

*Post Office Act*

feeling—and this is why I have some sympathy for the Postmaster General—that the Prime Minister has a dislike and mistrust of newspapers. In the swinging era, as he calls it, with half the cabinet here and half the cabinet away he would rather be on television and would rather run the country by himself through television than allow the news to be disseminated through daily newspapers.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Woolliams:** In that regard I have some sympathy for the Postmaster General because he is doing the job for the Trudeau government in the Trudeau way and he is the unfortunate instrument to pilot this bill through against a lot of pressure with regard to discrimination against our daily and weekly newspapers.

Perhaps the old thinking still exists in the new era, and to prove this let me repeat some of the Prime Minister's statements. In March, 1963, in a very famous article in which he dealt with the philosophy of the Liberal government, which is so evident in the way in which this bill is being piloted through the house, this is what he said about his Liberal friends:

Say anything, think anything you like. But put us in power, because we are best fitted to govern.

He also said: "What idiots they all are", speaking about the Liberals. This is what he called them, not I. Now he uses the same philosophy in this House of Commons in appointing the Postmaster General to pilot this legislation through and to thrust it on the country whether or not it wants it.

**Mr. Harding:** Mr. Chairman, it is one o'clock and there are still a few questions to be asked on this clause. May I call it one o'clock?

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Chairman:** It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At one o'clock, the house took recess.

[*English*]

**AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr. Harding:** Just prior to the recess, Mr. Chairman, a number of questions were put to the minister. I do not know whether he wants to reply before a few more questions are

asked. Probably he could add another question or two to the list which he no doubt has before him.

We have had a fairly lengthy debate on the legislation dealing with the Post Office Act but I think there are still a number of questions which have not really been cleared up by the Postmaster General. It is my intention to try to get a little more information before we allow clause 1 to pass. I want to point out that when we started the debate on the post office bill the Postmaster General indicated that a large number of changes would be made. Since that time we have seen the pleas put forward, mainly by opposition members, gradually soften the stand he had taken. One of the issues is related to rural delivery, which is vital to my area. I am very happy to learn that apparently the Post Office Department is going to continue delivery of mail to rural areas on Saturday. The minister also suggested that there would be a graduated increase in some of the rates to be charged under clause 4. We have not been told what this scale will be but I presume we will learn that when the clause is before us.

There are several other points I should like to draw to the attention of the minister before we proceed. I feel it is true, as has been stated, that the newspapers are certainly getting a subsidy. However, it is a subsidy that is passed on to the consumer. In my area the people are going to have a substantial increase in the cost of their daily newspaper because it is delivered by mail. I believe this is one of the few areas in British Columbia where over a quarter of the total circulation of this newspaper goes through the post office. An extremely heavy burden by way of postal charges will be borne by this newspaper. I refer to the *Nelson Daily News*. I am certainly fed up with having the people who live in the 62 rural communities in that area called upon to pay a 25 per cent increase in the cost of their reading material.

As I indicated yesterday, there is no doubt in my mind about what is going to happen. Many of them will be forced to drop their subscriptions. As we heard last night, we are subsidizing two United States magazines to the tune of \$1.5 million, \$800,000 for one and \$700,000 for the other. I have no hesitation in saying that if anyone deserves a real subsidy it is the people who have pioneered and live in the rural areas. I have no hesitation in making the submission to the Postmaster General that I think some of these changes are rather severe.