

Postal Service Policies

• (4:50 p.m.)

I refer again to Professor Bernard Brody's remarks in the *Montreal Star* of yesterday. He wrote:

This whole mess should serve as an example to every employer on how not to introduce change, unless one is intentionally looking for a disruption of his operations.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it may sound absurd but I charge that the Postmaster General of this government is going out of his way to create a climate of unrest. He is doing so, not because he does not understand people but because he does understand people. He knows they must rebel. And having brought the Post Office of this country to its knees, he can do what he darned well likes in the name of improving the service—higher rates, fewer post offices, fewer services and, like a knight in shining armour to the rescue, in will come the Postmaster General with his Crown corporation. I say, get rid of the man now before it is too late.

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, I realize that time is short and we are near the end of our day so I will just say briefly that I do not think any of the citizens of Canada are very well satisfied with the present situation in this department. The state of affairs in our Post Office operation certainly characterizes the day-to-day operations of this government. If we had not selected the Post Office as a subject for today's debate, we could have chosen at random from the long list of government failures that keeps growing from day to day.

I am concerned about the effects of closing several small post offices in my riding. The Postmaster General said as recently as yesterday that he received representations from interested parties prior to the closing of each post office affected by his arbitrary and senseless hatchet job on the small rural post offices and rural mail delivery service. The minister also implied that he considered each representation on its own merits.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I made representations to the minister over every one of the planned closings of many rural post offices in my riding and I can tell you that my representations fell on deaf ears. The post offices were closed and as far as the end result is concerned I might just as well have made my representations to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux).

I must confess that the Postmaster General's efforts to streamline the operations of the Canadian Post Office have most of us completely baffled, and there are clear indications now that the Postmaster General is himself baffled. Every time the minister announces that he is going to improve some aspect of the Post Office operation, the Canadian public goes into a state of near-panic. By now all of us know that every time the Postmaster General decides to improve that once-great institution, the Canadian postal system, we can expect a new crisis to develop immediately.

There is one statement that I am anxious to make today. That is, that at this time I am incontrovertibly against our Canadian Post Office Department and system being converted to a Crown Corporation. Of all departments of the dominion government, it is the most unlikely or most ineligible for such treatment. This is the one department of government that if necessary the Canadian people are willing to underwrite by their taxes in order to obtain a reasonably good mail and communications service. Millions of Canadians depend on the mail because they cannot afford any faster or more dynamic form of communication such as radio, telegraph, television, automobile, railway or air. They depend on this simple, reasonably-priced service for their routine and basic, fixed habits of use.

The state of affairs in the Post Office is an indication of where this government is taking us, and I do not like it. The Canadian people do not like it. I would ask the Postmaster General again not to resign until the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) makes his next visit to Canada to share the shame and the blame for the state of affairs of not only our Post Office system but of all the institutions in our country that they once pledged themselves to preserve.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Suppose the Prime Minister doesn't come back?

An hon. Member: Hurrah, hurrah!

Mr. Alkenbrack: Oh, I think he will be glad to return to his native land that has been so generous to him and to which he owes so much.

Mr. Bell: He must be getting tired in those nightclubs.

Mr. Alkenbrack: However, if present conditions prevail the time is not far away when the Canadian people will be only too relieved