

Post Office Act

States. He also mentioned the possibility of making the post office a crown corporation. Had all these things been done long ago by his predecessors it might not have been necessary to introduce such drastic increases in postal rates.

• (4:10 p.m.)

With the new rates, Canadians will be in a position to demand service, but I have not heard the Postmaster General guarantee that we can be assured of next day delivery. The way mail deliveries have been going of late I am inclined to think we had better mail service when delivery was by stagecoaches. A letter mailed from within a radius of 60 miles of Toronto or in that general area might arrive in Toronto the next day, or it might not arrive until four days later. Sometimes a letter mailed from Toronto and addressed to my community of Guelph, 60 miles away, does not travel any faster than it did in the days of the stagecoach. Sometimes a letter mailed in England will reach my area more quickly than a letter mailed from Toronto. We will be looking forward to an improved service. We will be looking for next day delivery in all possible cases.

What will the situation be in respect of the five day delivery service? I wonder whether the officials in the department have realized that all our national holidays fall on a Monday. On Tuesday the poor courier will have to deliver the mail for four days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. He will have to lug this around to my house and yours. Already he is complaining about having to carry a bag which is too heavy. What kind of service can we expect when the mail for a period of three or four days will have to be delivered in one day.

We might consider also the situation in respect of the retail stores, many of which close on Mondays. This is a situation which is very common across Canada. So, under the new system, in the downtown section of the cities a four day volume of mail will have to be handled on one day. I can conceive of many problems in respect of next day delivery; we are likely to have a two or three day delivery. What will the situation be with regard to doctors, lawyers, and others who depend on good mail service?

Then there is the situation concerning bills of lading. A railway car which is sitting on a siding cannot be unloaded until the bill of lading has been received. That car might be loaded with perishable goods. The person who

[Mr. Hales.]

has ordered those goods will be in an unfortunate position because he will have customers waiting. I am sure the answer will be that these places of business should be instructed to rent lock boxes in the post office, so that they would be able to pick up their mail daily. This will not solve the problem, because at the present time it is very difficult to rent a post office box when such boxes are in short supply.

The statement given to us by the Postmaster General shows that for the year 1968-69 there will be a loss of \$2½ million in respect of post office lock boxes. If we were to step up the use of these boxes we would probably lose more money. These are some of the situations which I believe will develop under the five-day delivery system, and if efficiency, productivity, and other things are not introduced into the operation and policies of the Post Office Department.

Not too long ago an increase was introduced in relation to special delivery letters. A special delivery letter should be delivered to the addressee as soon as the post office receives it. I am told, however, that shortly after this increase in price became effective special delivery letters would go out on the regular route if the delivery in that area happened to be in the morning. If the delivery happened to be in the afternoon, the letters would be sent out by special courier. This is an example of where the price went up and the service went down. I am told this is what happened in this situation.

I received a letter from a merchant—and he has the facts to back up his case—who told me that a parcel post package took six days to reach him in Guelph, mailed from Toronto, 60 miles away. During the Christmas period a person in Guelph must allow seven days for a parcel post package to be delivered in Toronto in time for Christmas.

In closing I should like to say a few words about the philatelic division of the Post Office Department, and take this opportunity to thank the Postmaster General and the officials in his department for having produced a very nice looking and much appreciated memorial stamp in honour of the late Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. This was well received by the veterans of this country and I am sure by every Canadian.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hales: I am informed that this branch of the Post Office Department has a turnover