

*Government Organization*

businesses because they will not have the financial means to continue in operation.

I am not sure that the money supposed to be saved by the Post Office Department through increases in the rates will be of the great value that the Postmaster General and some members of the government think it will because I feel that the pressure on our economy has increased as a result. Much of the legislation that has been brought into the house by the government has had a similar effect. It is rather interesting to note also that in spite of the increase in postage I have never had so many complaints about the type of service being given by the Post Office Department. In fact, I have heard complaints that it takes three or four days for a letter to travel a distance of 10 or 12 miles. Such a situation is intolerable. One of the greatest problems is that the weekly newspapers are having great difficulty in getting their papers to their patrons who do not live in the area.

The main reason that I rose to speak this afternoon has to do with a situation that has developed in my own riding. It concerns a community where the government has decided a new post office should be built and the people in that community are complaining bitterly that they do not want it. I am referring to the village of Elora. Perhaps not everybody understands that the people in some villages are very happy living with their traditions and with certain buildings in their community. To bear this out I would like to read an editorial that was sent to me by one of my constituents. It has to do with the closing of the post office in Elora and appeared in the *Elora Express* shortly after Christmas. It is headed "Quite Unnecessary", and reads:

Rumours persist that Elora is to have a new post office. There are a number of things that Elora needs but a new post office is the least of its needs. We have a post office which is suitable to one of the oldest villages in the district and is a good solid structure. All we can get is one of the modern shoe boxes which are dotting the land, and, by the time we get a new bank—if we ever do—one more landmark will be gone. A few more and Elora will be as sterile of atmosphere as Guelph.

We feel that there should be some protest before we find that the present office is demolished. It undoubtedly needs more space but there is plenty of land available for an addition without ruining the character of the main street. Moreover, if the present minister responsible for post offices is so all-fired anxious to effect economies he might take this into consideration. It will take a lot of penny postage to knock a building down and build a new one.

[Mr. Howe.]

The next paragraph indicates that a protest to their member of parliament might be considered and that some thought should be given to the matter. I have certainly had protests from a number of individuals who have written me in connection with the action that is being taken in this case. The editorial continues:

As near as we can find out nobody wants a new post office. One is not necessary and it is downright wasteful to eliminate good buildings when so much thought is being given to their preservation.

This editorial is one of the reasons I am speaking in the debate this afternoon. I made a protest to the Minister of Public Works. May I say by way of interpolation that I sometimes wonder whether the regional desks are not already working in some parts of Canada because, in the case of Elora, the member of parliament representing that area was not consulted or even told that a new post office was going to be built in that village. It was not until somebody stumbled upon it when they saw people looking for a new site for the post office that the people in the community were made aware of the plans, and immediately they were up in arms. I do not blame them. This community has a population of between 1,200 and 1,500 of whom over 400 people signed a petition saying they do not want a new post office.

Another editorial appeared in the *Elora Express* following a meeting, which should have been held in the first place of officials of the Department of Public Works and the planning board of this community. It reads in part:

Members of the planning board present were J. Andrews, P. Buchanan, R. Marston and H. Waind.

Mr. Blackwell opened the discussion by stating that the department's only function was to find the most economical method of providing the facilities that the post office requires. From their investigations it would be more costly to renovate the old building with an addition, than to build a new post office.

● (3:30 p.m.)

As to that, Mr. Chairman, I do not know. Many of us live in old houses, but I imagine we could put them up against the houses being built today any time. After 80 or 90 years our houses will still be standing when many of the new buildings put up today will no longer exist.

Mr. John Andrews, an architect in that area, asked whether it was not important to