Aside from certain legitimate grievances I think it could be blamed on dilatoriness on the part of the government in dealing with grievances, and also on lust for power on the part of certain union officials. We can do without both. The government must pick up its socks in dealing with its employees, but this must be matched by a certain degree of responsibility on the part of those who lead the employees.

We are told that we will get a five day postal service for parts of Canada. In a matter of public service I do not see one iota of justification for a distinction to be made between rural and urban residents. In saying that I acknowledge that the rural residents are fully entitled to what they are going to get, but urban residents are entitled to the same degree of service. They have the same claim with regard to mail. They have the same status with regard to legal consequences.

As a classic example I cite a rule of the Immigration Appeal Board which states that the period for appeal shall expire within 15 days, I believe, following the making of an order, not 15 days after receipt of the order by the person concerned. To a person living out in northern Alberta, British Columbia, or some other distant urban point from Ottawa, this means that when a decision of the Immigration Appeal Board is sent to him it will remain in the city post office from Friday until Monday before delivery to him, and three days of the 15 day period will be lost to that person.

First of all, I think that Immigration Appeal Board regulation is wrong. It is a made-in-Ottawa ruling that should have no application across the country. But under the new postal regulations its effect on persons

living in urban areas at a distance from Ottawa will be worse than on those living in rural areas. The minister and his officials may blithely ignore the effect, but I point out that their proposed step does affect the legal rights of citizens.

There are many other instances where legal matters are not dependant upon the receipt of a letter, but upon the time of its dispatch. In a case such as this the postal authorities may well say, "It is tough luck that you happen to live in a city or urban area." I ask the minister and his officials what relief they will provide in such a case. The minister is quite prepared to provide relief against the hardship of rural residents not receiving their Friday newspapers, but that is a small thing compared to the legal rights of someone who may be adversely affected by the decision to suspend Saturday mail deliveries.

Admittedly there would be no grave danger if other existing legislation were changed to take account of this change in postal deliveries. But the other legislation is not being changed, and no one has told us that it will be changed. I would like the officials of the department to give a detailed answer on this matter, so that we may see whether they have thought it our or not.

I wish to make two more points, Mr. Speaker, with respect to city businessmen. I have here a copy of a letter written to the minister by a national merchandising and warehousing firm which does freight distribution for the Canadian National Railways in many communities both in the west and east. This is what the president of that company wrote with regard to curtailment of the Saturday mail service:

Frankly, it will work a real hardship on us if we are unable to do so—

Meaning to pick up their mail on Saturdays.

—and in addition, a hardship on the shipping public as it will not be possible for us to deliver merchandise arriving in cars on Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday night in our various locations—

And these are listed in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

The billings that we receive from the east represent a good portion of our mail for Saturday. The envelopes might almost be described as small parcels and it is imperative that we have these for preparation on Saturday in order that we can be ready to open cars on Monday morning and make delivery. Some of the merchandise is perishable, arriving in refrigerated and heated cars. If they are not unloaded it is necessary to maintain