

*Supply—Post Office*

**Mr. Lapointe:** What is the name of the place?

**Mr. Bryce:** The Petersfield rural route. The mail comes from Winnipeg in the morning, and it is at the office at 10.30; it is sorted by 11.30, and then it lies there until the next day. People who receive newspapers do not get them until a day late. I would appreciate it if the minister would look into that.

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** I want to be as constructive as I can in the comments I make on the minister's estimates. In so far as my knowledge is concerned, the personnel of the Post Office Department are to be highly commended for the service they render. I know quite a few of these people in my constituency, and they are happy and proud of the service they do render to this country. I think the service they render often goes beyond the call of duty of the particular office they try to fill in the Post Office Department.

I want to pay particular tribute to the rural mail couriers. In my own constituency we have quite a number of them. I am sure all hon. members who have seen them carrying the Queen's mail know the adverse circumstances under which they perform their duty, and will join me in paying tribute to the kind of service they attempt to give. I know quite well that many rural carriers use power toboggans; some of them use jeeps, and some use horses and cutters in order to get around their routes. I am one of those who would like to join other hon. members in commending these rural carriers upon the type of service they render.

However, I do want to say I feel this government should be criticized in many respects, one of which is with regard to the cost we now have to pay to send ordinary mail. I recall the debates which took place in this house when the members of this group in particular fought the increase in the letter rate from 4 cents to 5 cents. I feel that time has proved what we said then to be correct, namely that it was not necessary for the government to make this increase. At the time they pulled a trick on the Canadian taxpayer by removing the requirement for stamps on cheques, but increased the price of stamps on ordinary letters to 5 cents.

It is true that much of our mail travelling on the 5 cent rates goes air mail; nevertheless I think it rather a scandalous surprise, if I may put it that way, to find that this year the Post Office Department has a revenue surplus of over \$30 million. The minister shakes his head, but that is what I understand and he can put the record straight when he speaks. I feel that the people of Canada

[Mr. Bryce.]

want service from this department, and not a surplus. They do not want it being used by the government to gain revenue. I suggest to the minister that he should try to improve the service, particularly in some of the rural areas.

At this time I want to bring to the minister's attention some problems relating to my own constituency. He will recall that I have been in touch with him with regard to several post offices in my constituency. I have here a communication from the secretary-treasurer of Torquay, Saskatchewan. I think the minister will be aware, Mr. Chairman, that we have suffered a great deal from the curtailment of rail service in Saskatchewan. This may be outside the scope of the minister's department and perhaps we should score the Minister of Transport in that regard. I see he is in his seat. However, apparently the railroads serving western Canada have curtailed passenger service in their economy drive, and that has meant that postal deliveries have been similarly curtailed.

I hope the minister will deal with this when he replies, but I want to bring to his attention the fact that there is a branch line from Estevan to Torquay over which the mail travels on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This means that from Thursday until Monday no mail is received. I have had representations from that area suggesting that the mail be carried by truck. I hope the minister will see fit to put in some type of truck delivery at those points at which there has been serious curtailment of mail delivery, so the people can receive adequate service.

I should like to point out also, along with the hon. member for Selkirk, the fact that there are many points where mail now comes in late in the evening and is not delivered on the rural routes until some time the next week. I know of one point where that situation applies on the Winnipeg-Arcola route, and that is at Manor. The mail comes into Manor at around seven o'clock in the evening. If it comes in on Friday evening, to my knowledge it is not sorted and sent out until the following Tuesday. If it comes in on the seven o'clock train from Winnipeg on Tuesday it is not sorted and delivered until the following Friday. I suggest that at least mail coming in during the late evening should be sorted and sent out as soon as possible in order to give better service.

There is one other matter, and that has to do with the post office at Maryfield. I made representations to the Postmaster General, suggesting to him that there is quite a good deal of pressure at that point for a new post office. I am fully aware of the fact that the basis upon which new post offices are built